
The State of the Marine Environment

Regional Assessments

The Hague, July 2006

Foreword

Recognising the significance of the pressure of human development activities on the coastal and marine environment, 108 governments and the European Commission adopted the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) in 1995. They made a commitment to deal with land-based impacts on the marine environment resulting from contaminants namely sewage, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), radioactive substances, heavy metals, oils (hydrocarbons), nutrients, sediment mobilisation, marine litter and the physical alteration and destruction of habitats.

The GPA calls for periodic reviews, taking into account assessments of the state of the marine environment. The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office commissioned a global State of the Environment report as a contribution to the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting in Beijing in October 2006. This expert report provides a concise global overview of the developments over the last decade within the area of focus of the GPA.

The report relies on information that dates back farther than the adoption of the GPA, largely because of limited contemporary data. At the same time, there often exists a considerable time lag between the pressures imposed on the environment, the development of policies, the implementation of measures and the visible manifestation of their impact. Consequently, while the findings of the report may not be based on as current information as we would like, the resulting analysis is indicative of certain trends in the state of the marine environment as they relate to the GPA.

The State of the Marine Environment: A Regional Assessment informs and compliments the other studies the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office has produced for the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting.

The report identifies that countries have made considerable progress in developing and implementing appropriate policy responses at national, regional and international levels. Nevertheless, progress over the last decade needs to be sustained and strengthened in response to the growing pressures, with special attention to implementation, enforcement and environmental governance.

The UNEP/GPA Coordination office and its partners are pleased to present this expert report and it is our hope that the findings presented here will further support global, regional and national efforts in implementing the Global Programme of Action. The scientific and logistical support of LOICZ as well as the scientific and financial support by UNEP/DEWA was much appreciated.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
AMCOW	African Ministerial Conference on Water
AMSP	Arctic Marine Strategic Plan
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment
BAPCO	Bahrain Petroleum Company
BCLME	Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem
BOD	Biological Oxygen Demand
BPoA	Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of SIDS
BSC	Black Sea Commission
BSEP	Black Sea Environmental Programme
BSERP	Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project
BSSAP	Black Sea Strategic Action Plan
CAR/RCU	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIPOL	Caribbean Oil Pollution Programme
CEHI	Caribbean Environmental Health Institute
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CLC	Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage
COD	Chemical Oxygen Demand
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (South Africa)
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FUND	Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage
GCLME	Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIWA	Global International Waters Assessment
GoGLME	Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystem Project
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
HABs	Harmful Algal Blooms
HDI	Human Development Index
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAM	Integrated Coastal Area Management
ICRP	International Commission on Radiological Protection
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGR	Intergovernmental Review
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
LBS	Land-Based Sources
LC	Lethal Concentration

LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
LOICZ	Land Ocean Interaction in the Coastal Zone
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPC	Maximum Permissible Concentration
MPN	Most Probable Number
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
NPA	National Programme of Action
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OHC	Oil Hydrocarbons
OPRC	Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Co-operation
PADH	Physical alteration and destruction of habitats
PAH	Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
PAME	Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
PC	Personal computers
PEMSEA	Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
PHC	Petroleum Hydrocarbons
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PTS	Persistent Toxic Substances
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RMS	ROPME Member States
ROPME	Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
Roshydromet	Russian Federal Service on Hydrometeorology and Monitoring of Environment
ROWA	Regional Office for West Asia
RPA	Regional Programme of Action
RSA	ROPME Sea Area
SAREC	Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation
SeaWiFS	Sea-viewing Wide Field-of-view Sensor
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SoE	State of Environment
SPAW	Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
TDS	Total Dissolved Solids
TOD	Total Oxygen Demand
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US-EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
WACAF	West and Central Africa
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region

WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment
WESTPAC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Regional Secretariat for the Western Pacific
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Maritime Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

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