



STAKEHOLDER FORUM BRIEFING PAPER SERIES PAPER #1: GPA BACKGROUNDER



SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW MEETING (IGR-2) OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES (GPA): A BACKGROUNDER

The major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land - in coastal areas and further inland. Municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off account for as much as 80% of all marine pollution. Sewage and waste water, persistent organic pollutants (including pesticides), heavy metals, oils, nutrients and sediments-whether brought by rivers or discharged directly into coastal areas-take a severe toll on human health and well-being as well as on coastal ecosystems. The result is more carcinogens in seafood, more closed beaches, more red tides, more beached carcasses of seabirds, fish and even marine mammals. The marine environment is also threatened by physical alterations of the coastal zone, including destruction of habitats of vital importance to maintain ecosystem health. Presently, about one billion people are living in coastal urban centers. Estimates show that almost 50 % of the world's coasts are threatened by development-related activities. The health, well-being and, in some cases, the very survival of coastal populations depends upon the health and well-being of coastal systems such as estuaries and wetlands. In response to these major problems, governments, intergovernmental organisations, the UN system, and civil society organisations have declared their commitment to protect and preserve the marine environment from the adverse environmental impacts of land-based activities. In 1974, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) established the Regional Seas Programme to address the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment, by engaging neighbouring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment. In 1982, the UNEP started addressing issues related to the impacts on the marine environment from land-based activities. The culmination of 13 years of preparatory work led to the adoption of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) in 1995. Today, the GPA is supported by 108 governments. The Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA (IGR-2), which will take place in Beijing, China from 16-20 October 2006, is expected to adopt the GPA's Programme of Work 2007-2011, and provide additional political guidance to address problems relating to land-based sources of marine pollution.

THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

In 1995 the global community adopted the GPA through the Washington Declaration. The GPA is a comprehensive programme, aimed at mitigating and preventing the degradation of the coastal and marine environment caused by land-based activities. The GPA aims to facilitate "the realisation of the duty of States to preserve and protect the marine environment. It is designed to assist States in taking actions". Designed to be an information clearinghouse and a central resource for national governments, the GPA has five main goals: 1) identify the sources and impacts of land-based sources of marine pollution; 2) identify priority problems for action; 3) set management objectives for these problem areas; 4) develop strategies to achieve these objectives; and 5) evaluate the impacts of these strategies. The GPA invites governments to assess their respective problems, identify priorities for action, develop strategies, monitor implementation and set as their common goal sustained and effective action to deal with all land-based impacts upon the marine environment, specifically those resulting from the nine pollutant source categories, as defined by the GPA: sewage, persistent organic pollutants, radioactive substances, heavy metals, oils (hydrocarbons), nutrients, sediment mobilisation, litter, and the physical alteration and destruction of habitats.

GPA National Programmes: A key component of the GPA framework is the development and implementation of National Programmes of Action (NPA). These programmes provide a

comprehensive yet flexible framework, to assist countries in fulfilling their duty to preserve and protect the marine environment from the major GPA pollution categories. The framework operates from the premise that action at the national level should build upon existing national priorities, policies and development plans. Targeted support is provided to countries to mobilise domestic and international resources for the implementation of the NPA and to reinforce the NPA through the review/enactment of national legislations and regulations. Over 70 countries are developing or have completed their NPAs: 15 NPAs have been completed, 27 are under way and 32 have been initiated.

GPA Secretariat: In 1995, UNEP was mandated to act as the secretariat of the GPA. The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, located in The Hague, The Netherlands, supports the implementation of the GPA by: promoting and facilitating implementation of the GPA at the national level and the regional and sub-regional level through, in particular, a revitalization of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme; and playing a catalytic role with other organizations and institutions in implementation of the GPA at the international level. The GPA Secretariat facilitates partnerships with the private sector and the international donor community, and assisting local and national authorities in designing and applying appropriate tools and measures, exploring alternative technologies, and mobilising financial resources to address the land-based sources of pollution.

REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME

For over 30 years, the UNEP Regional Seas Programmes has supported the sound environmental management of the oceans by assisting countries sharing a common body of water to coordinate and implement joint actions. The Regional Seas programmes function through Action Plans. In most cases these Action Plans are underpinned by a legal framework in the form of a regional Convention and associated Protocols on specific problems. Today, more than 140 countries participate in 13 Regional Seas programmes established under the auspices of UNEP: the Black Sea, Wider Caribbean, East Africa, south East Asia, ROPME Sea Area, Mediterranean, North-East Pacific, North-West Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Asia, South-East Pacific, South Pacific, and West and Central Africa. Six of these programmes, are directly administered by UNEP.

REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GPA

The First Intergovernmental Review Meeting: The First Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-1) was held in Montreal, Canada in November 2001. More than 300 participants from over 98 countries took part in the meeting. IGR-1 was instrumental in developing the GPA such that it is now recognised as a valuable tool for furthering ecosystem approaches to coasts, oceans and island management. The meeting focused substantively on the issues of municipal wastewater, integrated coastal and oceans governance, building partnerships and financing the implementation of the GPA. Delegates noted steady, albeit slow, progress in the implementation of the GPA at global, regional and national levels. However, delegates also recognised that: the present models of coastal development need change; new and innovative sources of funding are required; the objectives of the GPA need to be mainstreamed into national development plans and financial arrangements; and people and their governments must be mobilised in new partnerships. The meeting endorsed the GPA Coordination Office 2002-2006 Programme of Work with indicative costs. The key outcomes of the meeting included the Montreal Declaration; conclusions of the Co-Chairs; a declaration by the legislators, local governments and non-governmental organisations.

The Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA: The Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA (IGR-2), which will take place in Beijing, China from 16-20 October 2006. Representatives from governments, inter-governmental organisations, NGOs and other groups are expected to participate in a highly inter-active and results orientated meeting. The meeting will include parallel sessions, a one day ministerial segment and a five regional Multi-Stakeholder dialogue sessions. The objectives of IGR-2 are to:

- Strengthen implementation of the GPA and contribute to the achievement of the JPOI 2006 target;
- Define the programme of work for the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office for the period 2007-2011;

- Contribute to the International Decade for Action: 'Water is Life', 2005-2015;
- Forward ecosystem approaches and contribute to the achievement of the JPOI 2010 target;
- Contribute to the achievement of the JPOI 2015 target for sanitation;
- Focus and expected outcomes of IGR-2.

The expected outcomes of IGR-2 will include approval of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office Programme of Work for the period 2007- 2011, which includes activities to address the GPA's contribution to key international goals and targets such as the: International Decade for Action: 'Water is Life', 2005-2015; ecosystem approach as per the JPOI 2010 target; and sanitation target of the JPOI 2015. The outcomes of the Ministerial Segment will culminate in the endorsement of the IGR-2 Beijing Ministerial Declaration and a Chairman's Summary, outlining consensus reached on key strategic directions to take in the immediate term to meet global goals and targets and to address priority issues.

Preparatory Process for IGR-2: The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office has begun a series of consultations involving a wide range of stakeholders to obtain feedback and ensure that all relevant constituencies are fully involved in the IGR-2 process. Stakeholder Forum is partnering with UNEP GPA to conduct regional consultations in preparation for the IGR-2. The purpose of these dialogues is to enable a broad range of local, national, and regional stakeholders (including those who are unable to attend the IGR-2 in China) to input their positions and experiences on protection of the marine environment in advance of the IGR-2. A number of intergovernmental meetings will also submit contributions to IGR-2. In June 2006, an IGR-2 Preparatory Committee meeting will be held to assist in the preparation of the UNEP/GPA Programme of Work 2007-2011. Two consultative meetings, the Fourth World Water Forum (March 2006) and Xiamen International Forum for Local Municipalities (September 2006), will also form part of the preparations for IGR-2. UN Agencies and Programmes will also provide input to the Review Meeting; including through UN-Oceans, UN-Water Task Force and the UNEP Regional Seas Programmes, UNEP Regional Offices and other UNEP Divisions. In addition the UNEP/GPA website will facilitate open dialogue where stakeholders are invited to provide input to the IGR-2 preparations via electronic means.

GPA RESOURCES

- GPA Text: http://www.gpa.unep.org/document_lib/en/pdf/whole_gpa.pdf
- IGR-2 Resources: <http://www.gpa.unep.org/bin/php/igr/igr2/index.php>
- UNEP/GPA Secretariat: <http://www.gpa.unep.org/bin/php/home/index.php>
- Outcome of IGR-1: http://www.gpa.unep.org/document_lib/en/pdf/igr-1_key_outputs.pdf
- GPA Handbook: <http://www.gpa.unep.org/bin/php/programs/npa/index.php>
- UNEP Regional Seas Programme: <http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/>
- London Convention: <http://www.londonconvention.org/>