

UNEP INPUTS FOR THE 2002 SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

The Regional Seas Programme

Background

UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, initiated in 1974, provides a legal, administrative, substantive and financial framework for the implementation of Agenda 21, and its chapter 17 on oceans in particular. Recently, the "Plan of Implementation" of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg 9/2002) has focussed also on the issue of oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas as critical element for global food security and for sustaining economic prosperity. It has also reinforced the concept that sustainable development of the oceans requires effective coordination and cooperation, at the global and regional levels, between relevant bodies. Hence, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans provides a very effective platform for the implementation of this concept. The UNEP's Regional Seas Programme is based on regional Action Plans, related to a common body of water, which is usually adopted by high-level intergovernmental meetings and implemented, in most cases, in the framework of a legally binding Regional Seas Convention and its specific protocols, under the authority of the respective Contracting Parties or Intergovernmental Meetings.

Currently, 17 regions are covered by adopted Action Plans, of which 12 Action Plans are also supported by Regional Seas Conventions. UNEP facilitated the negotiation of 13 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in the developing world, and has just finished to support the negotiations for a Convention in Northeast Pacific.

The main objectives of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are the promotion of sustainable development and integrated management of coastal areas and associated river basins and their living aquatic resources; the promotion of the implementation of appropriate technical, institutional administrative and legal measures for the improved protection of the coastal and marine environment; and - facilitating the monitoring and assessment of the coastal and marine environment, including their conditions and trends.

Global Activities

Global Meetings of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans - The 3rd and 4th Global Meetings of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans were held in Monaco (6 to 10 November 2000) and Montreal (21 to 23 November 2001) respectively. These global meetings provide an excellent opportunity for sharing of experiences, best practices, and lessons learned among the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans as well as an valuable fora for cooperation and coordination. These meetings were attended by coordinators and high-level officers of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, representatives from International Organizations and Global Environmental Conventions, as well as NGOs, the Industry and the Civil Society. Discussions are under way about the organization of the 5th Global Meeting planned for the 1st quarter of 2003.

Regional Seas input to WSSD - As part of UNEP's preparations for WSSD, UNEP's Regional Seas Coordinating Unit (RSCU) has organised a Consultative Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans Coordinators (New York, 4th April 2002) to assemble a consolidated perspective for WSSD. The meeting prepared the paper entitled "Proposals from the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans for Action on Oceans and Seas by the WSSD". This meeting identified the following **concerns and priorities** for Regional Seas Conventions and Action

Plans: a) land-based activities threatening the marine environment; b) ship-generated marine pollution; c) the impacts of urbanisation and coastal development; d) conservation of living marine resources and coastal ecosystems, including the depletion of fisheries; and – e) the need to monitor and assess the quality of the marine environment, in order to provide a science-based information for the comprehensive and integrated management of the coastal zone and the associated river basins. The results of this meeting were presented during WSSD and serve to design and establish the new strategies for UNEP's Regional Seas Programme.

Regional Seas coordinators and high level officers informal consultation meeting (London, 29th September 2002) - This meeting was organized as a side event during the IMO-UNEP Forum on combating Marine Pollution" (London 30 Sept. – 2 Oct. 2002). The meeting discussed, *inter alia*, the following issues: a) the role of the annual Global Meetings of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans; b) the agenda for the 5th Global Meeting of Regional Seas; c) suggested new strategies to make the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans more visible; d) suggested strategies to demonstrate the benefits of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to member States; e) suggested strategies for mobilizing "ownership" of governments in Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans f) suggestions for moving the focus of activities from secretariats to member countries; and - g) the involvement of the non-UNEP administered Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. The results of this meeting as well, will serve to design future priorities and strategies for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

Publications - A new brochure and a new poster on UNEP's Regional Seas titled "Regional Seas a Strategy for Sustainable Development" were published, with the full involvement of all Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans prior to WSSD. The aim of these materials is to enhance the visibility of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to potential funding partners and as public outreach materials and to present the strategic goals for each of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans .

UNEP has published, jointly with FAO and with the technical assistance of the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) the document "Ecosystem-based management of fisheries. Opportunities and challenges for coordination between Marine Regional Fishery bodies (RFBs) and Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs)".

Horizontal cooperation among Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

Nairobi Convention and Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) - A Twinning Arrangement between HELCOM and UNEP as the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention) was signed in Malmö, Sweden, on 30 May 2000. The Agreement came as a follow up to the Second Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans which identified and recommended the need for cooperation as a form of sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned between the Regional Seas Conventions, and a way of providing technical assistance from the more developed Conventions to younger and less developed Conventions. As a follow up to the twinning agreement the HELCOM Secretariat agreed to support two experts to share the experiences in waste water management and to provide technical assistance in the development of a new protocol on Land-based Activities that affect the marine and coastal areas in the Eastern African region

Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and West and Central African Action Plan (WACAF) - The Second Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans also recommended the cooperation between OSPAR and the Abidjan Convention, administered by the UNEP-Regional Coordinating Unit for the WACAF

(WACAF/RCU). During the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 16-17 May 2002, the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Abidjan Convention was inaugurated. OSPAR who attended the meeting called for closer collaboration with UNEP and invited the Chairman of the Abidjan Convention and the representative of the Secretariat to attend the annual meeting of the OSPAR Commission, held in Amsterdam in June 2002. Both the Interim coordinator for the Abidjan Convention and the Minister attended the meeting in Amsterdam. A review of the workprogramme and strategy for revitalising the Abidjan Convention have been proposed to implemented in 2003.

Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP): The collaboration between MAP and NOWPAP has been very active, mainly in the field of oil spill preparedness and response. REMPEC-MAP officers have participated and backstop MERRAC-NOWPAP meetings and NOWPAP and MAP have exchanged visits of Programme Officers in this field of oil and chemical spills .

Wider Caribbean and the Northeast Pacific: A large number of member states that are part of the Northeast Pacific Regional Seas Programme (NEP) are likewise members of the Wider Caribbean Regional Seas Programme. The 1st Intergovernmental meeting of the NEP has recommended the setting up of a joint working group in order to identify possible areas of cooperation and to develop joint programmes for working in areas of common concern.

Collaboration with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs):

Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans provide an effective platform for the regional implementation of the substantive issues addressed by MEAs. In this regard, relevant MEAs have participated in Regional Seas Global Meetings which provide a forum for collaboration and joint programming. Several decisions have been adopted during these meetings in order to promote coordination and collaboration between Regional Seas and MEAs. In addition several Conferences of the Parties of MEAs have considered and adopted resolutions with the aim of joint programming between their respective organizations and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. Discussions are ongoing between the UNEP Regional Seas Unit and the Basel Convention Secretariat regarding residue reception facilities for the recycling of ships and on the issue of marine litter. An inventory on chemicals-related work taking place at the various Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans was presented during the 4th Global Meeting of Regional Seas. UNEP's Regional Seas Programme continues to be represented at COP meetings of Global Conventions.

At the regional level UNEP, the GPA, and the Secretariats of the Cartagena Convention and the Barcelona Convention are supporting the revision of the Nairobi Convention, the Protocol concerning Protected Areas and Wild Flora and Fauna in the Eastern Africa Region and the Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern Africa Region Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities. The revisions will update the Nairobi Convention and take into account the developments since the adoption of the convention in 1985. WIOMSA and the Secretariat for the Nairobi Convention presented the proposed text for the protocol entitled Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region. The drafts now referred to as the zero drafts of the protocol on LBA and Protected Areas should now be presented to the Ad-Hoc Legal and Technical working group of the Nairobi Convention for further discussion and review.

UNEP has been collaborating with CITES in order to implement effective measures to protect sturgeon resources. An inter-agency UNEP meeting was convened in February 2001. The meeting drew up a proposal for transmission to the five littoral States, and asked UNEP to take the lead in

organising a high level meeting, including fisheries ministers of the littoral States. Subsequently, in June this year, UNEP convened a meeting between UNEP, CITES, the Caspian Environment Programme, the European Union and Caspian Littoral States. UNEP achieved its immediate objectives, which were to facilitate a co-ordinated approach by Intergovernmental bodies (including UNDP, CITES and CEP) and the littoral states to prevent a crisis which could have led to contentious trade bans and further damage to sturgeon conservation. As a result of the meeting, the Caspian Littoral States issued a joint declaration promising to take immediate measures on sturgeon protection and management. UNEP remains watchful and is encouraging the financing of improvements to sturgeon management and harvesting in the region.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Several GEF proposals were initiated for various Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in collaboration with the UNEP/GEF office and the GPA and are under various stages of development. In East Africa – PDF B West Indian Ocean LBA Project; In West Africa – Guinea Current LME; in the sub-Saharan Africa: MSP Sub-Saharan Africa Project “Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa”; in the NOWPAP area – PDF B for Strategic Action Programme for the Eastern Northwest Pacific region for the protection of the Marine Environment of Land Based Activities, in EAS the South China Sea LBA full project was established an initiated; in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean two full projects continue to run and in the Southeast Pacific a new LBA project is initiated as a PDF A.

Partnerships with International Organizations

Third Meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process established by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/33 in order to facilitate the annual review by the assembly of developments in ocean affairs: The Meeting took place in New York from 8 to 15 April 2002. The Consultative Process organise its discussion around the following areas: a- Protection and preservation of the marine environment; b- Capacity-building, regional cooperation and coordination, and integrated ocean management, as important cross-cutting issues to address ocean affairs, such as marine science and transfer of technology, sustainable fisheries, degradation of the marine environment and safety of navigation. Each one of these areas of focus identified in General Assembly resolution 56/12 served as the basis for two discussion panels. The former one was chaired by the Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC). This was an extraordinary opportunity to raise issues concerning the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and to their fundamental role in the preservation of the marine environment.

Collaboration with the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory (MESL-IAEA) - The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans have benefited from using the services of and being assisted by the MESL. Further assistance in developing national and regional monitoring programmes and in capacity building are being explored.

Collaboration with IMO: Progress has been made by IMO and UNEP and several Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in strengthening their collaborative approach to issues of oil spill preparedness and response, in particular in the establishment of regional systems for cooperation in preparedness for and response to oil spills and in the implementation of regional training courses on response to oil spills.

A joint "IMO/UNEP Forum on regional arrangements in emergency response to marine pollution" was held in London (30 September to 2 October 2002). The proposed objectives of the Forum were: a- exchange of experiences and information; b- general overview of priorities and major achievements; c- identification and discussion of issues of common concern to the different

regions; d- recommendations for future inter-regional co-operation; and e- identification of areas for possible harmonization of procedures and collaboration.

At the regional Level UNEP jointly with IMO held a meeting of National Experts on the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency in the Eastern African Region (Emergency Protocol) in Maputo, 10-14 December 2001 and 11-15 May 2002.in Mauritius

Collaboration with FAO: Ecosystem-based fisheries management: UNEP's Regional Seas Programme has been promoting the use of the ecosystem-based approach, as a management tool to achieve the sustainable development of natural resources. In this regard UNEP is embarked in a process of collaboration with FAO to explore the opportunities and challenges for coordinated activities on ecosystem-based management of fisheries. UNEP has published, jointly with FAO and with the technical assistance of the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) the publication "Ecosystem-based management of fisheries. Opportunities and challenges for coordination between Marine Regional Fishery bodies (RFBs) and Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs)". The purpose of this publication is to present considerations that can serve as the basis for potential cooperation between RFBs and RSCs. It describes the concept of ecosystem-based fisheries management, the relevant mandates and activities of RFBs and RSCs and the relationship and mutual relevance of their work. Possible mechanisms for cooperation and issues for future consideration are identified.

Collaboration with UNESCO-IOC: Several joint activities of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme marked the continued collaboration with IOC, namely the participation in the IOC-GOOS (Global Oceans Observation System) programme, the assistance of WESTPAC office of IOC in Bangkok in the organization and substantial support to NOWPAP activities related to monitoring and data and information networking, the joint activities in the implementation of the GEF MSP project in Sub-Saharan Africa: "Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa" and the subsequent "African Process". The development of GOOS regional programmes in the Caribbean and in the Mediterranean in collaboration with the respective Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

The Antigua Guatemala Convention (NEP - Northeast Pacific Action Plan)

The Second Session of the High-Level Government-Designated Expert Meeting of the Proposed Northeast Pacific Regional Seas Programme met in Managua, Nicaragua, on 19 to 23 March 2001 and agreed 25 of the 28 articles of the Convention. During this session, and following a request from several countries, it was decided to retain the term "Northeast Pacific" instead of the term "Central-East Pacific".

The Third Session met in Panama City, Panama, on 6 to 9 August 2001 and agreed the full text of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific. The support provided by the Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea was very helpful in resolving these difficulties. As well, the role of the UNEP Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) during the negotiations of the Convention and the Plan of Action was crucial. Following a proposal by one representative and with the approval of other participants, the title of the proposed Convention was modified to read as follows: Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific. In addition to the Convention, the meeting also agreed the full text of the Plan of Action for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific, including Annex 1 (the Regional Programme of Work on Land-Based Sources of Pollution 2001-2006) and Annex 2 (Strategy for Operationalizing the Plan of Action).

At the invitation of the Government of Guatemala, the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific was signed at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in La Antigua, Guatemala, on 18 February 2002 by six of the eight member states: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries also adopted the Plan of Action for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific, which has been under implementation since. The Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries was signed by all member states, including Mexico and Colombia, as well as one regional economic integration organization: the Central American Integration System (SICA). Canada and the United States of America participated as observers.

The Conference of Plenipotentiaries was followed the next day by the First Intergovernmental Meeting of the Plan of Action for the Northeast Pacific in Guatemala City, Guatemala, from 19 to 22 February 2002. The main issues discussed during the meeting were: the role of international organizations in the implementation of the Plan of Action; the development of project proposals for the implementation of the Plan of Action; institutional arrangements and the adoption of procedures for the selection of the host country for the permanent Executive Secretariat; and the financial arrangements for the Convention and the Plan of Action. Several decisions were taken concerning the mentioned issues. The meeting requested UNEP to provide, in collaboration with the COCATRAM, the services of the interim secretariat until the permanent Executive Secretariat is established.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)

The Regional Seas Coordinating Unit, in its capacity of interim secretariat of NOWPAP, has been supporting the implementation and the strengthening of the Action Plan. The 6th Intergovernmental Meeting of NOWPAP was held in Tokyo, Japan, 6-9 December 2000 and the 7th Intergovernmental Meeting of NOWPAP was held in Vladivostok, the Russian Federation, 20-22 March 2002. The Intergovernmental Meetings agreed to establish a co-hosted Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) in Toyama, Japan and in Pusan, Republic of Korea. UNEP was requested by NOWPAP Members to facilitate the finalization of the host-country agreements (HCAs) with Japan and the Republic of Korea, to assist in the establishment of the two offices, and to facilitate the recruitment process of the staff for the RCU.

UNEP is finalizing the Host Country Agreements for the co-hosted offices in Toyama (Japan) and Busan (Korea) of the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) It is estimated that the practical establishment of the two offices could take place in the coming months.

UNEP has received the required financial contributions into the Trust Fund, from Japan and the Republic of Korea, required for the establishment of the RCU posts. These UN posts will be advertised as soon as the HCAs are signed.

The Regional Seas Coordinating Unit in UNEP will continue to facilitate in the establishment process and will continue to support NOWPAP through guidance and advice during the first years of the operation of the RCU.

UNEP has assisted NOWPAP to vitalize the activities of the four Regional Activity Centers:

- **CEARAC** (Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center), located in Toyama, Japan, at the Northwest Pacific Region Environment Cooperation Center (NPEC);

- **DINRAC** (Data and Information Regional Activity Center), located in Beijing, China, at the State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA);
- **MERRAC** (Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Center), located in Taejeon, Republic of Korea, at the Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering/Korea Ocean Research and Development Institute (KRISO/KORDI); and –
- **POMRAC** (Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center) located in Vladivostok, Russia, at the Pacific Geographical Institute (PGI).

The budgeted programme of work for the NOWPAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs) was approved by the 7th IG meeting. The four RACS are now in various stages of preparations, organization and operational implementation of regional activities within the NOWPAP region. MERRRAC and DINRAC has already established their own websites and additional information is available on: <http://merrac.nowpap.org> and <http://www.nowpap1.org> respectively.

Within the activities of MERRAC, an agreement on the final draft of the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan has been reached and it will be submitted for final approval by the next NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting.

During 2000 –2002 UNEP have signed four separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with NOWPAP RACs. These MOUs provide the framework for cooperation between UNEP and each of the RACs and provide the mechanism for the RACs to implement their respective specific activities. Each of the four NOWPAP Members has nominated National Focal Points for each of the RACs which established a widespread network high level governmental and professional contacts for each specific activities of the RACs (Oil spill preparedness and response, data and Information networks, marine and coastal monitoring and assessment).

Following the decision of the 6th and 7th NOWPAP IGMs, UNEP's Regional Seas Programme has prepared a GEF PDF-B proposal on LBA/GPA activities. The proposal was written following a visit of the consultant to the four NOWPAP member countries, and in cooperation with the GPA and the UNEP-GEF Unit. The draft proposal will be sent shortly to the four NOWPAP governments and UNEP intends to convene a meeting in order to seek the approval and commitments of countries to the project, so that the proposal is submitted to the GEF in early 2003.

The Mediterranean Action Plan

Considering the importance of preparedness and adequate response to accidental marine pollution, the Contracting Parties have established a sound legal basis through a new protocol, adopted on 25 January 2002: "Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea".

In order to follow and induce implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, a reporting system was adopted in November 2001 and seven countries have volunteered, on a test basis to implement it.

The evaluation of MAP and its components is progressing, the evaluation of 3 Regional Activity Centres/Programmes completed, the evaluation of other two Regional Activity Centres on-going and the overall evaluation of MAP structure to be launched soon; all these evaluations imply as necessary a revision and updating of respective mandates in conformity with national, regional and international evolutions in relation to environment and sustainable development issues.

Created as an Advisory body to UNEP/MAP, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development has prepared and printed a "Strategic Review for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Region", in addition to major analysis and proposals on "sustainable management

of urban development", "industry and sustainable development" and "free trade and environment"; work has been launched on "cooperation and financing for sustainable development" and on "local governance", together with a follow up on the management of water demand.

In conformity with the decision of the Contracting Parties and their Partners and in line with the recommendations of the World Summit for Sustainable Development, preparatory process for a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development has been initiated since July 2002, with coherent "Orientations" expected for April 2003 and Strategy report for 2004.

In order to promote visibility and information, UNEP/MAP has induced and assisted most Mediterranean countries and major NGO Networks in preparing report on environment and sustainable development issues, usually based on multi-stakeholders workshops; moreover, several brochures were prepared in various languages and largely disseminated, within a series "towards Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Region" and on various general, legal and technical issues; and "information, awareness and public participation " strategy for the region is under preparation, based on already prepared components for Mediterranean Arabic speaking countries, for East Adriatic countries and others, in addition to the Aarhus Convention.

Considering the importance of regional cooperation, UNEP/MAP has strengthened its cooperation with mainly UN concerned institutions and regional offices and EU, notably the European Environment Agency and the Euro Mediterranean Partnership; regarding the latter, concerned ministries have confirmed during 2002 the importance of cooperation with UNEP/MAP, requesting the promotion of joint activities including the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.

In the field of biodiversity, preparations for a Strategic Action Programme on Biodiversity (SAP/Bio) are progressing, EU/MEDA has accepted to finance a regional project of more than 2 M. Euros on Mediterranean Protected Areas, and implementation of various Action Plans and identification of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Interest (SPAMI) have shown encouraging results.

In the field of pollution prevention and control, an "Operational document for the implementation of the SAP" was adopted and detailed "guidelines for the preparation of the National Diagnostic Analysis" and "of the national baseline budget of pollutant releases" have been prepared and widely disseminated with appropriate training courses in various countries.

In the field of Coastal Zone Management, a White Book has been prepared with relevant policy proposals, and Coastal Areas Management Projects have been or are being implemented in other four Mediterranean countries.

Promotion of Cleaner Production and use of Remote Sensing for environmental protection and sustainable development are being strengthened with various case studies at national and local levels with necessary training.

Finally, work on Sustainable Development Indicators, mainly calculation and dissemination, as a decision making tool, is satisfactorily progressing in most countries with a unique publication at regional level; moreover, countries are being assisted in the identification, collection and use of environmental statistics with the support of EU; together with other information, these will provide background data for the preparation of a Mediterranean Report on Environment and Development, expected for 2003 focusing on observation, trend and prospective analysis.

The Caribbean Environment Programme

Background

The Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) includes four sub-programmes: Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP); Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW); Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (CEPNET); Education, Training and Awareness (ETA).

Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution Sub-Programme

The coordination of the AMEP sub-programme, which encompasses the work on the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the wider Caribbean Region (Oil Spills Protocol) and the LBS Protocol includes secretariat services to the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee for the LBS Protocol (LBS/ISTAC) and work related to the Steering Committee for the Regional Activity Centre on Oil Spills (RAC/REMPEITC-Carib). There are two AMEP projects being developed under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The first is linked to the implementation of Annex IV of the LBS Protocol and is entitled "Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea" which is already seeing significant achievements, such as private sector and stakeholder involvement in the development of national and regional action plans for the sub-region of Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama. The second GEF project under development is "Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management in Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean" which is being implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and co-executed with the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI).

The AMEP sub-programme coordinated the following projects during 2002: Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea, Pilot Projects in Sewage, Treatment Needs Assessments, Integrating Management of Watersheds and Coastal Areas in Small Island Developing States, Planning of Rehabilitation, Environmental Management and Coastal Development in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala in the Wake of Hurricane Mitch, Rehabilitation of Contaminated Bays. GEF support was provided to the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management for Small Island Developing States project (IWCAM SIDS), which included the development of 15 national reports and three regional workshops.

Two RAC's for the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities were created during 2002 with the Governments of Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. A regional workshop in support of the Rehabilitation of Heavily Contaminated Bays project (Nutrient removal technologies and wastewater management) was organized. Two National Programme of Action demonstration projects were developed, one with the Government of Jamaica, one with the Government of Saint Lucia under the auspices of the GPA.

The First Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (ISTAC/LBS) was convened in February 2001 in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. A regional workshop on municipal wastewater was held in conjunction with this meeting with the UNEP/Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) Coordination Office to provide input to global work on the subject as well as to further regional work.

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Sub-Programme

The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW Protocol) entered into force on 18 June 2000. As of March 2002, there were nine

Contracting Parties, namely, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. In addition, the Governments of France, Jamaica, Mexico and the United Kingdom have officially informed the secretariat that the process of ratification has been initiated in their countries. The 2nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (COP/SPAW) was held on 6 May 2002, in Montego Bay (Jamaica).

The SPAW sub-programme coordinated the following projects during 2002: Strengthening of the Parks and Protected Area Network, Training in Protected Areas and Wildlife Management, Training of Trainers in Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Management, Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species and Development and Promotion of Regional Guidelines for Wildlife Management, development and implementation of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) project; selection of four demonstration sites (Mexico, Bonaire, Belize and Saint Lucia) Conservation and Sustainable Use of Major Ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean.

In addition, two Memoranda of Understanding were developed and made effective, one with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and one with the Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR).

Significant achievements have been made in coral reef conservation, sea turtles and manatees in 2002, as well as in the support of the marine protected area management project through the existing Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers (CAMPAM) networks. Regional and national reports on the status of coral reefs have been completed through the establishment and support of monitoring nodes in the region.

Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources

The CEPNET Sub-programme has the role of facilitator in improving the access and use of environmental information in the Wider Caribbean Region, both as a catalyst within the Secretariat to increase the analytical capacity of CAR/RCU, and as a link and technical resources for other sub-programmes of the CEP, through the maintenance and developing of the CEP website, increasing the impact of the intranet, improving database management activities and by assisting in taking advantage of Internet-based tools, such as e-groups.

The CEPNET sub-programme coordinated the following projects and activities during 2002: Strengthening CAR/RCU Information Management Capabilities, Strengthening of the Caribbean Environment Programme web site, environmental reporting, collaboration with agencies and institutions establishing regionally relevant environmental information networks and environmental information systems, collaboration with the UNEP Global Programme of Action (GPA) in the establishment of a regional clearinghouse node in the Wider Caribbean Region for information related to land-based sources of marine pollution, Training in coastal zone management uses and applications of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS), Web-based GIS Activities.

Education, Training and Awareness

The ETA sub-programme coordinated the following activities during 2002: responding to inquiries regarding marine pollution, wildlife and natural resources protection, geographic information, etc.; publication of informative brochures for CEP in general and LBS and SPAW activities; the development of a new CEPNews Centre; electronic referencing of the documents of the CEP library; strengthening of the CEP web site.

Other Meetings and Intergovernmental Coordination

The Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Seventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Montego Bay, Jamaica, May 7-11, 2002) adopted the workplan and budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The meeting also endorsed the "Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme 2002-2006" presented by the Secretariat. The governments of Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago presented their joint proposal to establish a Regional Activity Centre concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities that was accepted and approved by the Meeting.

Other meetings in 2002 included the 13th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Special Meeting of the Bureau of CEP; the 1st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (COP/SPAW); 2nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (COP/SPAW); Extraordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee for the RAC/REMPEITC-Carib (Protocol on Combating Oil Spills); Working Group on Rules and Procedures for the CEP; Financial Rules for the Cartagena Convention and the CEP; and on the Terms of Reference for the Caribbean Trust Fund.

In addition, the Contracting Parties to the Protocol gave support to the initiative of the Government of the United States "White Water to Blue Water" to hold a regional stakeholder conference to promote sustainable development.

East Asian Seas Action Plan

The East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU) is the secretariat of COBSEA. Member countries were warned for a number of years that the total Trust Fund pledges from countries could not support a secretariat and, in 2002, the UNEP Environment Fund reduced its contribution considerably and warned that for 2003 and on there would be no contribution. The secretariat has been preoccupied at revitalising the EAS/RCU and finding funding for its operation.

The EAS/RCU finalised the requirements for GEF to release funding for the UNEP/GEF Project "Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand". This project is underway with a separate project coordinating unit as secretariat for the Project Steering Committee. Some staff from the EAS/RCU are in the project coordinating unit of this project.

The EAS/RCU is also implementing ICRAN activities in East Asian Seas. Following a gap analysis and a workshop of experts chosen by the COBSEA members, four demonstration sites and four target sites were chosen at which the assessment of management plans and legislation is made at demonstration sites and these are learnt at the less well managed target sites. Site visits were organised for managers of each of the sites.

A list of monitoring parameters under the ICRAN and the ICRI funded project for coral reefs project was developed and a number of small grant proposals in the region funded. These small projects concentrated on monitoring for management of coral reefs and will be used as demonstrations for member countries to use. Monitoring training and initial monitoring was carried out in Cambodia for capacity building to assist establishment of marine protected areas. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network was supported by the EAS/RCU commissioning status of coral reef reports from two countries and assisting with others.

The EAS/RCU has supported two activities under the GPA. A report on the socio-economic implications of sewage in the region was completed and a workshop held to: agree on guidelines for control and treatment of sewage, discuss and identify innovative means of treatment and to discuss partnerships in sewage treatment and control. The second activity involves developing methodology and a GIS to determine major sources of pollution in catchments in member countries.

For COBSEA to continue, more commitment from countries and recognition of a useful coordinating unit is required. More public demonstration and advertising on its behalf, by EAS/RCU would also improve the profile of COBSEA.

Nairobi Convention (Eastern Africa)

UNEP as the secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan Convention signed a Memoranda of Understanding with the Government of Seychelles to support the regional Coordinating Unit in the Seychelles. The financial support facilitated the Interim coordinator to consult with Parties to the Conventions and develop action strategies to ensure the settlement of arrears in contributions to the Trust Fund and regular future payments; as well as to organize consultations with partners, donor agencies and financial institutions with a view to mobilize funding for the projects under the respective action plans.

UNEP organized the third Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention held in Maputo, Mozambique from 5-7 December 2001. Further, UNEP coordinated, established and held the first meeting of the Focal Points for the Nairobi Convention in February 2002. The Forum of the Focal points provides guidance and advice to the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, and further prepares and coordinates the implementation of the workprogramme. Under the Forum of Focal Points, the governments of the region established the Coral Reef Task Force. This two expert groups draws expertise from the NGOs, governments and UN agencies operating in the region. UNEP jointly with other collaborating partners such as IUCN, WWF and local NGOS, organized the First Meeting of Coral Reef Task Force in Nairobi on 4 September 2002. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Terms of Reference for the Task Force in compliance with the decision by the Third Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention, held in Maputo, 5-7 December 2001 to protect coral reefs and the associated ecosystems.

Abidjan Convention - (West and Central Africa)

UNEP through the Secretariat of the Nairobi and Abidjan Convention supported the inauguration of the Regional Coordinating Unit for the Abidjan Convention by the Heads of Delegation of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention during their Sixth Meeting held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 16-17 May 2002. UNEP further provided equipment; computers and internet connectivity to operationalize the RCU and additional nominal funds to support the government to meet the cost of hiring the interim Coordinator and a secretary.

UNEP as the secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan Convention further hired a Consultant to prepare a work programme/action strategy and to establish a network of focal points to enable cooperation with governments of the region and other ongoing initiatives such as the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem project and other UN and non-UN organizations on relevant projects and activities that contributes or complement those of the West and Central African Action Plan.

Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment - Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea And Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)

Activities of the Organization

PERSGA is carrying out a number of activities for the protection and wise use of the environment including execution of the *Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*. This is an interdisciplinary project funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank) and the Islamic Development Bank. The SAP, which will run at least until the end of 2003, provides a cooperatively developed framework for the long-term conservation and management of the coastal and marine resources of the Region. Hence there is no specific reference to salient issues that have 'arisen' in 2002.

The SAP is a programme of activities being carried out through six complementary components: Reduction of Navigation Risks and Marine Pollution, Sustainable Use and Management of Living Marine Resources, Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation, Development of a Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas, Support for Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Enhancement of Public Awareness and Participation.

Each of the primary SAP components is implemented with the cooperation and coordination of a Regional Working Group made up of representative experts from each of the PERSGA member countries. These teams advise PERSGA on the implementation of the Programme, and National Programme Coordinators support and facilitate the work being carried out in each country.

a) Protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems

Sustainable Use and Management of Living Marine Resources

Standardised data collection: PERSGA has established a regionally standardised system for the collection of fisheries data. This has been focussed on the shark fishery, as stocks are known to be over-exploited but also includes data systems for pelagic, demersal, and ornamental fish as well as shrimp and other invertebrates. Data is assembled in a GIS linked database. A species identification guide for sharks has been prepared and printed, and key personnel trained to collect the statistical information. Data collection stations have been established at several fish landing sites in the region.

A regional survey is currently underway on shrimp and cuttlefish stocks and the impacts on the environment of trawl fishing.

Training centres: Two regional fisheries training centres are being upgraded, one in Aden (Yemen) and a second in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia).

Regional Fisheries Management: Plans have been put forward for the establishment of a Regional Fisheries Management Committee (RECOFI) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Support for the proposal has been indicated by FAO.

Ornamental Fish Trade: A regional workshop has been held to encourage sustainability in the ornamental fish trade in the region. A set of standard survey methods for key species has been developed and steps taken to promote international standards in the harvesting of stocks.

Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation

Standard Survey Methods: As there has been no standardisation of the survey methods used in the region for the collection of data on species distribution or population levels, the comparison of data between different countries and across different years has been difficult or impossible. PERSGA has therefore developed a set of standard survey methods for key habitats and key species that are being used in studies on coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, marine mammals, turtles, and seabirds.

Regional training courses and surveys have been held for coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, turtles and breeding seabirds in 2002.

In joint cooperation with ROPME and UNEP-ROWA, PERSGA has prepared the *Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Coral Reefs in the Arabian Seas Region*. The objectives of this Plan are the conservation and ecologically sustainable development of the coral reefs of the Arabian seas region for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Development of a Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas

Networking: PERSGA is establishing a network of marine protected areas (MPAs). These will serve to assist in conserving representative examples of habitats and biodiversity and have the potential to benefit both migratory species that require scattered habitats, and transboundary or straddling stocks. A *Master Plan for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas* has been written. Detailed survey programmes were carried out in proposed MPAs in Djibouti, Sudan, and Yemen during 2002. Site-specific management plans will be prepared based on the survey results.

Training: A new training course for marine protected area managers has been prepared in association with the UN Train-Sea-Coast programme; the first course was delivered in January 2002 in Port Sudan.

Support for Integrated Coastal Zone Management

A Pilot Project for integrated coastal zone management is being implemented in Aden (Yemen). ICZM plans for the coast of Aden have been prepared through extensive consultation with the local stakeholders and accepted by the Aden Governorate. The plans have been submitted to the Council of Ministers for government approval. A similar Pilot Project is underway in Sudan covering the whole Sudanese coastline, and a third will be implemented in Djibouti in 2003.

Public Awareness and Participation

Outreach: New public awareness centres have been established in several countries and provided with equipment and materials. Training courses on environmental education have been held leading to the establishment of nature conservation clubs in schools throughout the region. An Environmental Education Learning Supplement has been prepared.

PERSGA continues to print a regular newsletter under the title *Al Sanbouk*. The PERSGA website can now be reached through the address <http://www.persga.org>.

A 'Community Participation Programme' funded through micro-grants has been set up. Projects are being executed by local NGOs and complement conservation activities such as lobster stock assessments, mangrove rehabilitation and the protection of breeding seabirds.

Control of Land Based Activities

Alongside the SAP, and with the support of GPA/UNEP, PERSGA has prepared a regional Programme of Action for the prevention of pollution from land based activities. This document was delivered to the GPA Coordinating Unit for publication in 2001. Meanwhile PERSGA is implementing two national Programmes of Action, in cooperation with GPA/UNEP, in Egypt and in Yemen.

PERSGA is in the process of developing a regional pollution monitoring programme in cooperation with the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Marine Environment Laboratory of the International Atomic Energy Agency (Monaco).

Regional Legal Instruments

A *Protocol on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden* has been prepared.

A 'Strategy on Biodiversity and the Establishment of Protected Areas for PERSGA and ROPME' has been written, in cooperation with ROPME and UNEP-ROWA, and with the support of the European Commission. This has led to the drafting of a *Protocol Concerning the Conservation of Biological Diversity and the Establishment of Protected Areas* for both the PERSGA and ROPME regions.

b) Safety of navigation

Reduction of Navigation Risks and Marine Pollution

Hydrographic Surveys: The southern Red Sea has been recognised as a navigational 'high risk' area as there are no official traffic lanes separating vessels travelling north from those travelling south. The area had not been comprehensively surveyed for over a hundred years. With support from the World Bank, a full hydrographic survey has been undertaken covering 750 square nautical miles, the correct locations of rocks and other hazards have been identified for the first time. The results have been accepted by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) allowing for the publication of new charts of the southern Red Sea. A proposed vessel traffic separation scheme was presented to IMO in December 2002 and approved at the 76th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee. The new charts and routes will make a substantial improvement to navigation safety in the region. PERSGA recognises and appreciates the strong cooperation received from the IMO, UKHO and the World Bank.

Further enhancements and improvements are envisaged through the establishment of lighthouses and an automatic vessel monitoring system.

In close cooperation with PERSGA, the IMO Marine Environment Division has funded the preparation of a *Regional Action Plan* to cover the development of National Systems and Regional and Sub-Regional mechanisms to prepare for and respond to major marine oil spills in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Some initial funding through the IMO Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme will allow this Plan to be started. IMO will work with PERSGA to find donors who will support the full implementation of the Action Plan.

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission – HELCOM)

A. Salient issues that have arisen during 2002 within our respective areas of competence.

During the year a series of issues have attracted major attention. These are:

1. EU Enlargement and European Marine Strategy

The (present) EU accession process by several HELCOM Contracting Parties will be finalized on 1st May 2004 with the consequence that nine of ten HELCOM Contracting Parties will be EU members with the consequence that all HELCOM member states except the Russian Federation will be committed to fulfilling EU Directives. That will cause a loss of regulatory competence of HELCOM in general.

For the moment the European Commission is preparing a European Strategy for Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment. The consequences of such a strategy will probably strongly influence the future work of the Helsinki Commission.

Nevertheless there will be a continuous need for strict and tailor-made solutions/ measures to protect the unique and particularly sensitive ecosystem of the Baltic Sea, thus still calling for regional approaches even under the roof of the EU regulatory system. That includes stricter regulations in fields where existing EU legislation doesn't adequately reflect the particular needs of the Baltic Sea. Particular regional measures have to be adopted under the umbrella of the Helsinki Convention.

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issue

During the last years the HELCOM Subsidiary Bodies have been working on harmonisation of HELCOM Recommendations with EU and OSPAR Regulations in order to avoid inconsistencies or

possible direct regulatory conflicts. In fields where there is a need to safeguard the sensitivity of the Baltic Sea Area special actions have been taken.

Further actions

The forthcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in June 2003 will discuss the role of HELCOM and its future priorities seen in the light of the described development.

2. Oxygen depletions and eutrophication

In August 2002, extraordinary strong oxygen depletion was observed in large areas of the Kattegat, Belt Sea, the Sound and Western Baltic Sea. Excessive leaching of nutrients from land in combination with excellent growth conditions for algae during a long, very warm summer provided the fundamentals leading to these events. The wide-spread oxygen depletion resulted in mass deaths of fish and widespread areas with dead or greatly harmed animal life at the sea bottom. Oxygen depletion in the shallow areas of the Gulf of Finland has also extended during the past years due to eutrophication and subsequent internal load.

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issue

In 1988, the Ministers of Environment of the Baltic Sea States decided that anthropogenic discharges to the Baltic Sea should be reduced by 50 % by the year 1995. Regarding point sources, the 50 % reduction target has been achieved for phosphorus by almost all the Baltic Sea countries, while most countries have not reached the target for nitrogen. Diffuse pollution sources (mainly agriculture) levels usually have shown smaller decreases than the point source loading. Decreases have been found in nitrogen, while decreases in phosphorus remained smaller.

In the light of the recent events with severe oxygen depletion, fish kills and damages to the benthic flora and fauna, HELCOM realises that the present measures towards reduction of nutrient input to the Baltic Sea are not sufficient.

Further actions

The situation was considered in depth in November 2002 by HELCOM and a series of actions were decided. Eutrophication will be on the Agenda for the forthcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in June 2003. An *ad hoc* Expert Group on Oxygen Deficiency has been established and experts from the Ministries responsible for Agriculture will be involved. This eutrophication initiative will address: monitoring and assessment, specific sector- or issue-objectives and measures to obtain these specific sector- or issue-objectives.

3. Agricultural pollution

Agriculture is the major contributor to diffuse pollution. The main problem leading to unreasonably large losses of nutrients to the water environment is the intensive livestock farming in many areas often leading to improper storage of manure and untimely and too high application rate of manure to the fields. In addition too high application rates of chemical fertilizers and pesticides add to the problems.

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issue

During many years pollution due to agricultural activities have addressed by HELCOM. In 1998 HELCOM adopted an Annex III to the Convention: Prevention of Pollution from Agriculture. Also several recommendations dealing with agricultural pollution have been adopted during the years. At present a HELCOM Working Group on Agriculture is following the implementation of Annex III and revising and updating the relevant Recommendations seen in relation to Annex III and regulations adopted by the European Union. Due to the recent eutrophication and oxygen

requires States to adopt laws and regulations to prevent, reduce and control pollution from land-based sources and to endeavour to establish global and regional rules, standards and recommended practices and procedures, acting especially through competent international organizations and diplomatic conferences.

Responding to the need for multilateral action to protect the marine environment, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) was adopted by an Intergovernmental Conference in November 1995. The GPA is illustrative of the new generation of flexible, non-binding commitments by the international community that call for integrated and holistic approaches to realizing sustainable development. The GPA is the only global programme addressing the interface between freshwater and saltwater environments.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/189 of 16 December 1996, designated UNEP as the lead agency in the implementation of the GPA. Under the auspices of UNEP, the GPA Coordination Office was established at The Hague in 1997. The First Intergovernmental Review of the GPA was held in November 2001. The conclusions of the Co-Chairs and the Montreal Declaration adopted by the ministerial/high-level segment of the meeting were presented in Annex I to the Report of the Secretary General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, of 7 March 2002.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation, adopted in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002, calls on governments to advance implementation of the GPA and the Montreal Declaration, with particular emphasis during the period from 2002 to 2006 on municipal wastewater, the physical alteration and destruction of habitats, and nutrients, by actions at all levels to:

(a) Facilitate partnerships, scientific research and diffusion of technical knowledge; mobilize domestic, regional and international resources; and promote human and institutional capacity-building, paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries;

(b) Strengthen the capacity of developing countries in the development of their national and regional programmes and mechanisms to mainstream the objectives of the GPA and to manage the risks and impacts of ocean pollution;

(c) Elaborate regional programmes of action and improve the links with strategic plans for the sustainable development of coastal and marine resources, noting in particular areas that are subject to accelerated environmental changes and development pressures;

d) Make every effort to achieve substantial progress by the next GPA conference in 2006 to protect the marine environment from land-based activities.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation also calls for action to effectively reduce, prevent and control waste and pollution and their health-related impacts by undertaking initiatives by 2004 aimed at implementing the GPA in small island developing States.

In 2002, among other activities, the GPA Coordination Office continued to implement the UNEP/WSSCC/WHO/Habitat Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater. This included the articulation of Key Principles for Municipal Wastewater Management. The GPA Coordination Office also commenced developing a Strategic Action Plan on the Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats.

depletion events it seems necessary to introduce new measures towards curbing agricultural pollution.

Further actions

Based on the outcome of the discussions on the specific issues of oxygen depletion and eutrophication at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in June 2003 a decision will be taken on the future work of HELCOM in the field of Agriculture.

4. Rising risk for oil spills

The Baltic Sea area is characterized by a heavy traffic, with around 2000 ships at sea on an average day and among these 200 oil or product tankers.

By 2017 a doubling in the amount of cargo transported via sea has been estimated. Looking at different sectors, general cargo and container traffic is expected to triple; oil transportation is thought to increase by 40%.

A 50 per cent increase in the statistical risk for oil spills of less than 1,000 tonnes and a 25 per cent increase in the statistical risk for oil spills of more than 1,000 tonnes have been predicted on the basis of the increased maritime traffic.

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issue

Preventing pollution from maritime traffic has been a major item for the Baltic Sea States since the beginning of their environmental co-operation in the 1970s. To ensure maritime safety in the Baltic Sea region, which is well-known for its narrow straits, shallow depths and archipelago areas, the Helsinki Commission has decided on a great number of measures during the past 20 years.

The work to reduce the environmental risks associated with the heavy traffic in the Baltic Sea area is mainly concentrated around:

- Elimination of illegal discharges;
- Improved safety of navigation to reduce the risk for accidents;
- Adequate ability to respond to an accident; and
- Implementation of adopted measures, such as the Baltic Strategy for Port Reception Facilities for Ship-generated Wastes and Associated Issues and the HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration on the Safety of Navigation and Emergency Capacity in the Baltic Sea area

This work is based on inventories on maritime transportation and risk assessments.

After accidental oil spillages, deliberate oil discharges have the greatest impact of all sources of sea-based pollution. Although individually the amounts of oil involved may be very small, taken together they add up to a larger volume of oil than accidents.

Further actions

The "Prestige" accident has again put shipping high on the agenda of HELCOM, and the possible need for additional measures to ensure the safety of navigation will be considered during the forthcoming HELCOM Ministerial meeting in June 2003.

B. Areas of focus selected for the fourth meeting of the Open-ended informal consultation process on oceans and Law of the Sea

1. Protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems

Natural conditions in the Baltic Sea (stratified brackish waters with varying temperatures) have restricted the occurrence of most of the marine and freshwater species. This has resulted in an ecosystem with low number of species and short food chains making the ecosystem very vulnerable for external stress.

A total of 133 distinct marine and coastal habitat types have been classified by HELCOM for conservation purposes, but most of these habitats are threatened by human activity. Major threats to biodiversity include pollution, eutrophication, disturbance, over-fishing and introduction of non-indigenous species.

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issues

The 1992 Helsinki Convention was the first regional agreement to cover international marine nature conservation over an entire sea. The Contracting Parties shall conserve natural habitats and biological diversity and protect ecological processes. Such measures shall also be taken in order to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources within the Baltic Sea Area.

HELCOM promotes ecosystem-based approaches in developing strategies for the management of marine resources of coastal and offshore waters, favouring broader, long-term management practices instead of a short-term, sectional approach.

Common concepts and visions for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) are under development. A report summarizing the current state of affairs was published in 2001, and a complementary strategic report setting out a common approach will be published in 2003.

HELCOM has adopted, through a Recommendation in 1994, 62 marine and coastal areas to be the first phase of a system of Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs).

In addition, HELCOM adopted a Recommendation which states that in all riparian states to the Baltic Sea, a coastal strip of at least 100 to 300 metres landwards and seawards the medium midwater line outside of settlements shall be generally protected from diverse activities leading to destruction of habitats.

HELCOM has adopted Recommendations to protect seals (1988), harbour porpoise (1996) and wild salmon (1998). In 2002, a Recommendation concerning protection of heavily endangered or immediately threatened marine and coastal biotopes in the Baltic Sea Area was adopted.

HELCOM and the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission (IBSFC) have jointly made actions to reduce the negative environmental effects of fisheries and to promote ecosystem-based management of fisheries. Integration of environmental and nature conservation issues into fishery policies and integration of fishery issues into environmental and nature conservation policies is an ongoing process both in HELCOM and IBSFC.

HELCOM has supported development of a joint database on non-indigenous species (alien species) in the Baltic Sea, promoted concerted actions to improve the management of ballast water and supported international actions in IMO.

Further actions

Protection of marine biological diversity, including the environmental effects of fisheries and the further development of the network of marine protected areas will be a theme for the forthcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in June 2003.

2. Safety of navigation

The "Baltic Carrier" accident on 29 March 2001, resulting in the outflow of 2,700 tonnes of heavy fuel oil to the Baltic Sea, put to the fore the increased risk associated with the dense traffic in the area.

An Extraordinary HELCOM Ministerial meeting on 10 September 2001 promptly and efficiently responded to the increased risk, by adopting a Declaration on the safety of navigation and emergency capacity in the Baltic Sea area (the HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration).

Measures that are being undertaken to address the issues

The HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration contains a voluminous package of measures to increase the safety of navigation and ensure the adequacy of emergency capacity.

These measures include:

Maritime safety measures

- New and improved routes for shipping;
- Enhanced use of pilots in high-risk areas;
- Regular hydrographical surveys;
- Use of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) and Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS);
- A monitoring system for shipping in the Baltic Sea area;
- Extended and intensified Port State Control;
- Common procedures for investigations into accidents;
- Phasing out of single-hull oil tankers, at the earliest possible date under the International Maritime Organisation regime;

Emergency measures

- Plans for places of refuge;
- Additional research and development activities, in particular to address response to high-density oils, orimulsion as well as spills in icy conditions;
- Co-operation during shore-line clean-up operations;

Future tasks

- Assessment of trends in maritime traffic as a basis for risk analyses;
- Possible designation of parts of the Baltic Sea area as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA's).

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (the Helsinki Convention) was amended, as of 1 December 2002, to make the consequent measures binding under international law.

Further actions

The need for further actions will be considered during the forthcoming HELCOM Ministerial meeting in June 2003.

Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)

Groundwater, storm water, rivers, sewerage systems and the wind all transfer terrestrially derived pollutants to the oceans where the pollutants accumulate in both biological and geophysical resources, thus reducing the economic, social and environmental value of coastal and oceanic systems. Land-based sources are responsible for 80 per cent of the pollution of the oceans and affect the most productive areas of the marine environment. Article 207 of UNCLOS

The GPA Coordination Office, in cooperation with key partners, provided significant leadership during preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, drawing increased attention to the links between Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM), as well as broader issues associated with oceans, coasts and islands. Activities included, amongst others, introducing Integrated Coastal Area and River-basin Management (ICARM) concepts and targets to the UN Framework for Action on Water and Sanitation, co-producing a comprehensive guide to oceans, coasts and islands prior to the Summit, hosting a multi-stakeholder pavilion entitled "H2O: Hilltops-2-Oceans" at the Summit, and coordinating a high profile multi-stakeholder event on oceans on 2 September 2002.

In 2002 the GPA Coordination Office has funded, with the support of donors, the development of National Programmes of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (NPA) in Egypt, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. These will be finalized in 2003. The UNEP Handbook on the Development and Implementation of NPAs was completed in 2002 and made available in 6 UN languages on the GPA Clearing House Mechanism. In 2003 further national programmes will be developed subject to the availability of funds from donors and other sources, with a view to realizing the target of 40 NPAs by 2006. The development and implementation of national programmes of action represent a direct step towards the enhancement of national capabilities and institutional strengthening.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) continues to play a vital role in funding projects in a variety of environment-related issues. In 2002 the GEF Council approved the project "Russian Federation – Support to the National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment." In 2002 the GPA Coordination Office contributed, with the support of donors, to the GEF project "Development and Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa". It also received a PDF-A grant to prepare a medium sized project proposal for the protection of the South East Pacific from land-based activities. The proposal will be submitted to the GEF in 2003.

UNEP and corals

UNEP's role in the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

UNEP continues participate actively in the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), providing support to its operations and participating with high-level representation at meetings of the ICRI Coordinating and Planning Committee. UNEP also supports the ICRI Regional Workshops, convened by the ICRI Secretariat in cooperation with the UNEP Regional Seas.

UNEP is particularly active in the current debate about possible reforms to ICRI, especially in light of the recommendations made in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. There is a need for ICRI to become more open, representative and effective, building on its strengths of flexibility and commitment. Support is also provided to ensure a smooth transition in the revolving country Secretariat of ICRI. The current Swedish-Philippine secretariat will be handed over early in 2003, and UNEP is taking part in negotiations with the likely successors.

Coordination of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)

UNEP, through the Coral Reef Unit, continues to give its full support to the coordination of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) project, an operational network of ICRI. Significant in-kind support is provided to ICRAN e.g. in the form of staff, as well as attendance in meetings of the ICRAN Board, Steering Committee and Executive Committee.

ICRAN's Start-up Phase produced a Strategic Plan, published in January 2001, to guide the projects actions and activities. During the Bridging Phase, from January to September 2001, the project was prepared for the full-scale Action Phase by securing additional financial support and establishing a Coordinating Unit at UNEP-WCMC. An independent evaluation of the start-up and bridging phases, carried out by a consultant, took place during the first half of 2002, concluding

that the overall quality of the project is very good, with high quality outputs. The Action Phase of ICRAN was launched on schedule in June 2001. Project implementation is well underway in all regions and by all partners. For a detailed list of outputs, see Document UNEP/GC.22/INF/17.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and ReefCheck have been accepted as full partners to ICRAN in 2002, further strengthening the partnership. ICRAN is also broadening its network and continues to strengthen Regional Seas by incorporating PERSGA, ROPME and SACEP in the programme.

Led by the ICU and supported by UNEP and other partners, major progress has been made in raising funds for ICRAN. At the ICRAN WSSD Side Event, USAID announced a donation of US\$ 1.5 million for activities on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, and in October 2002 the Goldman fund granted the partnership an additional US\$ 250,000.

Fundraising remains one of the priority activities for ICRAN. During the Action Phase, the UN Foundation provides matches for donations to ICRAN up to a total of US\$ 5 million, over US\$ 3 million of which still remains. UNEP has consistently pressed partners to raise funds, and will continue to do so.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

ICRAN took active part in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, August-September 2002, with a concerted effort from its partners and in close collaboration with the ICRI Secretariat. For detailed information on the contribution to the WSSD PrepComs and WSSD, see document UNEP/GC.22/INF/17.

The ICRAN Type II partnership was launched under the name 'People and Reefs: A Partnership for Prosperity' at the ICRAN Side Event on 1 September, by announcing the planned expansion in collaboration with SACEP, PERSGA and ROPME, as well as the special focus on coral reef based tourism with a lead from UNEP-DTIE. The event was attended by over 100 guests and media representatives. ICRAN also organized or co-organized an Exhibition and a Discussion Seminar.

The WSSD Plan of Implementation provides strong support for UNEP's work on coral reefs and ICRAN, in particular the recommendations on sustainable fisheries (paragraph 30g); implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, development of programmes for conservation and management of oceans and prevention of loss of marine biodiversity as well as implementation of the ICRI programme (31d,e); improved scientific understanding and collaborations, including integrated assessment and capacity building (34 a,c); improving sustainable use of water resources in artisanal fisheries through work with communities (38d); sustainable tourism development (41b) in particular in Africa (64a,b); conservation of biodiversity (42f,g,h,j,l); promoting development and implementation of public-private partnerships (45ter); and supporting small island developing states (SIDS) (52) and Africa (56, 61) to attain sustainable development.

The Coral Reef Unit

UNEP's Coral Reef Unit is actively working with MEAs on harmonising work programmes and reporting procedures between various MEAs, networks and the UN system on the topic of coral reefs. Efforts are also made to further integrate MEAs and ICRI.

New private sector partnerships have been formed, e.g. with the media company 3D Entertainment through a MoU on promoting a coral reef movie which CRU helped produce, as well as related outreach materials. UNEP-CRU and ICRAN were also represented at the World Eco-tourism Summit in Montreal, May 2002.

For additional information on these and other activities in the implementation of decision 21/12, including ICRI, ICRAN and CRU outputs, see document UNEP/GC.22/INF/17.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Implementation of the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, including the CBD multi-year programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity

In 1998, the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted decision IV/5, containing a multi-year programme of work for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity. Further priorities for the programme of work were adopted by the fifth meeting of the COP in decision V/3. These priorities concerned, in particular, the incorporation of coral bleaching into the programme of work, and led to the development of a specific work plan on coral bleaching, and elements for a work plan on physical degradation and destruction of coral reefs.

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity approved the continued implementation of the specific work plan on coral bleaching and the elaboration and implementation of the work plan on physical degradation and destruction of coral reefs (decision VI/3), and requested continued cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in regard to coral reefs (decision VI/20). COP also urged the strengthening of collaboration between the Secretariat and regional seas conventions and action plans, and such collaboration is being actively sought by the Secretariat. The work plan on coral bleaching is now being implemented, and closer ties are being developed between the Secretariat and relevant organizations, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and its partners, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC). In this regard, the Secretariat became a co-sponsor of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), and is collaborating with the Second International Tropical Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS 2). As a result of decision VI/3, coral reefs will continue to be a priority issue in the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has conducted two meetings of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas. This international expert group considered and finalized its work on the values and effects of marine and coastal protected areas, and linkages between marine and coastal protected areas and sustainable use. As part of this work, the Expert Group proposed a framework for sustainable management of marine and coastal biological diversity, including a network of highly protected areas covering both areas inside and outside of national jurisdiction. Additionally, the Expert Group proposed a global goal for the Convention in relation to marine and coastal protected area networks, corresponding to paragraphs 31 (a) and (c) of the WSSD Plan of Implementation. The Expert Group also prepared recommendations for further research, including pilot projects.

The Secretariat conducted a meeting of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mariculture. This meeting, which was held in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), evaluated the current state of scientific and technological knowledge on the effects of mariculture on marine and coastal biological diversity, and provided guidance on criteria, methods and techniques to avoid the adverse effects of mariculture on biodiversity, while enhancing any positive effects. The Expert Group agreed that even though all forms of mariculture affect biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem level, a number of techniques are available to minimize such effects. These techniques include proper site selection, optimal management (including proper feeding), culturing different species together (polyculture), and the use of enclosed, and especially re-circulating, systems. It was also agreed that under certain circumstances mariculture could enhance biodiversity locally. The work of this Expert Group, as well as the Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, will be presented for the consideration of the eighth meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), to be held from 10-14 March 2003.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (UNDOALOS), has undertaken a study of the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources on the deep seabed. The study reviews the provisions of the two conventions as they relate to the conservation and sustainable use of the genetic resources of the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The study notes, however, that whereas the provisions of the two conventions are complementary and mutually-supportive regarding the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, an important legal lacuna exists with respect to commercially-oriented activities relating to marine genetic resources in the high seas. This lacuna will need to be addressed by the international community given the increasing importance of the genetic resources in these areas and the risk of their over-exploitation without due regard to conservation and equity imperatives.

The Secretariat has finalized a review of the implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity adopted in decision IV/5. This review is based on National Reports and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans submitted by Parties, and on questionnaires sent to international and regional organizations. The review also considered actions undertaken by the Executive Secretary in facilitating the implementation of the programme of work. The main conclusion of the review was that although progress has been made in the implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, much still remains to be done to achieve its full implementation, and to halt the decline in marine and coastal biological diversity globally. The review provided suggestions for potential refinement of the programme of work, based on priorities identified by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, by Parties, and by international organizations. The review will be presented for the consideration of the eighth meeting of the SBSTTA.