



WELCOME FROM THE COORDINATOR

Welcome to the first **UNEP/GPA and Stakeholder Forum IGR-2 Newsletter**. The aim of this newsletter is to keep you up-to-date on the planning and preparatory events of the 2nd Intergovernmental Review of the *Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities* (GPA). IGR-2 will take place in Beijing from 16 – 20 October 2006.

We are delighted to continue our partnership with the Stakeholder Forum as we build towards the IGR-2. These monthly newsletters will provide you with the latest information on:

1. The developments of IGR-2;
2. Specific GPA-related issues such as financing of the GPA, national implementation of the GPA, wastewater and much more;
3. A sneak preview of upcoming IGR-2 preparatory events planned by Stakeholder Forum where you can provide your input;
4. A summary of the latest conferences and events related to the GPA.

In this inaugural issue of the IGR-2, let me recall that the GPA, adopted by 108 Governments and the European Commission in 1995, targets major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine and coastal environment resulting from human activities on land. The GPA proposes an integrated, multi-sectoral approach based on commitment to action at local, national, regional and global levels. It is an important global mechanism that explicitly addresses the linkages between freshwater, coastal and marine environments.

The GPA has catalysed many governments around the world to build institutional capacities, and review legislative frameworks and environmental policies for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment. The GPA has raised international awareness and facilitated action to address the environmental dimension of urban sanitation and municipal wastewater, and the physical

alteration and destruction of habitats. It is also recognised as a valuable tool for achieving internationally agreed goals and targets, including those associated with the Millennium Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy on Small Island Developing States. This was reaffirmed in Paragraph 33 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which, in addition to endorsing the GPA, calls upon States to: "Make every effort to achieve substantial progress by the next GPA conference in 2006 to protect the marine environment from land-based activities".

The First Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-1) was held in Montreal, Canada in November 2001. More than 300 participants from over 80 countries took part in the meeting. IGR-1 was instrumental in furthering the implementation of the GPA such that it is now recognised as a valuable tool for furthering ecosystem approaches to coasts, oceans and island management.

The objectives of the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA (IGR-2) are to:

- a. Strengthen the implementation of the GPA at national, regional and global levels.
- b. Contribute to the achievement of specific targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) as they relate to the GPA, ecosystem approach, and sanitation.
- c. Define the programme of work for the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office for the period 2007-2011.

We hope this newsletter will inform and inspire you. We look forward to your active involvement in the preparations for IGR-2 and at the IGR-2 meeting itself. Please do not hesitate to visit our website at www.gpa.unep.org and to contact us should you have any questions.

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CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

The Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands: Moving the Global Oceans Agenda Forward

The Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, held in Paris from 24-27 January 2006, examined progress made in the implementation of some of the objectives agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable



Development (WSSD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The conference brought together some 400 participants from 78 countries, representing governments, the United Nations and other international agencies, industry, non-governmental organizations

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(NGOs) and networks of other interested parties.

Special emphasis was put upon Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy; as well as the progress made on the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA).

The financial difficulties faced by SIDS in enforcing conservation policies and controlling development were highlighted, especially in light of decreasing overseas aid budgets. Continued support for SIDS, both financial and technical, was seen as imperative if they are to succeed in their coordinating and monitoring programmes.

Whilst progress in the development of better management of oceans and coasts is seen as too slow (it was noted that 2012 targets for protected marine areas would not be met

until 2085 at current rates), it was noted that half of all SIDS have implemented ecosystem-based management systems.

As a preparatory meeting for the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA, to be held in October in Beijing, this conference discussed progress on the GPA. Over 60 States have now initiated Plans of Action to address land-based sources of marine pollution. 14 were praised for making good progress towards implementing integrated marine and land-based water resource management, 51 States have taken 'some steps' and 43 are in the initial stages.

The meeting further emphasised the importance of regional dialogues, of concentrating on implementation and not obstacles, and the continuing integration of upstream, coastal and ocean water management systems.

The 9th Governing Council Special Session and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum



The 9th Governing Council Special Session (GCSS) and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) were held from the 7-9 February 2006 in Dubai. The GCSS/GMEF was attended by over 160 countries including around 125 environment Ministers, the largest gathering of its kind in the Arab world.

The meeting provided the opportunity for Ministers to discuss issues of energy, chemicals management and tourism. UNEP introduced its revised draft water policy and strategy, which will be used as an overarching document for future work programmes. An essential part of UNEP's work, the provision of policy guidance and coordination concerning water issues is achieved through this policy and strategy. It aims to support governments and stakeholders in increasing understanding and awareness of water issues, while helping in the application of integrated management plans.

At the 8th GCSS/GMEF in 2004, the Governing Council agreed to promote ecosystems-based approaches to water management, an approach that was to be guided by the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building.

Following from the discussions at the 8th Governing Council Special Session, and the official adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan, the importance of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), capacity building and coordination was further emphasized in Dubai.

It was also noted that UNEP should take a lead on issues relating to sanitation, as well as in capacity-building and South-South cooperation, areas in which UNEP has special expertise.

Tourism and the environment was also discussed, with emphasis on developing better sustainable tourism policies. It was agreed that the development of tourism, while important for many countries in terms of alleviating poverty, needed to be done with an emphasis on protecting the environment. A global public policy network on sustainable tourism was launched by France in cooperation with UNEP, with support from Finland and India.

The discussions on water and tourism produced no final agreements, but rather offered a space for Ministers to discuss the issues freely. The event was generally seen as a success, with the progress made to be carried forward into next year's UNEP Governing Council, as well as to the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA.

For further information on this event, please visit www.unep.org/gc/gcss-ix

LINKING FRESHWATER TO OCEANS

Human activities and their impacts on river basins are intrinsically linked to problems of the marine environment. Pollution discharges, increased freshwater use, land use practices, river regulation works and water resource development projects have crucial impacts on principal coastal and oceans resources and may place the viability of coastal economic activities at risk. Increased demands for food for an expanding global population have necessitated a rapid growth of the agricultural sector during the last decades. The widespread and heavy use of fertilizers employed by modern agriculture many hundreds of kilometres from the coast is making nutrient over-enrichment and eutrophication an increasingly hot issue in coastal waters. Oxygen depleted "dead zones" have been a rapidly expanding problem during the last decades in, for example, the Gulf of Mexico adjacent to the Mississippi River delta, the Baltic Sea and South China Sea. On the other hand, freshwater flows are critical to the health and productivity of estuaries and coastal waters. Increased demand of freshwater, mainly for irrigated agriculture (80% of water use) and urban development are depleting freshwater flows and damaging coastal ecosystems and their vital functions as spawning and nursery grounds for coastal fisheries.

River basins and the marine environment share common problems and therefore require joint solutions. The separate efforts of ocean management, coastal management and river basin management are not able to achieve the shared objectives. A holistic, ecosystem-based approach is needed, linking the management of river basins, coasts and oceans. The required scale of the area of integrated management is defined by the extent of the priority problems themselves, their driving forces, the extension of their impacts and anticipated societal responses. Defining the management area in such a way

as a 'problem-shed' - may easily allow for the inclusion of groundwaters, air deposition, and river catchments in marine management approaches.

Activities

GPA and freshwater-coast partners established at the WSSD in 2002 the FreshCo partnership and developed a series of activities, such as workshops, pilot projects, and an ICARM expert group to promote and guide the management link. The Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands established the Task Force on Linking Freshwater to Oceans and organised the Lisbon and Paris conferences in 2005/06 to promote its message.

Forthcoming Publications

UNEP/GPA and its partners will issue two publications on linking the management of freshwaters to oceans in the next few months as a preparation for the IGR-2 meeting in October.

- The ICARM Casebook will capture the lessons learned from practical cases on linking the management of rivers and coasts. Case studies for some 20 river-coast systems will be analysed to assess the need for and benefits of linking management. Measures taken and constraints and challenges encountered in establishing a management link will be examined.
- An ICARM Progress Marker report will give guidance on assessing progress towards linking the management of catchments and coasts. The specific objective is to sketch a roadmap, identify subsequent phases and outcomes, and set adequate markers to guide and provide a yardstick for assessing progress.

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ABOUT STAKEHOLDER FORUM



Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future's mission is to inform, influence, promote, and advance the implementation of sustainable development. Stakeholder Forum fulfils this mission by developing and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes that engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of sustainable development policy. To support multi-stakeholder processes, Stakeholder Forum also undertakes activities related to capacity building, training, and policy development.

Stakeholder Forum is delighted to continue our partnership with UNEP GPA as we build toward the IGR-2. Stakeholder Forum is working with UNEP GPA to undertake outreach and conduct dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that the IGR-2 will gain from the experience and expertise of a broad range of stakeholders.

For more information please visit www.stakeholderforum.org

ABOUT UNEP/GPA



The GPA was adopted in 1995 by 108 Governments and the European Commission in response to the increasing threat to the marine environment from human activities on land. The GPA is designed to be a source of conceptual and practical guidance for national and/or regional authorities for devising and implementing sustained action to prevent, reduce, control and/or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities.

The United Nations Environment Programme acts as the secretariat for the GPA. The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, located in The Hague, The Netherlands supports the implementation of the GPA by: promoting and facilitating the implementation of the GPA at the national level and the regional and sub-regional level and playing a catalytic role with other organisations and institutions in the implementation of the GPA at the international level.

For more information please visit www.gpa.unep.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

20—31 March 2006 Curitiba, Brazil	Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-8) Contact: secretariat@biodiv.org
29—31 March 2006 Vancouver, Canada	Globe 2006 Contact: info@globe2006.com
1—14 May 2006 New York, USA	14th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development Contact: dsd@un.org
17—19 May 2006 Delft, The Netherlands	Envirowater 2006 Conference Contact: envirowater2006@wur.nl
12—16 June 2006 New York, USA	7th United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS) Contact: doalos@un.org
18—24 June 2006 Hong Kong, China	First Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium Contact: apcrs.secretariat@cuhk.edu.hk
19—23 June 2006 Vancouver, Canada	3rd World Urban Forum Contact: lars.reutersward@unhabitat.org
9—14 July 2006 Cairns, Australia	Catchments to Coast International Conference Contact: sally.brown@uq.net.au
21—27 August 2006 Stockholm, Sweden	World Water Week Contact: sympos@siwi.org
1—30 September 2006 Beijing, China	International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress Contact: water@iwahq.org.uk
14—15 September 2006 Helsinki, Finland	6th Asia—Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM) Contact: admin@aseminforboard.org
16—20 October 2006 Beijing, China	The 2nd Intergovernmental Review (IGR-2) of the Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) Contact: igr2@unep.nl

CONTACTS

- For all general GPA enquiries contact, including information about the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting, please email igr2@unep.nl or telephone +31 70 311 4460.
- If you have any questions regarding the newsletter or would like to submit some information or an article for possible inclusion in the next issue please contact: jpeer@stakeholderforum.org
- If you have been forwarded this newsletter and would like to subscribe to GPA Outreach, please email jpeer@stakeholderforum.org to subscribe.