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**10th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas
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**Report of the 9th Global Meeting
of the
Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans**

**Report of the 9th Global Meeting
of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs)
held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
29-31 October 2007.**

The ninth Global Regional Seas meeting was held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 29th to 31st October 2007. The Secretariat of the Jeddah Convention/Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) hosted the meeting. Representatives from 16 Regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs), several UN and non-UN international organizations attended the meeting (list attached). The meeting reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the global regional seas strategy 2004-2007, and discussed among others some current issues/themes such as climate change, mainstreaming of coastal and marine issues into national planning, and delineation of continental shelf. A number of resource persons were specifically invited to address these issues. Based on the deliberations during the three days meeting, a new global regional seas strategy for 2008-2012 was finalized, and the meeting also adopted the Jeddah Declaration. This meeting report provides an overview of the various sessions, highlighting the main issues discussed and the conclusions reached. The detailed agenda of the meeting and the key outcomes i.e., the Global Regional Seas Strategy 2008-2012 and the Jeddah Declaration are attached to this report as annexure.

Day 1: Monday 29th October 2007

The inaugural session

Dr. Ziad Abu-Ghaarah, Secretary General of PERSGA called the meeting to order and delivered the address of welcome. Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, UN Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UNEP highlighted the history of the Regional Seas Program (RSP) and UNEP's role in supporting the RSP. The guest of honour, HRH Prince of Saudi Arabia Turki bin Nasser bin Abdul Aziz, President of the Department of Meteorology and Environmental Protection, inaugurated the meeting. His Royal Highness welcomed the delegates to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and emphasized the need for and importance of exchanging knowledge and experiences on environmental research and actions at both local and international levels. His Royal Highness also informed the meeting that the Saudi Arabian government has adopted an action plan to clean 200 kilometers of Jeddah's coastline and beaches.

The working sessions

At the outset of the working session, the delegates unanimously elected HE Eng. Abdul Rahman Fadhl Al-Eryani, Minister of Water and Environment, Government of Yemen as the Chair of the meeting, and Mr. Hamid Ghaffarzadeh of the Caspian Environment Program and Ms. Nassere Kaba, Director, Ministry of Environment and Quality of Life, Government of Cote d'Ivoire and Interim Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention as Rapporteurs of the meeting.

Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (UNEP/DEPI) outlined the background, purpose and expected outcomes of the meeting. Mr. Thiaw noted the special importance of the meeting given that one expected outcome is a new strategy for the RSP for the next five years - 2008-2012, that will take into account the impact of climate change on the environment, particularly on coastal and marine ecosystems. He urged the delegates to discuss the key global challenges that should guide the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas Programme (2008-2012) and to define practical and innovative approaches to mainstream the Regional Seas activities into national development planning and budgeting process based on their accumulated experiences of the past years.

Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator of Caribbean Environment Program and on behalf of the UNEP as the Secretariat of the Global RSP, reported on the implementation on the RS Strategic Directions 2004-2007. The presentation also highlighted the key accomplishments and challenges. It was reported that RSP facilitated the implementation of global initiatives such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), World Summit on Sustainable Development/ Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (WSSD/JPOI) targets, and ensured high-level participation in the decision-making process for the sustainability of the marine environment at national and regional levels. This generated increased global interest in the marine environment and also created opportunities for partnerships with NGOs, private sector, and civil society in general.

After these presentations, the Chair invited responses from the delegates on their observations on the progress in the implementation of the Global Regional Seas Strategies Directions 2004-2007. The representatives of MAP, Caspian Environment Program, Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, Black Sea Commission, PERSGA, ROPME, OSPAR, COBSEA, NOWPAP, CPPS, HELCOM, SAS/SACEP, SPREP, COCATRAM/NEP and Caribbean Environment Program briefly reported on their accomplishments and challenges, and elements of a way forward. Key highlights emerged from the various interventions, which can be summarized as follows.

Accomplishments:

- Member countries have taken considerable actions towards an ecosystem-based approach and sustainable development strategies and approaches.
- Legal frameworks have been developed and/or strengthened at both national and regional levels.
- Protocols to address land-based sources of pollution have been developed and ensure integrated coastal zone management in some of the conventions.
- While designing intervention strategies there have been greater emphasis on science-based actions.

Challenges:

- Long-term financial sustainability of activities initiated by the RSP is uncertain
- Decision-making is yet not fully coordinated in several regions.

- Ecosystem-based approaches are not fully understood by many actors both at national and regional levels. General awareness of actions taken is limited.
- Exchange of information and data among various stakeholders and countries is limited, and often the quality of data is poor or unavailable.

Way forward

- Climate change and its implications must be considered.
- The high seas issues also require more attention.
- Ecosystem-based approaches should be an integral part of program planning.

Session 2: Climate Change: Adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change on the marine and coastal environment.

Three presentations were made: Prof. Wong Poh Poh of IPCC, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw of UNEP and Prof. David Johnson of OSPAR.

Prof. Wong Poh Poh, the Coordinating Lead Author of Chapter 6 (Coastal Systems and Low-Lying Areas) of the 4th Assessment Report prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 2: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability of Climate Change, presented an overview of the findings of the latest IPCC report as regards the marine and coastal environment. Prof Poh Poh reported that evidence in support of climate warming is ‘unequivocal’ and that it is now evident that the global average temperature will increase around the world. This prediction however, excluded Antarctica, a region for which data is not available. It was emphasized that climate change will have major implications including rise in sea level, increase in tropical cyclones, coral bleaching, ocean acidification, threats to wetlands and increased flooding. He highlighted the ‘drivers’ and concluded that sea level rise will continue beyond 2100 with irreversible damage to coastal areas in particular to hotspots of vulnerability in Asia, Africa and small to low islands. He also noted that in the long-term, inaction to address climate change would cost society considerably more than adaptation measures, and therefore urged the development of adaptation measures, e.g. integrated coastal/delta management, addressing research needs such as better baseline data, strengthened prediction capacities, methods for prioritization of actions and in knowledge networking.

Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw (Director, UNEP/DEPI) informed the meeting about the Draft UNEP Strategy on Climate Change, and invited their views and contributions in this process. He stressed that UNEP attached high priority to climate change and noted that IPCC was established by UNEP and IMO. He argued that the draft strategy on climate change has been developed based on UNEP’s comparative advantage including its long term association with the climate change issue and relevant stakeholders, *inter alia*; governments, industry, civil society, the UN family and the scientific community. The Strategy will focus on capacity building, innovative initiatives, engaging multiple stakeholders, adapting through building resilience, strong proactive action and transition to low carbon societies.

Prof. David Johnson (Executive Secretary, OSPAR) presented the recent amendments to the OSPAR Convention permitting carbon capture and storage. He joined the earlier speakers in stressing that 'the need for action was inescapable' as climate change would lead to unprecedented and profound changes in marine/coastal environments with major implications for sustainable development. Noting that CO₂ was the major culprit he suggested that sequestration, although not a panacea, was a major option. He briefly listed OSPAR activities including studies on CO₂ capture, transmission and storage processes and the legal and technical workshops held, communication and engagement with industry and the success in defining Amendments to the Annexes which lay down the legal framework for 'actions regarding climate change'. He highlighted that the measures unanimously agreed by the OSPAR Commission in 2007 which are (or will become) legally binding to all OSPAR Contracting Parties (see RS.9/Inf.9), consisting of; (a) Amendments of Annex II and Annex III to the OSPAR Convention (1992) in relation to the Storage of Carbon Dioxide Streams in Geological Formations; (b) OSPAR Decision 2007/1 to Prohibit the Storage of Carbon Dioxide Streams in the Water Column or on the Sea-bed; (c) OSPAR Decision 2007/2 on the Storage of Carbon Dioxide Streams in Geological Formations and their strategic implications. The importance of the OSPAR Guidelines for Risk Assessment and Management of Storage of CO₂ Streams in Geological Formations including a framework for Risk Assessment and Management of Storage of CO₂ Streams in Geological Formations (FRAM), which the OSPAR Commission had agreed to accompany OSPAR Decision 2007/2.

After the presentation, questions, comments, and observations were invited from the floor. During the discussion, more information was sought on measures such as 'ocean bed fertilization' and on 'use of depleted oil and gas reservoirs as storage facilities', climate change impact on inland waters and the impact of climate change on salinity and on sea bed currents. Information was provided on the High Level Meeting of Scientists and Politicians planned for April 2008 in Ecuador. Information was also provided on climate change adaptive measures being developed and pursued in the Mediterranean Sea - 'a climate change hotspot'. Participants also voiced concern on the need to consider climate change adaptation measures as business opportunities through use of appropriate financial and economic instruments and cost recovery mechanisms. The meeting emphasized on the need for more research on issues ranging from ocean fertilization, CO₂ storage, and impacts on currents and on deep oceans. It was also suggested to seek a more UN wide joint strategy on climate change.

In the light of the above discussion, the meeting was informed that the draft UNEP Strategy on climate change reflects a partnership approach to make best use of limited resources and to avoid overlap and/or duplication. As regards the marine part of this strategy, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans will be a key partner for UNEP. The suitability of sub-seabed geological formations for a safe, permanent storage/containment of CO₂ has to be judged on a case-by-case basis. The guidelines adopted by OSPAR offer advice on the relevant risk assessment and management considerations. The 4th Assessment reports prepared by the various IPCC Working Groups provide information on other actual or potential effects of climate change, such as on enclosed/inland seas, the strength and circulation patterns of deep-sea currents, and

salinity. It was also mentioned that there are clear financial incentives, including the potential for carbon credits, to look into (and invest in) carbon sequestration and storage opportunities. However, carbon sequestration and storage (CSS) measures should be taken as only one of a portfolio of options to reduce levels of atmospheric CO₂. CCS represents an important interim supplement to measures for the reduction or prevention of CO₂ emissions and should not be considered as a substitute for other means to reduce CO₂ emissions. Finally, it was mentioned that the current climate change 'momentum' provides opportunities for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to increase their work on climate change adaptation. There is a need to consider, *inter alia*, how to position and strengthen the role of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in the international processes, what contributions they can provide, and how the up-take of these contributions, e.g. to improve national action plans, could be facilitated.

The meeting concluded this session by congratulating Prof. Wong Poh Poh, representing the scientists and experts involved in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and requested him to convey this message to all his fellow colleagues of IPCC.

Session 3: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Dr. Anantha Kumar Duraiappah, Head of Ecosystem Services Economics (ESE) Unit UNEP presented the findings from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. He informed the meeting that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) was carried out by more than 1000 scientists from 100 countries. This was conducted at multiple scales (local to global) and was designed to both provide information and build capacity to provide information. It was expected that the exercise will be repeated at 5-10 year intervals if it successfully meets needs. The key goal of the MA was to carry out policy-relevant assessments of ecosystems and the linkages to human well-being for use by decision makers. Dr. Duraiappah emphasized that the degradation of ecosystem services is a barrier to achieving the MDGs and reported that in the last 50 years human beings have changed the ecosystem more than any comparable time period and 60% of ecosystems in decline with consequent impacts on human well being and economic development. He noted that the challenge of reversing the degradation of ecosystems while meeting increasing demands for their services can be partially met under certain scenarios considered in the MA but as these involve significant changes in policies, institutions and practices, they are not likely to be implemented in the short-term. Furthermore, many options exist to conserve or enhance specific ecosystem services in ways that reduce negative trade-offs or that provide positive synergies with other ecosystem services. These options involve global coordination of major investments in public goods (e.g., education, infrastructure) and poverty reduction, the removal of trade barriers and the elimination of distorting subsidies, widespread use of adaptive management practices and significant investment in the development of technologies to increase efficiency in the use of ecosystem services, the widespread use of 'payments for ecosystem services', and the development of market mechanisms. Finally, it was stressed that one principal reason for the decline in ecosystem was that their full value was not captured in decision making processes.

Due to time constraints, the Chair did not open the floor for discussion and proposed to take up comments on the following day. The Chair then opened the agenda item on establishment of ad-hoc working groups for drafting the Jeddah Declaration and the Regional Seas Strategic Directions for 2008 – 2012.

Establishment of Ad-hoc Working Groups

The Chair introduced the agenda item and briefly described the functions and expectations of the two Ad-hoc Working Groups; one to develop the Strategic Directions 2008-2012 and the other to work on the Jeddah Declaration. The delegates nominated by consensus the following representatives to lead the Ad-hoc Working Groups, but also invited others to join the group at their own convenience.

Ad-hoc Working Group for Strategic Directions 2008-2012:

- Dr. Leo Brewster (Chair)
- Mr. Kent Blom (Member)
- Ms. Jeeyun Lee (Member)
- Mr. Lucian Chabason (Secretary)

Ad-hoc Working Group Jeddah Declaration

- Dr. Ziad H. Abu Ghararah (Chair)
- Mr. Paul Mifsud (Member)
- Prof. David Johnson (Member)
- Dr. Ahmed Khalil (Secretary)

Subsequently, the work of these groups were supported by many other delegates notably by Ms. Anne Christine Brusendroff of HELCOM, Mr. James Kamara of Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, Mr. Gonzalo Pereira and Fernando Felix of CPPS, Ms. Rosa Maria Rodriguez and Ms. Maria Isabel Fernandez of NEP, Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares of CEP and Mr. Ruisheng Yue of COBSEA and NOWPAP.

Day 2: Tuesday 30th October 2007

The morning session was opened with a brief update on the progress of the two Working Groups. This was followed by **Session 4** while three presentations were made. Firstly, Dr. Duraiappah of UNEP in continuation of his previous presentation highlighted the core principles for using the ecosystem services human well-being approach, such as among other, treating of various resources as interrelating parts of living and dynamic systems rather than as individual components to be managed separately and need to separate impacts on various social and economic groups. He also emphasized on need for looking at cause and effects across time and space and the need to further work at interdependences and trade offs among ecosystem services and among well-being

constituents and determinants and addressing the long-term consequences of today's decisions.

Mr. Ameer Abdullah of IUCN presented 'Enhancing Red Sea Resilience in case of Climate Change'. Based on the work of IUCN Climate Change and Coral Reef working group he informed the meeting that signs of coral bleaching due to impact of climate change started to appear in 1998. He provided information on the Red Sea Marine Program's case study of applying ecosystem-based approaches assessing coral reef bleaching in the red sea and how ecosystem 'resilience' could be enhanced through local empowerment, capacity building and training efforts. This according to him would require well-planned actions with appropriate monitoring system in place.

Dr. Alan Simcock briefed the meeting on his work to develop a "manual for RSP on ecosystem-based approaches to managing human activities affecting the marine environment". He added that the manual would provide a framework for thinking, a confirmation of essential principles and a toolbox of techniques. During the discussion, UNEP's advocacy of ecosystem-based approaches was praised. Many participants stressed that the target group for the manual should be the RS and that it should be developed with the substantive involvement of the RS. Other delegates questioned how the proposed manual would be different from other manuals already available, and whether the 'Manual' could be developed for various sectors. A suggestion was made to orient the work towards 'EBA guidelines' rather than a 'manual'. The participants suggested that there was a need for UN agencies to harmonize the development and application of the EBA noting the ongoing work at UNEP/WCMC and WRI of Washington on other EBA manuals. Participants also observed that the EBA is complex, holistic and sustainable development oriented, but to date it is dominated by biological thinking which made it difficult for other stakeholders to understand and appreciate. They emphasized that the EBA should be able to address human development and economic concerns, and argued that in developing the manual/guidelines different perspectives in terms of what ecosystems management and services mean should be clearly defined and articulated. The manual should also include discussion on the potential services and services realized. Some participants requested UNEP to take the lead in harmonizing the concept of ecosystem management with reference to decisions taken during the 24th Session of the UNEP Governing Council on the need for the international panel for sustainable resource management and follow-up of the Millennium Assessment. Dr. Alan Simcock responded that EBA manual is based on the sustainable development tripod - environment, society and economy, and that the use of the word 'manual' is used to

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