



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL
PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT
FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES
MONDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2001**

The first Intergovernmental Review (IGR) on Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) began on Monday, 26 November in Montreal. Delegates heard opening remarks, addressed organizational matters, reviewed accomplishments in GPA implementation, and considered the GPA's strategic action plan on municipal wastewater.

OPENING REMARKS

Donald Kaniaru, Director, UNEP Division for Policy Implementation, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, stated that the IGR meeting would consider opportunities for and barriers to GPA implementation, and pave the way for a revitalized programme for the next six years. He said the meeting would review: progress in GPA implementation; the results of scientific assessments of the impacts of land-based activities on the marine environment; progress with national plans; coordination among governments and institutions; and progress in capacity building and mobilization of resources to support GPA implementation.

Herb Dhaliwal, Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, highlighted efforts underway in Canada to manage its oceans in an integrated and sustainable way, including the adoption of the first Oceans Act in 1997, implementation of its National Programme of Action (NPA) in 2000, establishment of a network of marine protected areas, and implementation of an oceans strategy. He highlighted remaining challenges, including instilling a sense of stewardship for oceans at all levels, dealing with sources of marine pollution, and actively developing new financing mechanisms to assist all countries with GPA implementation. He underscored the need for global action and integrated management to protect the oceans for future generations.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Delegates elected by acclamation Herb Dhaliwal (Canada) as Chair of the meeting, Magnus Johannesson (Iceland) and Amb. Tuiloma Neroni Slade (Samoa) as Co-Chairs, Rejoice Mabudahasi (South Africa) and Boris Morgunov (Russian Federation) as Vice Co-Chairs, and Franklin McDonald (Jamaica) as Rapporteur. Delegates supported a proposal by Co-Chair Johannesson (Iceland) to establish a drafting group, chaired by Tom Laughlin (US), to work on the Montreal Declaration on the GPA. Delegates then adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/1) as presented by Veerle Vandeweerd, GPA Office Coordinator.

**REVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE GPA, 1995-2001**

GLOBAL LEVEL: GPA Office Coordinator Vandeweerd presented a review of accomplishments in GPA implementation, based on input from 50 countries and 20 organizations. She reported progress in developing regional action plans, conducting environmental impact assessments, and identifying problems and policy needs, but noted that little concrete action has been taken. She outlined barriers to progress, including: lack of awareness, political will and finance; limited availability of appropriate technologies; weak compliance and enforcement of policies; and the institutional divide between the freshwater, coastal zone and marine communities.

Michael Hugo, Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection (GESAMP), presented a recent GESAMP report. He highlighted, *inter alia*, difficulties with quantitative assessments, the impacts of pollution on food security and public health, the benefits and costs of policy action, and policy priorities. He stressed that reducing nutrient inputs and sewage generates large benefits but is also very costly. He highlighted three priorities for action: preventing habitat destruction; reducing pollution from sewage, nutrients and sediments; and incorporating the economic cost of environmental values in policy formulation.

REGIONAL LEVEL: Franklin McDonald, Chair of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the Cartagena Convention, presented a report on the Aruba Protocol to the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region. He described the Protocol as a strong agreement that furthers the GPA's goals by establishing regional effluent standards and identifying concrete actions on specific sources of pollution. He noted that the Protocol has not yet entered into force.

Lucien Chabasson, Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinator, noted the adoption of a revised Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources in 1996, which was designed to: incorporate river basins and watersheds in addressing marine pollution; address substances as well as categories of activities; enable countries to adopt regulations and enact permit systems; provide for adoption of regional strategies to reduce or eliminate pollution; and establish a system of reporting to the COP. He highlighted recent progress, including the completion of an inventory of pollution sources and the adoption of a Mediterranean Programme of Action in 1997.

NATIONAL LEVEL: John Arseneau, Environment Canada, presented Canada's NPA, adopted in June 2000. He highlighted pollution prevention and integrated management of activities within coastal and marine waters as primary strategies for protecting the marine environment from land-based activities. He said key lessons learned include: following the GPA's six-step methodology; involving all relevant stakeholders; beginning with immediate priori-

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

ties and proceeding to address all priorities; building on existing management strategies; building capacity; ensuring sustainable financing; and maintaining flexibility.

Boris Morgunov, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Russian Federation, presented the NPA for the Arctic region. He noted that pollution of the Arctic seas is largely a result of oil and gas drilling, mining, pulp and paper, transport, fishing and military activities. He said the Russian Federation aims to develop monitoring systems to assess pollution levels in the Russian Arctic, develop measures to protect the health of local communities, and promote cooperation with other institutions in addressing the transboundary movement of pollutants and protection of the Arctic Region.

Robson José Calixto, Brazilian Ministry of Environment, presented the NPA for the Brazilian section of the upper southwest Atlantic region. He highlighted water pollution, contamination of sediments and aquatic organisms, changes in sediment dynamics, degradation of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and endangered fish stocks as priority issues. He identified strategies for managing these problems, including: reducing pollution of water, sediments and aquatic organisms by encouraging the adoption of less polluting operating practices and technologies; developing studies on technological alternatives for basic sanitation; and supporting the development of environmental monitoring models.

BELGIUM, for the EU, stressed the need to employ integrated approaches to river basin and coastal management, build partnerships among stakeholders, and actively involve all relevant organizations. On finance, he recognized the role of the GEF but emphasized that countries should rely primarily on domestic resources. The WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) highlighted the impact of coastal pollution on human health.

GPA's STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ON MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

GPA Office Coordinator Vandeweerd introduced the GPA's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) on Municipal Wastewater (UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/4 and 5) and Guidance on Municipal Wastewater (UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/INF/4). She explained that the SAP aims to further develop the GPA's guidance on sewage, and to support Regional Seas and other relevant bodies to address sewage as a priority problem by: seeking consensus on the guidance document; promoting alternative solutions; facilitating partnerships to apply best practices; and facilitating regional cooperation. Regarding the current status of the SAP's implementation, she noted that the draft guidance has been developed, a global knowledge base developed and integrated in the "Sanitation Connection" database, and several regional workshops held to review the guidance document, share experiences on best practices and identify pilot projects. In the next four years, the SAP will focus on building capacity to develop new partnerships, explore alternative solutions and facilitate sustainable action. She noted that the SAP on sewage will serve as a model approach for other source categories, and said it would be submitted for endorsement to the UNEP Governing Council at its 22nd session.

TANZANIA underscored the need for new and additional financial resources to improve wastewater management in the East Africa region. COSTA RICA said funding is not well-defined in the SAP and thus the SAP should clearly note the need for new financial mechanisms to ensure that implementation activities are properly financed on a priority basis. The WHO outlined projects it is working on with the GPA, including a global water supply and sanitation coverage survey, ecological sanitation alternatives, and the Sanitation Connection database.

The UN CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT) urged delegates to consider the important role of cities in implementing the GPA. The WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL noted that the SAP recognizes the variability of local circumstances and the need for local actors to use discretion when applying the guidelines, and highlighted the need for targeted capacity building. The UNEP DIVISION OF TECHNOLOGY, INDUSTRY AND ECONOMICS highlighted the importance of strengthening mechanisms to build local capacity to address municipal wastewater issues. He noted the Division's recent compilation of a sourcebook on wastewater management and a survey of alternative technologies. ICLEI described its International Water Campaign, and noted potential areas

for ICLEI/GPA collaboration, including testing the guidelines with local government partners and networking cities for sharing best practice information. WWF-UK recommended that the GPA address natural alternatives to expensive sewage treatment plants, such as constructed wetlands and onsite composting, which are simpler to maintain and more effective in the long term.

AUSTRALIA expressed support for the SAP but called for further analysis and attention to regional and national differences. COLOMBIA cited its national action plan, which is based on the polluter-pays principle, and stressed the need to change users' mentality. The US proposed adding monitoring and policy evaluation to the GPA policy cycle, and said the GPA Office should seek funding for demonstration projects. THAILAND supported the SAP's attention to capacity building, and proposed including the polluter-pays principle as an official element. JAPAN said the SAP should take national circumstances into account, and emphasized the need for public-private partnerships and enforcement of the polluter-pays principle. SWEDEN, supported by GHANA and JAMAICA, proposed addressing industrial discharges in sewage systems and using alternatives to high-tech solutions, and supported efforts to develop SAPs for other sources of marine pollution. The WHO discussed cost-effective solutions to marine pollution that also benefit the economy, and cited examples of new filtration mechanisms and chemical-assisted primary treatment.

The UK welcomed the Guidance as a helpful tool, and recommended greater emphasis on defining water quality standards to enable effective wastewater treatment, and considering the needs of the poorest in developing policy frameworks. ST. LUCIA stressed the need for targets for wastewater treatment coverage and effluent guidelines, and endorsed the development of pilot projects that enable sewage needs assessments and development of low-cost and appropriate technologies.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the SAP should provide frameworks for cooperation in the distribution of best available sewage treatment technologies. JORDAN stressed the need to employ appropriate low-cost technologies or simple regulatory measures to reduce pollutant loads, and underscored the importance of thinking regionally and acting nationally. CHINA urged the establishment of additional financial mechanisms and strengthening of technology transfer for prevention of pollution from land-based sources. The INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE underscored that wastewater treatment is of crucial importance to the GPA and all other agreements related to UNCED, and noted the cost-effectiveness of creating one mechanism for capacity building and technology transfer to serve the needs of all such instruments.

SAMOA highlighted priority issues for small island developing states in sewage management, including the understanding of other contributing factors such as drainage and the need for assessment studies to test sewage management systems. PALAU expressed support for the principles of the GPA, particularly the promotion of sustainable cost-effective technologies, but noted that technologies must be compatible with local environmental and cultural circumstances. PAKISTAN underscored the importance of disseminating technological know-how relating to low-cost wastewater management projects. MOZAMBIQUE noted that the selection of wastewater treatment options should take into account health-care savings resulting from wastewater treatment improvements. BARBADOS urged caution regarding implementation of low-cost wastewater treatment solutions, which could damage marine ecosystems if implemented incorrectly.

NEW ZEALAND strongly supported a regional approach to GPA implementation. CHILE said it is utopic to expect action from international institutions, and stressed privatization of sanitation enterprises. ECUADOR expressed concern with the costs of technologies. UNIDO noted limitations in applying the polluter-pays principle and called for positive incentives for change. The GPA Office stressed the need to apply knowledge to practice and to involve the private sector and international financial institutions.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Plenary: Delegates will convene at 10:00 am in Plenary 4 to consider the 2002-2006 costed GPA work programme, and at 3:00 pm to discuss ocean governance.

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