

As reported previously, ESCAP had been involved in providing advisory services and training to its member countries in reviewing their marine policies in the light of the rights and obligations acquired under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It would be pertinent to mention that 27 ESCAP members and associate members out of a total of 61, had ratified the Convention, as of February 2002. The major thrust areas of our previous activities related mainly to integrated coastal zone management and formulating a regime for removal of obsolete offshore drilling platforms and structures.

With the recent restructuring of our work programme in 2002, we are now refocusing on three thematic areas namely, poverty alleviation, managing globalization and emerging social issues. The managing globalization theme includes the subprogramme dealing with environment and sustainable development, with a major focus on environmental policy issues including multilateral environmental agreements, energy and water resources planning and management.

It is also pertinent to mention that the Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, adopted at the Ministerial level in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, contains seven major initiatives, one of which relates to oceans and marine resources and sustainable development of small island states.

Further, ESCAP continues to collaborate with the three intergovernmental bodies namely the Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and South East Asia (CCOP), South Pacific Applied Geoscience Programmes (SOPAC), and Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) on activities related to marine affairs.