

# **Inputs to the Secretary-General's Annual Report to the General Assembly on the Oceans and Law of the Sea**

## **I. Introduction**

The Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch (MCEB) of the United Nations Environment Programme seeks to “provide an overall long-term vision that ensures prosperous and healthy ocean and coastal environments where conservation, productivity and resource use are sustainable”. To this end, almost all MCEB activities aim at implementing the relevant outcomes of summits on sustainable development.

MCEB is responsible for coordinating the Regional Seas Programme, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA), Marine Ecosystems Management and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). MCEB is making progress in implementing UNEP’s Marine and Coastal Strategy in alignment with UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work. In addition, MCEB is aiming to increase its collaboration with other UN agencies, research institutions and NGOs to meet its objectives.

MCEB’s key guiding document is UNEP’s Marine and Coastal Strategy which has four main elements: Land Ocean Connections; Ecosystems for Well Being; Reconciling Use and Conservation; and Vulnerable People and Places. MCEB is now implementing the strategy, working through existing projects and programmes, as well as developing innovative projects and forging new partnerships.

## **II. Progress to date**

### **1. South Asian Seas Programme (SASP)**

In order to strengthen the updating of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) process, foster collaboration, and help identifying and addressing challenges that require regional solutions, South Asian Seas Programme together with UNEP have initiated an activity to develop a South Asia Regional Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy in partnership with various other stakeholders. The Strategy will be prepared during 2013, in parallel with the NBSAPs which are currently under development, and will assist the five maritime countries of South Asia to achieve Aichi Biodiversity targets relevant to coastal and marine biodiversity on national as well as regional level. This process will support and guide future revision of the South Asian Seas Action Plan.

The protection of the marine environment from land based activities has been identified as one of the four priority areas to be addressed under the South Asian Action Plan. SACEP in collaboration with UNEP-GPA office and the BOBLME Project/FAO have perused an activity to implement a project titled “Controlling Nutrient Loading and Eutrophication of Coastal Waters of the South Asian Seas Region”. The main objective of the proposed project is to reduce and control nutrient loading into the coastal waters of the South Asian Seas Region through development of a Regional Action Plan and Policy Forum/Framework.

Maritime transport is a dominant mode of transport in South Asia in terms of international trade and as a result the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens to our ocean

waters via ships ballast water can be considered as an emerging threat. To mitigate the harmful impacts, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has developed the Ballast Water Convention (BWM). The Convention was adopted in February 2004 and of the five SAS countries, presently only Maldives is party to the Convention.

SACEP closely works with its member countries to carry forward BWM activities in the region in collaboration with IMO and will establish a Regional Task Force to facilitate the process. It is envisaged that the first meeting of the said Task Force will take place in mid 2013.

## **2. UNEP Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR-RCU)**

The United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) was established by the Caribbean states in 1986. Its mission is to promote regional co-operation for the protection and sustainable development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). This is achieved through the development and implementation of programmes, projects and activities that support the implementation of country obligations to the Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols on Oil Spills, Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS).

### **Contributions of Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Sub-Programme (SPAW):**

The Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) was established to conserve and sustainably use the marine biodiversity of the WCR through the protection of threatened and endangered species and their habitats and related ecosystems. This objective is met by working with governments to establish and manage protected areas, and to manage and use species and the coastal ecosystems sustainably.

### **Strengthening of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**

As the marine biodiversity found within the WCR faced new and existing threats such as invasive species and climate change, the SPAW Protocol continued to develop and implement specific measures to promote their conservation. Direct assistance continued to be provided to countries to: strengthen MPAs and build their capacity through provision of grants to address MPA management needs and priorities; develop sustainable fisheries and alternative livelihoods; promote best management practices; and develop a regional MPA database. A "Train the Trainers" programme also continues to provide comprehensive and targeted training for MPA personnel through the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM). Partnership sharing and collaboration among MPAs continues to be promoted through dissemination of lessons learnt and exchanges among sites, bringing together MPA researchers, managers, educators and scientists, as well as the private sector.

The SPAW Project in support of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, which began in March 2010 and expected to end in May 2013, has been successful in supporting the management of Protected Areas (PAs) projects in eight (8) small island developing states (SIDS) namely *Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines*. This has been achieved through the production of a compilation of MPA best practices and MPA Regional Database updates and factsheet. This USD 1.5M funded initiative was facilitated through the Italian Cooperation, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented in partnership with UNEP-CEP, CaMPAM, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Initiative, Reef Check Dominican Republic, SPAW-Regional Activity Center and The Nature Conservancy.

In 2012, eighteen (18) Protected Areas for the Wider Caribbean Region were listed under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) as meeting regional criteria of special significance (see link: <http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Presentation-of-the-18-PAs-listed,412> ). The list of protected areas is expected to grow as a regional cooperative programme developed for their support. The eighteen PAs included so far are:

- **Belize:** Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Glover's Reef Marine Reserve;
- **Colombia:** Sanctuary Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta and the Regional Seaflower Marine Protected Area in San Andrés and Providencia Archipelago;
- **Cuba:** National Park of Guanahacabibes, in Pinar del Río;
- **France:** Grand Connétable Island Nature Reserve (French Guiana), the National Park of Guadeloupe, the Réserve Naturelle Nationale of Saint-Martin, the Lagoon Ponds of St. Martin, the National Reserve of "Petite-Terre" (Guadeloupe), and the Agoa Sanctuary ;
- **The Caribbean Netherlands:** Bonaire National Marine Park, the national park the Quill and Boven on St. Eustatius, the Saba Marine Park; and
- **United States of America:** Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Dry Tortugas National Park ([www.nps.gov/drto](http://www.nps.gov/drto)), the Everglades National Park in Florida, and the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary ([www.flowergarden.noaa.gov](http://www.flowergarden.noaa.gov)) in Texas (Gulf of Mexico)

### **Coral Reef Management**

SPAW continued to support coral reef monitoring and assessments in the Wider Caribbean coordination with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GRMN) and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI).

### **Ecosystem-Based Approach (EBA) to Large Marine Ecosystems** (<http://www.clmeproject.org/pilotprojects.html> )

SPAW continues to participate with other UN agencies in the implementation of the GEF, UNDP, IOC/UNESCO Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project aimed at assisting Caribbean countries to improve the management of their shared living marine resources through an ecosystem based approach (EBA). The EBA is utilised for the conservation and effective management of coral reef ecosystems and their resources in order to maintain their functional and structural integrity and biodiversity, and to ensure economic and social benefits for local communities and the region as a whole. The GEF CLME pilot project began in 2010 and is slated to end in April 2013.

UNEP-CEP continues to be responsible for the implementation of this project and has utilized sub-agreements to partners operating in the CLME selected Pilot Target Sites. The targeted sites are the Montecristi National Park in the Dominican Republic; Caracol Bay in Haiti; Pedro Bank in Jamaica; and the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve in Colombia.

**Marine Mammal Action Plans** Additional marine biodiversity activities included national recovery plans for species such as sea turtles, a regional conservation plan for marine mammals, and management initiatives for economically important species such as lobster and conch. For additional information, please visit (<http://www.cep.unep.org/meetings-events/vi-spaw-copzz/6th-spaw-cop/mmap.pdf/view> )

### **Lionfish - Invasive Species**

UNEP-CEP along with the SPAW Regional Activity Center (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe partnered with the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and other numerous Caribbean

counterparts to address the lionfish issue in the Caribbean through preparation of a manual. The manual titled “*Invasive Lionfish: A Guide to Control and Management*” was developed in 2012 in English and is being translated in Spanish. This guide will serve as a crucial tool for managers in assisting with the control of the lionfish invasion and its impacts by providing practical solutions and recommendations. For more information, please visit (<http://lionfish.gcfi.org/manual/#?page=0> )

**Contributions of the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution Sub-Programme (AMEP):**

***Land-based Sources of Pollution***

The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land -based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) entered into Force in August 2010 .With the ratification of this Protocol by the Government of Grenada in 2012, ten (10) countries of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) are now contracting parties to this Protocol.

Support continues to be provided through UNEP CEP to member countries of the Wider Caribbean Region to meet their obligations under the LBS Protocol. This is facilitated through a range of projects and activities such as the GEF funded Project “Testing a Prototype Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew)” which seeks to establish innovative, financing mechanisms for cost-effective and sustainable financing of wastewater management in the WCR; to facilitate policy discussions, strengthen legislative frameworks; and to facilitate regional dialogue and knowledge exchange among the key stakeholders in the WCR.

GEF CRew is a four (4) year project managed and implemented by the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme. There are thirteen participating countries: *Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago*. The project also has four 4 pilot projects countries: Belize, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago. The Project completed baseline assessments in all the participating countries to determine policy, legislative, capacity building and training needs for effective wastewater management. The baseline assessment reports are being finalized. Regional training workshops convened by the project included topics such as *Appropriate Wastewater Treatment Technologies, Revolving funds for Wastewater Management and Operator Assessments for Wastewater utilities*. The Project continues to work with the pilot project countries to develop national Pilot Financing Mechanisms. For more information, please visit <http://gefcrew.org/>

Following the successful completion of the GEF Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) project, UNEP CEP in collaboration with the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) is now developing the full project proposal for a new multifocal area project entitled:” Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean SIDS (IWEco)”. The project proposal was approved for inclusion in the work plan of UNEP CEP at the 15th Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Twelfth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention held in October

2012 in the Dominican Republic. The four year GEF funded project has been endorsed by the governments of ten countries: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago. The Project will focus on *implementation of innovative solutions* in response to the policies, plans and strategies developed by the GEF IWCAM Project. For additional information, please visit

[http://www.carrcu.org/images/meeting\\_docs/img15/igm15/information\\_documents/UNEP\\_DEPI\\_CAR\\_WG.33INF.10/UNEP\\_DEPI\\_CAR\\_WG.33INF.10\\_EN.pdf](http://www.carrcu.org/images/meeting_docs/img15/igm15/information_documents/UNEP_DEPI_CAR_WG.33INF.10/UNEP_DEPI_CAR_WG.33INF.10_EN.pdf)

UNEP CEP continues to work on Marine Litter Management through the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAPMaLi) and continues work in developing a Marine Litter Activity Guide and an online Interactive Game and Learning Tool on Marine Litter for the Children's page of the CEP website. Activities continued to focus on the development of targeted educational, promotional and awareness material for children, decision makers and the general public.

### **Mainstreaming of National Programmes of Action (NPA s) into national processes under the framework of UNEP GPA and Regional Seas.**

UNEP CEP in collaboration with the UNEP Global Programme of Action (GPA) and NOAA assisted in facilitating the implementation of National Programmes of Action (NPA) projects for the prevention of pollution from land based sources and activities in 2012. Direct support was provided to the Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, and Suriname. The NPA project in Suriname involved a baseline analysis of the quality of water in the Suriname River. The NPA Project in Saint Lucia involved mainstreaming Saint Lucia's National Plan of Action through a North West Coast Water Quality Demonstration Project. The NPA project for the Dominican Republic entitled "Reaching out the National Programme of Action on Land-based Marine Pollution" developed outreach and education material on land-based sources of marine pollution and promoted integration and implementation of the NPA with local and national authorities, main stakeholders, and coastal communities.

### **Maritime safety, prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships**

The Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (Oil Spills Protocol) of the Cartagena Convention which entered into force in 1986 is supported by the Regional Activity Centre (RAC) REMPEITC-Caribe. The designation of the Wider Caribbean Region as a Special Area under Annex V of the MARPOL Convention which prohibits the discharge of all garbage by ships became effective on May 1, 2011.

UNEP CEP in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) continues to provide support to countries of the Wider Caribbean Region to meet their obligations under the Oil Spills Protocol, MARPOL Annex V and other related IMO Conventions. The Regional Activity Centre REMPEITC-Caribe provided technical support in conducting rapid assessments, training and capacity building for oil spill preparedness and response. RAC –REMPEITC trained approximately 60 persons from the WCR in Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in 2012.

A revised draft Ballast Water Management (BWM) Strategic Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region was developed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Task Force Meeting on the ratification and implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management organized by RAC-REMPETIC and IMO in 2012. The Strategic Action Plan seeks to provide a regional framework

for the activities that need to be developed and implemented within the WCR in order to mitigate, minimize and eventually eliminate the transfer of HAOP in ships' ballast water, in accordance with the BWM Convention and relevant programmes such as the GEF/UNDP/IMO GloBallast Partnerships project (GBP); to enhance regional cooperation and capacity in BWM matters towards the protection and conservation of the marine environment in the WCR using the existing regional bodies; and to encourage the accession to the BWM Convention by IMO Member States and facilitate the harmonized implementation of effective ballast water management strategies and policies within the Region. The Action Plan has nine (9) Strategic Priorities. For additional information, please visit <http://cep.unep.org/racrempeitc>

### **Increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability of coastal areas and SIDS to impacts of Climate Change.**

Support continued to be provided by UNEP CEP in efforts to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, through the protection and development of coastal ecosystems through the Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Project in Jamaica funded by the European Union (EU). Some ongoing activities under the project include; replanting of mangroves in degraded coastal regions; restoration of Seagrass beds/areas; improving database for monitoring changes in coastal ecosystems; reforestation and agro-forestry in selected Watershed Management Units; establishment and/ or strengthening of Local Forest Management Committees (LFMC); development of a fire management programme; designing and implementing climate change awareness campaigns; and policy and institutional review and reforms. For more information, please visit <http://www.cep.unep.org/eu-climate-change>

### **3. Black Sea (Bucharest Convention)**

#### **Legal and Policy Issues**

The Black Sea Commission initiated the process of amending its internal documents and for that purpose back in 2011 established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on update of the internal documents of the Commission. Among these documents are the following: Accounting Policy, Financial Rules, Rules of Procedure, Rules for Nomination of Official Staff, Procurement Manual of the Commission etc. Once this work is finalized, the amendments would be adopted by Black Sea Commissioners at their regular meeting.

The Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol to the Bucharest Convention has been signed by Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine in 2002, and in 2009 by Georgia. The Protocol entered into force in 2011. The draft Strategic Action Plan for the Biodiversity Protocol was prepared in 2004, This plan is presently under revision, aimed to take on board the provisions of Black Sea Strategic Action Plan amended in 2009.

The revised LBS Protocol to the Bucharest Convention was adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Sofia, in 2009. To be enforced at the regional level, the Protocol shall be ratified by at least four of six countries – Contracting Parties to the Bucharest Convention.

"Recommendations on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context for the Black Sea region" have been elaborated in cooperation with the ESPOO Convention Secretariat. The document will be submitted to the Black Sea Commission for national consultations and adoption.

### **Important publications**

The BSC Newsletter is regularly published. The latest issues #12, 13 and 14 comprehensively present different activities of the BSC for 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively (please see #12, #13 and #14 available online at <http://www.blacksea-commission.org/main.asp>).

A monograph about the Kerch accident on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 (oil spilled, 4 ships sunk) and its impacts has been prepared. It includes information about other large-scale accidents in the Black Sea as well. The book was published in 2011 in Moscow<sup>1</sup>.

A book for identification of Black Sea macroalgae (Marine Plants of the Black Sea. An Illustrated Field Guide) authored by Ms N. Milchakova, the Institute of Biology Of Southern Seas (Sevastopol, Ukraine) was published with the financial support of the BSC in February, 2011. The book contains information on the algal species in the Black Sea (characteristics, ecology), their distribution and importance for the Black Sea<sup>2</sup>.

The following check-lists were finalised and published (<http://www.blacksea-commission.org/>):

- Black Sea Fish Check-List;
- Black Sea Fish IUCN Status;
- Black Sea Non-Native Fish Species List.

The development of the special Black Sea data-base for the invasive species, i.e. Jellyfish, continues with collection of data and the regional methodology for Jellyfish sampling and processing of samples will be soon finalized and agreed.

Harmonization in phytoplankton and zooplankton research in the region is in process. Data quality control guidelines have been drafted and are discussed by the experts. A regional data base for phytoplankton is developed. The check lists of all Black Sea species (including non-natives and red data book species) are under revision and will be soon finalised.

### **BS Monitoring Program (BSIMAP), Projects.**

The Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP) for 2013-2020 is currently under the process of revision. Development and implementation of the BSIMAP is stipulated in the Bucharest Convention and its Protocols. The choice of parameters to monitor is related to the main environmental problems in the Black Sea region and re-evaluated every 5 years based on two important reports – Report on the State of the Environment of the Black Sea (SoE) and Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea (2009). Currently the BSC prepares these two documents to be finalized in 2014.

In strengthening the scientific foundations of the decision making in the Black Sea region, the BSC is organizing bi-annually its Black Sea Scientific Conferences. The latest, 3<sup>rd</sup> Black Sea Scientific Conference called “BS-OUTLOOK – Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts, Response and Recovery Indicators towards Better Governance of Black Sea Environmental Protection” took place in Odessa, Ukraine on 1–4<sup>th</sup> November, 2011. After the Conference, 25 selected

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1 Oil spill accident in the Kerch Strait in November 2007. Edited by Alexander Korshenko, Yuriy Ilyin, Violeta Velikova. Black Sea Commission Publications 2011, Moscow, Nauka, 288 p.

2 Marine Plants of the Black Sea. An Illustrated Field Guide (author Dr. N. Milchakova, IBSS)

papers were published in the Special Issue (# 12) of the Turkish Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences published in October, 2012 ([http://www.trjfas.org/?Special\\_Issue\\_Papers](http://www.trjfas.org/?Special_Issue_Papers)). Currently BSC works on organizing of the 4<sup>th</sup> BS Scientific Conference in Constanta, Romania.

Recently the BSC participated in several EC-funded projects: BlackSeaSCENE Upgrade, Envirogrids, PEGASO, MONINFO I and II,, joint HELCOM/BSC project Baltic2BlackSea, MSFD Project etc.

BSC has also obtained an advisory status in the following projects: KnowSeas, ODEMM, BONUS, MEECE, PERSEUS, CoCoNET, CREAM, SeasERA, MISIS etc.

### **International cooperation**

The cooperation with the observers and partner organizations as EC, UNEP, UNDP, ACCOBAMS, ICPDR, EEA etc. improved during the last years.

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhancing cooperation between the BSC and IMO was negotiated and signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 accompanied by the joint activities (sustainable fisheries, actions against IUU fishing etc.) for the biennium 2012/2013. Another MoU was negotiated between BSC and General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean (GFCM) under UN FAO and signed on 14th May, 2012. A renewed MoU between BSC and ACCOBAMS Secretariat with clear programme of activities for 2012/2013 was signed during the 28th Regular BSC Meeting on 22nd November, 2012. the MoU focuses mainly on finalization of the Black Sea Red Data Book, promoting the designation of MPAs eligible for cetacean conservation and on official adoption of the Regional Conservation Plan for Cetaceans.

The Danube-Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) revived its work. During its last meeting in January 2013 the Group amended its Terms of Reference (ToR). The mandate of this JTWG between the BSC and the International Commission on the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR) is to reinforce the cooperation and to develop appropriate mechanisms for the implementation of the MoU between the BSC and the ICPDR, create a common base of understanding on the changes in the Black Sea ecosystem and to report to both Commissions on the results, recommending strategies and practical measures for remedial actions, i.e. assessment of existing monitoring systems; development of a regional monitoring programme, ecological status indicators, development and update of reporting format, procedures etc.