



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



Distr.: General
8 October 2015

Original: English

**The 17th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas
Conventions and Action Plans
Istanbul, Turkey
20 October - 22 October 2015**

**Progress in implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the
Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) and
specifically the Manila Declaration**

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Progress in implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) and specifically the Manila Declaration

*Prepared for 17th Annual Regional Seas Meeting
20-22 October 2015, Istanbul, Turkey*

***Implementation of the GPA in partnership
with the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans***

I. Introduction

The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) was adopted by 108 governments and the European Commission in an intergovernmental conference held in Washington D.C., USA, on November 3, 1995. The Programme represented a clear commitment among national governments, international and regional organizations and programmes, non-governmental organizations and major groups to protect and preserve the marine environment from adverse impacts of land-based activities. The GPA framework calls for comprehensive, continuing and adaptive actions and provides a series of recommendations as well as criteria for their development at different levels with a focus on actions by governments. It provides a comprehensive yet flexible framework to assist countries in fulfilling their duty in accordance with international law to preserve and protect the marine environment from sewage, physical alterations and destruction of habitats, nutrients, sediment mobilisation, persistent organic pollutants, oils, litter, heavy metals and radioactive substances.

As Secretariat for the GPA, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, which is an integral part of UNEP's Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, assists States and intergovernmental organizations in the implementation of the GPA, *inter alia*, through the preparation of guidance material, assessments and manuals as well as the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building. It works closely with the Regional Seas Programme, which has spearheaded implementation efforts at the regional level. Since the move of the GPA Coordination Office from The Hague to Nairobi in 2008, the GPA-related activities have been largely embedded into UNEP's Programme of Work across all UNEP Divisions and sub-programmes. This in turn has led to broadened support from UNEP to the fulfilment of the functions of the GPA Coordination Office.

This report serves as documentation on the success stories and provides a summary and overview of the implementation of the GPA by countries in the past 20 years, along with the assistance provided in so doing by UNEP as the Secretariat through the UNEP/GPA Co-ordination Office and other multiple actors. UNEP as the Secretariat of the GPA is tasked with facilitating and promoting the implementation of the GPA through international, regional and national action.

A number of important considerations should be borne in mind with regard to the compilation of this report. Firstly, the primary responsibility for implementing the GPA lies with governments. However, governments and stakeholders are able to implement the GPA in a variety of ways and under different initiatives. For example, action on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), a major source category under the GPA, is now taken forward at a multilateral scale under the Stockholm Convention, adopted in 2001. Similarly, countries now adopt analogous approaches to the GPA, such as integrated coastal zone management and/or integrated water resources management plans. For these reasons it is very difficult to capture the full extent, and, in a systematic way, detail how countries are taking forward the implementation of GPA-related activities. This report therefore is just a summary and overview, though additional information on national actions is required for a complete picture. In addition, given the very important role of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in implementing the GPA within respective regions, information on their work is also provided.

II. Key Achievements of the GPA

Paragraph 144 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 65/37 recognises "that most of the pollution load of the oceans emanates from land-based activities and affects the most productive areas of the marine

environment”, and calls upon “States as a matter of priority to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and to take all appropriate measures to fulfil the commitments of the international community embodied in the Beijing Declaration on Furthering the implementation of the Global Programme of Action”.

There have been three Inter-Governmental Reviews (IGR) of the progress in implementing the GPA, the first in Montreal, Canada, in 2001; the second in Beijing, People’s Republic of China, in 2006; and the third in Manila, Philippines, in 2012 (which resulted in the Manila Declaration). A number of activities in the GPA Coordination Office Programme of Work were successfully implemented since the establishment of the GPA. The progress outlined in this report seeks to capture findings from those reviews and demonstrates the political determination on the part of governments to undertake tangible action to address the underlying causes of marine degradation resulting from land-based activities. In many countries, governments have taken actions to integrate the implementation of the GPA across sectors and ministries and into national budgets, development plans and strategies. Efforts at strengthening the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and developing strategic partnerships with the GEF, and more specifically the GEF-supported International Waters projects and the various Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, have been instrumental in bringing about these results. Notwithstanding the above, as outlined in this report, much remains to be done to protect the marine environment from land-based activities.

National Programmes of Action (NPA)

A National Programme of Action (NPA) is the policy framework envisaged in the GPA to facilitate implementation and mainstreaming of the GPA at the national level. Implementation of NPAs has been through policy measures and pilot projects to address priority issues. Pilot projects implemented by countries have aimed at demonstrating sustainable management approaches, testing of new technology (e.g. use of constructed wetlands for wastewater management), stimulating multi-agency cooperation and developing partnership between State and non-State actors to address land-based sources of coastal and marine pollution. The partnerships with non-State actors (e.g. Major Groups, non-governmental organizations and private sector institutions) are an important contribution to the development of new institutional arrangements for coastal resources management and to addressing land-based sources of marine pollution through the application of appropriate technology and management systems suited to local circumstances. As detailed later on, partnerships have grown significantly, at the global level, through the GPA.

Many Governments have developed NPAs or their equivalents. Many governments have also included GPA issues in wider environmental and/or coastal and marine policies since many GPA-related priority actions addressing key coastal issues and priority source categories such as wastewater, nutrients and marine litter (and solid wastes) can easily be included in either an Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) or Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) programme and therefore mainstreamed through these programmes at national and local levels depending on the evolution of responsibility for coastal management in each country. Indeed, the GPA recognizes the benefits of linking its implementation with integrated coastal management (ICM) initiatives. In fact paragraph 19, chapter II, of the GPA states that, ‘[T]he effective development and implementation of national programmes of action should focus on sustainable, pragmatic, integrated environmental management approaches and processes, such as integrated coastal zone management....’.

Recent reviews by the GPA Coordination Office suggest that trying to embed the GPA in national development planning and budgeting mechanisms may sometimes face difficulties. The ICM and IWRM frameworks may be better approaches since many countries have or are developing these plans and policies, with subsequent commitments to implementation.

From 1995-2001 progress was reported by participating countries in developing regional and national action plans, as well as increasing the use of integrated coastal area management and environmental impact assessment approaches, and identifying problems and policy needs. However, at the First IGR (in 2001), it was noted that little concrete action had yet taken place. Identified barriers to implementation included a lack of political will, finance and awareness of the GPA, limited availability of appropriate technologies, weak compliance and enforcement of policies, and an institutional divide between the freshwater, coastal zone and marine communities. By the Second IGR (in 2006), many of the goals set by the international community for the further implementation of the GPA were considered to have been met. The strategic direction set at the First IGR in 2001, was to facilitate the process of moving from planning to action at all levels. This was considered to have been achieved in large measure by 2006.

In 2006, just over 60 countries had adopted NPAs. Jumping ahead to 2015, over 80 countries had established framework NPAs since the inception of the GPA. Others have embarked on the development of NPAs and/or revised their NPAs and many of them have successfully integrated coastal and marine environmental management and pollution reduction measures into national sustainable development plans/strategies and budgetary mechanisms.

Mainstreaming & Outreach

Pursuant to the decisions taken by the IGR-2 in Beijing, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office in partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) produced a guidance document “Making Mainstreaming Work: An Analytical Framework, Guidelines and Checklist for the Mainstreaming of Marine and Coastal Issues into National Planning and Budgetary Processes”. Following the finalization of this guidance document, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office organized a series of regional training workshops, in partnership with the governments, Regional Seas Programmes and others, to familiarize national governments and key stakeholders with the concept of mainstreaming and the key steps that would entail to mainstream coastal and marine issues into national planning and budgetary processes leading to integrated planning. These workshops enhanced the opportunities for many policy makers to recognise the contribution of the coastal and marine resources to national gross domestic product and the livelihoods of coastal population.

The participants reached the conclusion that to move the mainstreaming process it would be important to set priorities that have wide and high-level support and good prospects for success, and articulate these priorities based on an economic analysis that demonstrates the full value of the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources to national development. Valuation of resources has now come into greater focus by the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, through recent efforts related to marine litter and wastewater.

An effort of UNEP/GPA Coordination Office to facilitate mainstreaming, by supporting a study in Sri Lanka, led to introduction of policy reforms at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the establishment of an environmental conservation levy exclusively for environmental conservation. The GPA and its NPA and mainstreaming approaches have helped catalyse broader approaches to integrated coastal management. In China, the development of an NPA and associated coastal pollution control programmes was embedded in their 12th five-year plan (2011-2015). The government of Seychelles, while revising its Environment Management Plan for the period 2011-2020, set out that the Plan represents a national environmental strategy for Seychelles. Other countries such as Kenya and Japan have also finalized or enacted integrated coastal zone management plans, intended to protect the marine environment from land-based activities.

A Clearing House Mechanism for information sharing has been proposed in the GPA. The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office has been instrumental in the development of information sharing platforms through the GPA website, which was recently upgraded (see www.unep.org/gpa). Due to a lack of resources, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office had difficulties in maintaining and expanding such a mechanism, which would have allowed Governments and other stakeholders to take full advantage of the information in the system. Further, there has been no official mechanism enabling reporting by Governments on progress in implementing the GPA and National Programmes of Action (NPAs). Coupled with the limited success in the clearing house mechanism, this has made analysis of progress at national level difficult despite a commitment by countries in Beijing in 2006 to improve monitoring. Under the resource constraints UNEP faces, in order to facilitate information mobilization, the existing global and existing and proposed regional partnerships are expected to play key roles in the information sharing and mobilization. The online marine litter network and the tools being developed by the GPNM, with the support of the GEF, are excellent examples. These are described in more detail below.

Outreach efforts have significantly increased within the GPA in recent times. Outreach material, such as flyers, awareness videos (e.g. on marine litter, wastewater and nutrients), upgraded website with regular articles of topical interest, and production and translation of training and other material (e.g. in Spanish & Chinese), have all contributed to raising the profile of the GPA. Some of these videos have actually won international awards (e.g. Jim Toomey video on nutrients; see: <http://unep.org/gpa/resources/Videos.asp>).

Starting from the IGR-3, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office has used the First and Second Global Land-Ocean Connections Conferences (GLOC-1 in Manila, 2012; GLOC-2 in Montego Bay, 2013), to highlight the issues relevant to the GPA among global audiences. These GLOCs were two to three-day gatherings of scientists, experts, policy makers and NGOs who made recommendations towards the implementation of the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the GPA. The objective of these conferences was to discuss

current and emerging issues in the marine and coastal sector with a focus on the three priority source categories of the GPA for 2012-2016, namely marine litter, nutrients and wastewater. The overall purpose of the GLOC is to emphasize the interconnectedness of activities on land and how they impact on the oceans, with a focus on pollution, while proposing ways to address these impacts through international cooperation. The GLOC-2 served as a Partnership Forum for the three Global Partnerships on marine litter, nutrients and wastewater, and showcased the success of the GPA in addressing land-based sources of pollution, as well as the contribution of Regional Seas Programmes to the implementation of the Manila Declaration.

Another way in which the GPA Coordination Office has increased visibility is through publications and representation at strategic regional and global events. Key recent publications (or in press) include:

- Economic Valuation of Wastewater
- Wastewater laws, norms and regulations
- Technology matrix of (innovative) Wastewater related treatment technologies (and a guidance document)
- UN-Water Analytical Brief on Wastewater
- Plastics in Cosmetics
- Valuing Plastics
- Biodegradable Plastics
- Our Nutrient World
- Building the Foundations for Sustainable Nutrient Management

Important or key meetings for which the GPA has been involved include:

- World Water Forums (including Korea, April 12-17, 2015)
- World Water Congresses (including Edinburgh, May 2015)
- Stockholm World Water Weeks (including August 23-28, 2015)
- GEF International Waters Conferences
- East Asian Seas Congresses
- Annual meetings and IGMs of Regional Seas
- Annual LME meetings
- Africa Marine Litter Summits, Cape Town, South Africa (including June 3-5, 2015)

The GPA will celebrate its 20th Anniversary on November 3, 2015. As Secretariat for the GPA Coordination Office, UNEP plans a number of activities to raise awareness on the successes of the GPA, its impacts, and future role. The main goal of the communication activities for the 20th Anniversary would be to engage governments in order to gain political support for the GPA and its next Intergovernmental Review (IGR-4), possibly in 2017. The Anniversary activities will start formally in November 2015 and carry on until November 2016. A second goal would be to improve understanding and gain internal support for the GPA within UNEP as well as deciding on a UNEP positioning for the GPA (i.e. what UNEP wants out of it).

A formal presentation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives took place in September 2015 and again in October 2015. The GPA Coordination Office will prepare a formal document on the success stories for presentation to member states and possible publication. Activities would be focused around highlighting and distributing GPA success stories to governments and other relevant stakeholder. Other activities may include:

- Meetings with the UNEP Senior Management Team to highlight what UNEP can get out of the GPA and how UNEP can help gathering political support for the GPA (regional offices focal points, division directors, and executive office);
- Producing a GPA booklet gathering case studies and policy guidance to distribute to governments;
- Creating and distributing media by-products based on the success stories;
- A series of meetings, consultations and webinars with GPA focal points to gather political support and further distribute success stories.

The GPA also hopes to encourage a government to host World Environment Day in 2016 (e.g. Sweden; Japan), with a focus on marine pollution and plastics. 2016 presents opportunities for highlighting the GPA through UNEA-2 and possibly the Third Global Land-Ocean Connections Conference (GLOC-3). However preparations will start in 2015. If all goes well and Marine Pollution becomes a theme for UNEA-2, GPA will play a major role in the development of the content. The next UNEA will also be a key event to gather political support in preparation for the IGR-4.

The next GLOC, if held, could also serve as another opportunity to highlight achievements and promote solutions while obtaining multi-stakeholder input to the IGR-4 and the partnerships. Costings and budget are under development but it is estimated that approximately US\$300K needs to be raised to host the conference. Since the GLOC does not fit into any of the GPA projects, special funding is needed.

Partnerships

Partnership development has been encouraged by member states throughout the life of the GPA. During the review of the GPA in 2012, the anticipated level of partnerships development and their utility in the implementation of the GPA was recognized as not being fully achieved. Establishing and maintaining viable global partnerships was acknowledged to be a challenge due to limited financial resources, varied levels of commitments of the stakeholders, and changing global priorities. The partial success was, at that time, reflected in the limited expansion of partnerships and the viability of existing partnerships. New global partnerships had only emerged where there were clearly-targeted objectives and well-defined outcomes, with the examples of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, the Global Partnership on Waste Management, and the Global Partnership on Tourism, amongst others. It was therefore expected that such partnerships with clearly defined objectives and outcomes, with time-bound targets, and well-prepared financial and support resources could effectively contribute to the implementation of the GPA in the five year period from 2012 to 2016.

The Work Programme of the GPA Coordinating Office has placed priorities amongst the nine source categories¹, i.e., on nutrients, sewage, marine litter and physical alteration and habitat destruction. Concerning the nutrients, marine litter and sewage, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Unit, working with its partners, has responded to the diffuse and challenging nature of these problems by establishing global partnerships and initiatives on nutrients, wastewater, and marine litter. The existing Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) and the newly established global partnerships on Marine Litter and on Wastewater in this document are relevant to the partnership approach as agreed in Beijing in 2006. Details are presented in the following sections.

The Manila Declaration

The Manila Declaration, agreed upon in 2012, guides the current work of the GPA. It decided:

- To develop guidance, strategies or policies on the sustainable use of nutrients so as to improve nutrient use efficiency and to mitigate negative environmental impacts;
- That the GPA should focus its work (for 2012-2016) on nutrients, litter and wastewater as the three priority source categories for the GPA, using global multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- To support the further development of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management;

¹ The GPA identifies a number of land-based sources of pollution including sewage, nutrients, sediment mobilisation, persistent organic pollutants, oils, litter, heavy metals and radioactive substances

- To work with all stakeholders concerned to find innovative solutions and initiatives to the marine litter problem;
- To support the further development of the global partnership on wastewater;
- To improve cooperation and coordination at all levels to deal with issues related to oceans, coasts, islands and their associated watersheds, by applying integrated management such as “ridge to reef” approaches; and
- To strengthen and promote the implementation of existing Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, and other relevant global and regional arrangements, agreements and programmes for the protection of the marine and coastal environment, with a view to further the implementation of the GPA.

Status of implementation of the Manila Declaration is addressed throughout the document.

Addressing Key Pollution Source Categories

The UN General Assembly Resolution 65/37 (paragraph 148), while welcoming the continued work of the States, the United Nations Environment Programme and regional organizations in the implementation of the GPA, encouraged “increased emphasis on the link between freshwater, the coastal zone and marine resources in the implementation of international development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and of the time-bound targets in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”), in particular the target on sanitation, and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development”. This also re-affirmed a need of enhanced effort to establish a policy link between coastal zone and watershed management. A number of pilot initiatives have resulted in practical ways to address these policy linkages such as Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management for the Caribbean Small Island Developing States, and support to the National Plan of Action for the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment in the Russian Federation, amongst others. It also highlights the further work needed to address nutrients and wastewater emanating from land-based activities in watersheds through management efforts to link watersheds and the coastal environment.

The GPA identifies a number of land-based sources of pollution including sewage, nutrients, sediment mobilisation, persistent organic pollutants, oils, litter, heavy metals and radioactive substances. Among the GPA source categories, progress has been made in the integration of the actions related to persistent organic pollutants in the GPA into the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Mercury is addressed in the Global Mercury Partnership and the Minamata Convention. Coordinated action is also being looked at on cadmium and lead. The considerable progress made in these areas of pollutants further confirms the decision adopted in Beijing in 2006 for participating States to focus efforts on diffuse pollutant categories: nutrients, marine litter and sewage.

Over time therefore, and in line with the desire of governments agreed by the IGR-2 in Beijing and reinforced at the IGR-3 in Manila, the **UNEP/GPA Coordination Office** has continued to focus on the key areas in GPA source category implementation since 2006 - **nutrients, wastewater and marine litter**.

Nutrients

Nitrogen and phosphorous are the two key nutrients that play important roles in global and local sustainable development agendas alongside water, climate and land use issues. Inefficient use of fertilizers leads to the accumulation of nutrients in areas of intense agricultural activities and can cause serious environmental problems in these areas and beyond. In many parts of the world there is an ‘excess’ of nutrients in the environment as a result of industrial and agricultural activity that has profound impacts, from pollution of water supplies to the undermining of ecosystems (including coastal) and the services and livelihoods they support.

The UN General Assembly Resolution on Oceans and Law of the Sea (65/37) in 2010 expressed its concern “regarding the spreading of hypoxic dead zones in oceans as a result of eutrophication fueled by riverine run-off of fertilizers, sewage outfall and reactive nitrogen resulting from the burning of fossil fuels and resulting in serious consequences for ecosystem functioning” and called upon States to enhance efforts to reduce eutrophication and, to this effect, to continue to cooperate within the framework of relevant international organizations, in particularly the Global Programme of Action”. Effective action on addressing nutrients and wastewater, which are major contributors to eutrophication, has however proven challenging, especially in developing countries. Some 417 eutrophic and associated oxygen depleted areas were identified in 2007

worldwide. Given that the situation was deteriorating and these source categories continued to be priority issues, as requested by the General Assembly resolution, it was suggested in 2012, that in the implementation of the GPA in the coming years, further attention be given to address these diffuse sources of pollution.

While welcoming the continued work of the States, the United Nations Environment Programme and regional organizations in the implementation of the GPA, the UN General Assembly Resolution 65/37 (paragraph 148), encouraged "increased emphasis on the link between freshwater, the coastal zone and marine resources in the implementation of international development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and of the time-bound targets in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"), in particular the target on sanitation, and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development". This also re-affirmed a need of enhanced effort to establish a policy link between coastal zone and watershed management. A number of pilot initiatives have resulted in practical ways to address these policy linkages such as Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management for the Caribbean Small Island Developing States, and support to the National Plan of Action for the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment in the Russian Federation, amongst others. It also highlights the further work needed to address nutrients and wastewater emanating from land-based activities in watersheds through management efforts to link watersheds and the coastal environment.

UNEP, through the GPA Coordination Office, has therefore sought to engage strategically with the key actors working in the area of nutrient management in order to control pollution from land-based activities, by taking a leadership role in the creation and management of a Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM). The GPNM was launched at the 17th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in May 2009 in order to bring together Government policymakers, scientists, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, with a view to communicating the nutrient management challenge and helping to build constituencies of interest and action on the issue. The GPNM is hosted by UNEP and aims to promote the sustainable consumption and use of nutrients, notably nitrogen and phosphorous, and to trigger high-level strategic interest and engagement among countries and stakeholders. Since its launch, GPNM has contributed to developments in science, policy, and public perception on nutrient management issues. Asia and Caribbean regional chapters for the GPNM have also been established.

Several actions have been undertaken by the GPNM including policy development, establishment of regional platforms, publication of scientific reports, development of 'on the ground projects', preparation of case studies and partner activities. GPNM is emerging on the global scene as a unique public-private partnership to address the economic, environmental, and social effects of intensifying food production.

Examples of regional work include the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), who, with technical inputs from GPNM and financial support from BOBLME, has carried out a study on Nutrient over-enrichment and coastal eutrophication in South Asia in order to develop a regional action plan and establish a regional policy forum to monitor progress of action and define corrective actions to be pursued by member countries.

The report "Our Nutrient World" (Sutton et al, 2013), produced through the GPNM, provides a concise overview of the state of knowledge related to the Nutrient Challenge. This report draws attention to the multiple benefits and threats of human nutrient use. It highlights how nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers are estimated to feed half

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