

## SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW MEETING OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES:

16-20 OCTOBER 2006

The Second Intergovernmental Review (IGR-2) Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) opens today in Beijing, China, and will continue until 20 October 2006. The goals of the IGR-2 are to: strengthen the implementation of the GPA at national, regional and global levels; contribute to the achievement of specific targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) as they relate to the GPA, the ecosystem approach, and sanitation; and provide guidance on the programme of work for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)/GPA Coordination Office for the period 2007-2011.

During the week, delegates will participate in parallel breakout groups to address national implementation in action, and in partnerships workshops. Delegates will also convene in plenary to hold sessions on organizational matters and building a common agenda. A Ministerial High-Level Segment will take place on the last two days of the conference. Throughout the week, a working group is expected to draft the Beijing Declaration, to be adopted in plenary during the Ministerial Segment.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GPA

Major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land, including the generation of municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and runoff, as well as atmospheric deposition. These contaminants affect the most productive areas of the marine environment, particularly estuaries and near-shore coastal waters. The marine environment is also threatened by physical alterations of the coastal zone, such as the destruction of habitats critical to the maintenance of ecosystem health.

**UNCHE AND UNEP:** The UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5-16 June 1972, led to the adoption of a number of regional and international agreements, and underscored "the vital importance for humanity of the seas and all the living organisms which the oceans support." At the conference, the UN General Assembly resolved to establish UNEP, which was codified by UN General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII). UNEP and UNCHE endorsed a regional approach to controlling marine pollution.

**UNEP REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME:** UNEP launched its Regional Seas Programme in 1974 by encouraging groups of countries sharing common seas to find regional solutions to their particular problems. The Regional Seas Programme now covers 18 regions of the world, making it one of the most globally comprehensive initiatives for the protection of marine and coastal environments. These regions are the: Antarctic; Arctic; Baltic; Black Sea; Caspian; Eastern Africa; East Asian Seas; Mediterranean; North-East Atlantic; North-East Pacific; North-West Pacific; Pacific; Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (Gulf States); South Asian Seas; South-East Pacific; Western Africa and the Wider Caribbean.

**UNCLOS:** The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) opened for signature on 10 December 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, at the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea. It sets forth the rights and obligations of States regarding the use of the oceans, their resources, and the protection of the marine and coastal environment. The Convention entered into force on 16 November 1994.

**THE MONTREAL GUIDELINES:** Coinciding with the adoption of UNCLOS, UNEP began addressing issues related to impacts on the marine environment from land-based activities. This initiative resulted in the preparation of the Montreal Guidelines for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-based Sources, which were endorsed by the UNEP Governing Council in 1985. The Guidelines were expected to serve as a basis for future drafting work at the international and national levels.

**UNCED:** The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992) adopted Agenda 21, an action plan for implementing sustainable development. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 addresses "the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources." It specifically refers to the Montreal Guidelines and, in paragraph 17.26, invites the UNEP Governing Council to convene, as soon as practicable, an intergovernmental meeting on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.

**UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISION 17/20:** In response to paragraph 17.26 of Agenda 21, the Governing Council, in its decision 17/20 of 21 May 1993, *inter alia*, authorized the Executive Director to implement the UNCED recommendations and decided on a workplan, timetable and budget for the preparatory process and the intergovernmental meeting itself, which would be held in Washington, D.C., US, in 1995.

**GPA:** The GPA was adopted by 108 governments and the European Commission at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt a Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, held in Washington, D.C., US, from 23 October to 3 November 1995. The Conference designated UNEP as the Secretariat of the GPA to lead the coordination of GPA implementation. UNEP established the GPA Coordination Office in The Hague, the Netherlands, in 1997. The GPA was designed to be a source of conceptual and practical guidance to be drawn on by national and/or regional authorities in devising and implementing sustained action to prevent, reduce, control and/or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities. The GPA calls on States to:

- establish priorities based on assessments of the severity and impacts of contaminants, applying integrated coastal area and watershed management approaches;
- set management objectives, including goals, targets and timetables, to address priority problems with regard to source categories and affected areas;
- identify, evaluate and select strategies and measures to achieve these objectives; and
- develop criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and measures.

**UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISION 20/19B:** In February 1999, the UNEP Governing Council, in its decision 20/19 B, decided to undertake the first IGR of the status of implementation of the GPA in 2001, and requested the UNEP Executive Director to organize an expert group meeting to facilitate the preparatory process.

**IGR-1:** At the first IGR (Montreal, Canada, 26-30 November 2001), representatives from 98 countries, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) convened to review the implementation of the GPA since its adoption in November 1995, and to chart the way forward. The meeting endorsed the GPA Coordination Office 2002-2006 Programme of Work with indicative costs, and focused on the following issues: municipal wastewater; integrated coastal and oceans governance; building partnerships; and financing the implementation of the GPA. The meeting noted steady, albeit slow, progress in the implementation of the GPA at global, regional and national levels. IGR-1 outcomes include the Montreal Declaration, conclusions of the Co-Chairs, a declaration by the Global Legislators' Organization for a Balanced Environment, a statement by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, and a statement by NGOs.

### RECENT INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

#### WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August - 4 September 2002) negotiated and adopted two main documents: the JPOI and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. Among the 11 chapters of the JPOI, which provide a framework for action to implement sustainable development commitments, Chapter VII on "Sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS)" contains a paragraph on the implementation of the GPA in SIDS. Other JPOI commitments related to the GPA include: the enhancement of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment from pollution; the facilitation of partnerships for the implementation of intergovernmental commitments; and the target of applying the ecosystem approach by 2010.

**THIRD GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS, COASTS, AND ISLANDS:** The Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands (Paris, France, 24-27 January 2006) took as its theme "Moving the Global Oceans Agenda Forward." Bringing together

over 400 participants, the meeting sought to accelerate progress in achieving international oceans policy targets, especially those related to the WSSD and the Millennium Development Goals. Participants focused on two major emerging oceans policy issues: high seas governance, and the wide-ranging effects of climate change on oceans and coastal environments. Participants also developed specific recommendations on enhanced means for linking freshwater to coasts to oceans, which will be presented at IGR-2.

**STOCKHOLM CONVENTION COP-2:** The second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (Geneva, Switzerland, 1-5 May 2006) adopted 18 decisions on, *inter alia*, DDT exemptions, financial resources and mechanisms, implementation plans, technical assistance, synergies and effectiveness evaluation. In particular, key issues at COP-2 included the first review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism of the Convention, and a process to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention at COP-4 in 2009.

**UNICPOLOS-7:** At the seventh meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (New York, 12-16 June 2006), delegates: exchanged views on areas of concern and actions needed; discussed cooperation and coordination on ocean issues; and identified issues that could benefit from attention in future work of the General Assembly. A discussion panel was held to consider ecosystem approaches and oceans.

**ONLINE DIALOGUE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COASTAL DEVELOPMENT:** An online dialogue hosted by the Stakeholder Forum, in collaboration with UNEP/GPA, was held on the theme "Our Expanding Urban Coast: a Threat to the Marine Environment and Human Health," from 19-30 June 2006. The aim of the dialogue was to explore the links between the marine environment, coastal urbanization and physical alteration and destruction of habitat, integrated management approaches, and nutrient loading. The dialogue also sought to develop recommendations on: processes and policies to address these issues at all levels; the GPA's role; and the potential role of various stakeholders.

**IGR-2 INFORMAL PREPARATORY MEETING:** At an informal preparatory meeting for IGR-2 (Paris, France, 27-28 June), over 40 government, IGO and NGO representatives convened to advance the preparation of the draft IGR-2 official documents, and to seek guidance on some of the issues to be addressed during the Ministerial Segment. The documents discussed were: draft Guidance to the Implementation of the GPA for 2007-2011: GPA contribution to the internationally-agreed goals and targets for the sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands; UNEP/GPA Coordination Office Proposed Programme of Work 2007-2011; Elements of a Ministerial Segment Background Document; and Elements of the Beijing Declaration on the GPA.

**REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** The following regional preparatory meetings for IGR-2 were held: the Regional Workshop on Development and Implementation of National Programmes of Action (NPAs), Mexico City, Mexico, 22-26 August 2005; UNEP Oceans Policy Roundtable, Washington D.C., US, 11 January 2006; the Caspian Environment Programme Revisit Planning Meeting, Baku, Azerbaijan, 27-28 February 2006; the Meeting for the Preparation of an NPA, Beijing, China, 11-12 April 2006; the Meeting to examine and agree on the regional position relative to IGR-2 and review progress of the pilot projects on land-based sources of pollution, Valparaíso, Chile, 30 May-1 June 2006; the Meeting to review the long-term implementation of NPAs to address pollution from land-based activities, Durres, Albania, 1-3 June 2006; and the Regional Latin American and Caribbean NPA Meeting, Panama City, Panama, 4-5 July 2006.