

UNU Input to the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea for the 59th GA session

UNU's Inter-linkages Initiative seeks to develop cohesive responses to linked environmental problems, especially in the areas of capacity development, information and knowledge management, and national/regional support mechanisms. In 2003, a number of activities were carried out, including an ASEAN regional workshop in Kuala Lumpur, a training course at the 11th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UN CSD) in New York, a partnership on integrated capacity building in the Asia Pacific, a country case-study by invitation of the Bhutanese Government, a national workshop in Papua New Guinea, a training workshop in Sri Lanka on multilateral environmental agreements' (MEAs) compliance and enforcement targeting the Asia and Pacific region and another one in Jamaica targeting the English-speaking Caribbean region. Following up on the results of the WSSD, the initiative is now focused on developing partnerships and frameworks for integrated capacity building, starting with a regional approach in the Pacific in 2004. More information on the initiative is available from its website at <<http://www.geic.or.jp/>>.

The UNU Fisheries Training Programme, coordinated by the Marine Research Institute in Reykjavik in cooperation with several research institutions and universities in Iceland, constitutes postgraduate training of six-months' duration in six fisheries and fisheries-related fields in Iceland, covering fishery policy and planning, marine and inland water resource assessment and monitoring, and environmental assessment and monitoring. Since the inception in 1998, the programme has trained 84 participants from 20 countries. Participants are from developing countries with considerable fisheries potential (nationally or provincially) and are already working as professionals in their individual disciplines. With a practical approach, the training is designed to suit the needs of the individual participants. After a six-to-seven week introductory course, the fellows undergo specialized training in specific fields, which comprises a five-week structured course followed by a project and work assignment. In 2003, the programme took part in the development of a short course in Viet Nam, where experts from the programme are working with former fellows and other professionals. The course is on safety and quality assurance of seafood and will be completed in 2004. Further work will be sought in this area in cooperation with partners in developing countries. Detailed information of the programme can be obtained at <www.hafro.is/unuftp/>.

Yet another capacity-building project of UNU is focused on management of coastal resources and control of land-based sources of pollution. The project "Environmental Monitoring and Governance in the East Asian Coastal Hydrosphere" aims to monitor pollution in marine and coastal environment by land-based sources of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The monitoring continues, including capacity building for monitoring, in the coastal waters in nine East Asian countries. The monitoring data is coordinated and disseminated as a comprehensive GIS-based database on the Internet at <<http://landbase.hq.unu.edu/>>. Another component of the project focuses on Asia-Pacific cooperation for research and conservation of mangroves. Based on a workshop held in 2000, a Mangroves Action Plan has been developed in close collaboration with UNESCO, the International Society for Mangroves Ecosystems (ISME), and a number of experts from the region. Along with the Mangrove Action Plan, the proceedings of workshops are published in hardcopy form and accessible from the afore-mentioned website.