

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 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) took place in Beijing, China, from 16-20 October 2006. The meeting was hosted by the State Environmental Protection Administration of China and attended by over 400 participants, representing governments, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The goals of IGR-2 were 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 as they relate to the GPA, the ecosystem approach, and sanitation; and provide guidance on the programme of work for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/GPA Coordination Office for the period 2007-2011.

Over the course of the five-day meeting, delegates addressed several key issues, including: the way forward with National Plans of Action, a review of accomplishments in GPA implementation from 2001 to 2006; and Guidance for the Implementation of the GPA 2007-2011. Delegates also engaged in 19 partnership workshops on mainstreaming the implementation of the GPA.

Over 40 ministers and high-level officials, as well as representatives from 19 intergovernmental organizations, 17 UN agencies and 12 NGOs, also addressed the meeting during a High-Level Segment. The outcomes of the meeting include: a Chair's summary of the high-level discussions; a report of the meeting; and the Beijing Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the GPA. The Declaration will be submitted for endorsement to the next UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in February 2007.

As delegates applauded the closure of the session on Friday afternoon, the poignant impression they shared was of a well-planned and -executed endeavor that managed to achieve its goals. To many, the most important outcomes were plenary's approval of the Coordination Office's new programme of work, and the meeting's strong emphasis on new ideas for the further implementation of the GPA.

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, in June 1972, led to the adoption of a number of regional and

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international agreements, and underscored “the vital importance for humanity of the seas and all the living organisms which the oceans support.” The conference called for the establishment of UNEP, which was codified by UN General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII). 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 Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, 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, Wider Caribbean, as well as Western and Eastern Africa.

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 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 invites, in paragraph 17.26, 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 Agenda 21, the UNEP Governing Council, in its decision 17/20 of 21 May 1993, *inter alia*, authorized the UNEP Executive Director to implement the UNCED recommendations, and decided on a workplan, timetable and budget for the preparatory process and the intergovernmental meeting itself, to 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., 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 20/19B, decided to undertake the first IGR of the 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 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.

IGR-2 REPORT

On Monday morning, 16 October 2006, Zhou Shengxian, Minister of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), China, opened IGR-2 and outlined national measures to reduce pollutants discharge, including the construction of wastewater treatment plants, the reduction of use of fertilizers and pesticides, and the promotion of marine nature reserves.

Khalid Malik, UN Resident Coordinator in China, emphasized the role of the GPA in linking environment and development objectives and addressing challenges at the national and local levels. Calling for prioritizing capacity building in developing countries, he highlighted the challenges of mainstreaming GPA objectives across sectors and ministries, and into national development budgets, legislation and institutional planning.

Veerle Vandeweerd, Coordinator, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, encouraged delegates to celebrate the GPA's achievements and share experiences. She stressed the importance of partnerships among, and involvement and awareness of, all stakeholders, including non-governmental actors.

Noting a need for on-the-ground-action, Ian Matheson, Environment Canada, highlighted the importance of: sharing knowledge and experiences; fostering creative solutions; and building working partnerships and cooperation among governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. He said GPA goals can be achieved with innovation and local knowledge, and extensive funding is not always needed.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On Monday, delegates elected Zhou Shengxian as IGR-2 Chair; Ferguson Theophilus John (Saint Lucia), Lucia Ana Varga (Romania) and Rejoice Mabudafhasi (South Africa) as Vice-Chairs; and Tom Laughlin (US) as rapporteur. Delegates adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/1) without amendment. Chair Zhou Shengxian invited Mexico to chair the open-ended working group on the draft elements of the Beijing Declaration (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/5).

On Monday, delegates addressed national implementation of the GPA, both in plenary and in three breakout groups. On Tuesday, delegates engaged in 19 partnership workshops on mainstreaming the GPA, and on Wednesday in plenary, they considered reports from the partnership workshops, a Progress Report for the period 2002-2006, guidance for the implementation of the GPA for 2007-2011, and the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office Programme of Work for 2007-2011. A working group was formed on Monday to negotiate the draft elements of the Beijing Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the GPA, and met until Wednesday morning when it concluded its work. The draft Declaration was presented in plenary on Wednesday afternoon and adopted on Friday during the High-Level Segment. This Segment took place on Thursday and Friday, with nine roundtable discussions being held on Thursday afternoon on the importance of oceans, coasts and islands and their associated watersheds, and the way forward.

THE WAY FORWARD WITH NPAS

Vice-Chair Varga chaired this panel on Monday. Vandeweerd highlighted the need for domestic political endorsement of national plans of action (NPAs), increased funding, and mainstreaming the GPA in development processes and plans.

Colombia outlined key NPA elements, including scientific research, technology transfer, institutional strengthening, clean production, education, and capacity building.

Finland described the threats faced by the Baltic Sea environment and highlighted lessons learned in elaborating and implementing its NPA, namely the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders at the earliest planning stages and incorporating scientific data and monitoring activities in elaborating future actions.

India said his government has improved legal and institutional structures and adopted a new management approach, using guiding principles related to ecological and livelihood security, social and gender equity, and the ecosystem approach.

Underscoring the vulnerability of small island developing states (SIDS), Mauritius described national measures to address the discharge of domestic waste, agricultural runoff, and industrial waste, and called for capacity building at all levels, as well as strengthened international and regional cooperation.

South Africa described national efforts to implement the GPA and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), including drafting new legislation on buffer zones to protect coastal areas, and noted active regional cooperation by, *inter alia*, mobilizing a task force to address wastewater issues.

The US highlighted national and regional achievements since the First Intergovernmental Review meeting (IGR-1), including the adoption of a national ocean action plan based on ecosystem approaches, state and federal government cooperation, and a partnership for the Wider Caribbean that stresses technical support for implementation of NPAs.

In the discussion, delegates addressed risk-based management approaches, research and monitoring, and environmental education. They also discussed ways to accommodate differing community values in setting targets.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION IN ACTION

On Monday, delegates engaged in breakout groups on the three following themes: mainstreaming the GPA into national development planning; financing the implementation of the GPA; and strengthening legislative and institutional frameworks to further the implementation of the GPA. A summary of their discussions was presented in plenary on Tuesday (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.1).

The three groups were chaired by the representatives of Germany, Iceland and Barbados, respectively. Presentations of national and regional experiences were made by Brazil, China, Guatemala, India, Israel, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, the EU, and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). Comments were made by Bangladesh, Belgium, Finland, the Caribbean Environment Programme Regional Coordination Unit, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UN Development Group, and the World Bank.

Delegates identified the following key elements for improved national implementation of the GPA:

- enhancing political will at all levels of government and linking ministries of the environment with other ministries;
- creating and strengthening an enabling environment;
- ensuring the participation of all stakeholders and an independent judiciary in monitoring and enforcing implementation;
- promoting an ecosystem-based management approach, the use of appropriate technologies, and strategic partnerships with the private sector, international bodies and donors to support capacity building to enable the relevant levels of government to access financing for GPA implementation;

- highlighting the relevance of the GPA to the realization of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets, as well as other internationally-agreed development goals;
- valuing the goods and service produced by marine ecosystems and the cost of inaction;
- leveraging national legislative frameworks through participation in regional instruments such as the Regional Seas Conventions;
- carrying out studies to record and monitor baseline data, and dissemination to agencies responsible for GPA implementation;
- developing NPAs with clear targets and priorities, as well as national environmental protection funds and community-based waste management programmes;
- using domestic resources as the primary means for GPA implementation;
- mainstreaming environmental considerations into public-sector budgeting; and
- engaging with regional development banks to encourage them to focus on environmental considerations in investment decisions, and with bilateral and multilateral donors to encourage them to support the creation of regional revolving funds and investment funds to serve as regional financing mechanisms for the protection of the marine environment.

A summary of these discussions is available online at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2533e.html>.

PARTNERSHIPS - MAINSTREAMING THE GPA

On Tuesday in plenary, Vandeweerd introduced the partnerships day and outlined its objectives. Throughout the rest of the day, participants engaged in 19 parallel partnership workshops. A summary of the discussions is available online at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2534e.html>.

The Chairs of the workshops subsequently prepared brief summaries of the discussions, which were presented on Wednesday in plenary and submitted to the High-Level Segment on Thursday (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.3). The following is a summary of this document.

CHINA – AFRICA AND ARAB COUNTRIES

PARTNERSHIPS: The partnership between China and African countries was established in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 2005, and the partnership between China and Arab countries was agreed in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in February 2006. The two partnerships have conducted training courses on water management and municipal wastewater treatment and further training on these and other water-related issues is envisioned.

UNEP/GEF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM: IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED ACTIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND ITS COASTAL AREAS:

The main objective of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) is to assist countries in implementing reforms in investments in key sectors that address transboundary pollution reduction, biodiversity decline, habitat degradation, and living resources protection priorities. The partnership serves as a catalyst in

leveraging policy, legal and institutional reforms, as well as additional investments for reversing the degradation of this damaged LME.

ADVANCING JPOI TARGETS ON ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND IN INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE GPA:

This partnership is organized by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office. The partnership aims to mobilize a broad array of partners at global, regional and national levels to further advance the WSSD goals of ecosystem management and integrated coastal and ocean management by 2010, including through the preparation of a global report to be featured at the Fourth Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands in April 2008, and at a high-level Oceans Summit in 2009. The partnership will assess tangible progress, problems, needs for redirection, success of existing capacity-building efforts, and needs for further capacity development.

ESTABLISHING A LONDON CONVENTION, GPA AND REGIONAL SEAS PARTNERSHIP: This partnership among the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and its associated protocol, the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, and the GPA, was established to promote compliance with the Convention, capacity building through technical cooperation activities, cooperation with other agreements and programmes, and outreach activities to promote the GPA's objectives. The workshop aimed to strengthen and develop the partnership and expand its membership.

MARINE LITTER – A GLOBAL CHALLENGE: This workshop focused on the creation of a new partnership: "Marine litter – a global challenge," which will serve as a platform to enhance cooperation and implementation of the UNEP-sponsored Global Initiative on Marine Litter.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO INTEGRATING STAKEHOLDERS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE FRESHWATER AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN:

This partnership between the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office was originally established for the period 2004-2007, and was subsequently extended for an additional four years. The partnership concerns collaboration activities related to coastal and marine pollution originating from land and coastal degradation within the Wider Caribbean region. Its office within NOAA's National Ocean Service's Staff Office for International Programs provides technical assistance and advice to governments in the Wider Caribbean on developing their NPAs and using them to raise environmental awareness.

DEMONSTRATION OF AN INTEGRATED FRESHWATER TO OCEANS MANAGEMENT APPROACH FOR THE XIAMEN-ZHANGZHOU-LONGYAN REGION OF FUJIAN PROVINCE:

This partnership comes under the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Biodiversity Management in the Coastal Area of China's South Sea and the US-China Science and Technology Agreement. Through the partnership, NOAA provided technical

assistance in the development of a demonstration plan of action for the Xiamen-Zhangzhou-Longyan Region of Fujian Province to reduce the impact of land-based pollution on the marine environment.

OCEAN TRAINING: SYNERGIES IN CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH MULTI-PARTNER

COLLABORATION: The Oceans Training partnership aims to strengthen and combine existing partnerships among the International Oceans Institute, the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), the GPA, UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-IHE Institute for Water Education and the GEF in order to maximize benefits in capacity building.

COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: PACIFIC SIDS PARTNERSHIPS ON WASTEWATER AND RECYCLING INITIATIVES: This workshop addressed two partnerships: the Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative, which aims to develop and implement sustainable environmental policy; and the PacSIDS Capacity Building Initiative – Improving Sanitation and Wastewater Management for Pacific Island Countries and Territories, which focused on improving wastewater management through a cooperative exchange among trainers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GPA: PARTNERSHIPS IN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL AND MARINE AREAS: This workshop addressed the activities of PEMSEA in scaling up integrated coastal management programmes as a major strategy for achieving sustainable development of the coastal and marine areas of the PEMSEA region, in collaboration with governments and other stakeholders.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES PROTOCOLS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS: This workshop aimed to provide a forum to exchange experiences in the implementation of the GPA, to identify how the various Regional Seas Conventions have influenced the national implementation of land-based activities and sources of pollution protocols, and to consider suitable mechanisms for translating the protocols into national legislation for compliance and enforcement.

INFORMATION PORTAL ON WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR SIDS: This workshop aimed to discuss the creation of an information portal on waste management for SIDS, which would enable SIDS from all regions to share information on initiatives, projects, activities, best practices and other information related to waste management.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL WATERS IN THE GEF: MAINSTREAMING THE GPA INTO TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS AND LMEs: This workshop focused on two GEF-supported partnerships. The first, the Danube-Black Sea Basin Strategic Partnership for Nutrient Reduction, is an initiative aimed at reducing agricultural, industrial and municipal sources of nutrients that have resulted in the “dead zone” of the Black Sea, and involves two UNDP-GEF regional projects and the World Bank-GEF Investment Fund. The second, the Partnership Investment Fund for Pollution Reduction

in the LME of East Asia, aims to reduce pollution in the LMEs of East Asia and promote sustainable coastal development through integrated coastal management.

THE OCEANS LIBRARY: This workshop focused on the issue of coordination among the Flanders Marine Institute, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, and integration and accessibility of new oceanographic information products on the internet, with special attention to developing countries.

PLANNING INSTRUMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SIDS: This workshop focused on the proposed partnership that would build on existing experience and the proposed creation of a team that would draft and implement a decision-making tool for sustainable tourism planning in SIDS.

MOVING TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE SANITATION SERVICES: The workshop discussed revisions of the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater, adopted at IGR-1 in 2001, with a view to including the present work of the respective agencies on urban and rural sanitation activities relevant to the environmental dimensions of sanitation.

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE GLOBAL OCEANS AGENDA, IMPLEMENTATION OF OCEAN AWARENESS AND STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTION OF THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE OCEAN: This workshop discussed an Ocean Information Package, aimed at enhancing public awareness of the Global Oceans Agenda and engaging the public in concrete actions. The package will be developed and produced by the World Ocean Network, together with the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands, the GPA, and IOC, within the framework of the GEF-UNEP-IOC projects that foster a global dialogue on oceans, coasts and SIDS.

WHITE WATER TO BLUE WATER – A MODEL FOR PARTNERSHIP BUILDING IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND: This workshop focused on linkages and cross-sectoral approaches to watershed and marine ecosystem management, as established under the White Water to Blue Water initiative. This initiative encompasses partnerships in the areas of integrated water resources management (IWRM), environmentally-sound marine transportation, sustainable tourism, and marine ecosystem-based management.

THE CHALLENGE OF LINKING FRESHWATER AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT: This workshop focused on identifying obstacles to establishing linkages between freshwater and coastal stakeholders. Viewpoints on river basin and watershed management, as well as coastal area and marine ecosystem management were addressed. Discussions focused on the Global Water Partnership Toolbox, which provides a valuable means of enhancing linked freshwater and coastal management initiatives. Participants identified joint actions to mainstream freshwater and coastal management approaches within stakeholder initiatives.

IMPLEMENTING A COMMON AGENDA

PROGRESS REPORT 2002-2006: During plenary on Wednesday, Vandeweerd presented the Report on Progress in Implementing the GPA at the International, Regional and National Levels in the Period 2002-2006 (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/2), noting that the GPA's performance depends on governments' will to undertake tangible action.

A few countries lauded the GPA's recent achievements, as well as its catalytic potential. Delegates called for: stronger emphasis on the long-term economic costs of inaction; building capacity of local government officials; assessing the financial sustainability of projects; raising awareness among policymakers and the public; and involving international and regional institutions, civil society, and the private sector.

Many delegates described national policy-making initiatives. One suggested that an IGR meeting be held every three years, while another proposed holding annual regional review workshops. Norway, on behalf of the OSPAR Commission, reported on activities under the OSPAR Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. He referred to achievements made by the European Commission and the North Sea Conferences and stressed the importance of the ecosystem approach.

UNEP, on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), noted the complementarity between GPA and CBD work, as well as their Memorandum of Cooperation. He highlighted recent achievements under the CBD that also benefit the GPA, including measurable targets on marine environmental protection agreed upon at the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD.

Delegates also noted: the low representation of Latin American countries at IGR-2; SIDS' vulnerability and lack of resources and capacity; the need for harmonization of legal frameworks and enhanced law enforcement, financial mechanisms, research and monitoring, capacity building, and public awareness and participation.

A summary of these discussions is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2535e.html>.

GUIDANCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GPA 2007-2011: During Wednesday's plenary, Vandeweerd introduced the 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/IGR.2/3), and invited states to make suggestions to enhance its usefulness.

Delegates stressed the need for: South-South cooperation; regional activities; water security; a stronger link between freshwater and oceans; emphasis on the ecosystem approach; education and institution strengthening; financial, technical and management capability support for developing countries; and a focal point for SIDS at the GPA Coordination Office.

A summary of these discussions is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2535e.html>.

UNEP/GPA COORDINATION OFFICE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2007-2011: On Wednesday in plenary, Vandeweerd introduced the proposed 2007-2011 Programme of Work of the

UNEP/GPA Coordination Office (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/4). Many speakers commended the work done by the GPA Coordination Office, and welcomed its proposed work programme.

Delegates highlighted the need for: innovative financing mechanisms and capacity building in developing countries; technology transfer; information dissemination; monitoring; performance indicators; emphasis on the national level; assessment work; improvement of stakeholder cooperation; closer cooperation between the GPA and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); a SIDS focal point at the Coordination Office; and greater cooperation with the freshwater community.

Mauritius recalled the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, while Palau referred to the vulnerability of SIDS. UNEP said it will consider ways of promoting African NPAs in the budgetary process, and the Netherlands reaffirmed its support for hosting the Coordination Office in The Hague.

Vandeweerd welcomed continued support to the Coordination Office, and stated she would present an initial contribution on performance indicators to the next session of the UNEP Governing Council and prepare a work plan for 2008-2009, and agreed on improving cooperation with MEAs, to avoid duplication. Delegates approved the proposed Programme of Work.

A summary of these discussions is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2535e.html>.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

OPENING STATEMENTS: On Thursday, Chair Zhou Shengxian chaired the first part of the High-Level Segment.

Underlining the significance of international cooperation in efforts to protect the marine environment, Hua Jianmin, State Councillor, China, noted that rapid economic growth leads to increasing pressure on marine resources. He outlined China's efforts with regard to marine environmental protection, stressed that his country's environmental situation is still "grey," and expressed hope that other countries will continue supporting China in its efforts to promote sustainable development, calling on nations to join hands to protect "our common blue home."

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, noted progress made since the GPA's adoption in 1995, highlighting the recent launch of the report "The State of the Marine Environment: Trends and Processes." He stressed the GEF's funding of GPA activities and welcomed the collaboration of the private sector in marine protection efforts. Noting that China's rapid economic growth is watched with fascination and concern, he stated that Chinese environmental protection efforts will give hope to the rest of the world to achieve sustainable development. He stressed the need to link the GPA to the global agenda, such as the target to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010, and expressed hope for the adoption of a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling at the UN General Assembly in November 2006. Steiner indicated UNEP's continued commitment to administer the GPA Coordination Office.

A summary of these opening statements is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2536e.html>.

MINISTERIAL/HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OCEANS, COASTS AND ISLANDS, AND THEIR ASSOCIATED WATERSHED AND THE WAY FORWARD: This part of the High-Level Segment was chaired by Vice-Chair John on Thursday.

Stefan Wallin, State Secretary of the Environment, Finland, stressed the need to: combine sustainable development and biodiversity conservation, using the ecosystem approach; share experiences; use performance indicators; enhance cross-sectoral cooperation; and encourage sectors to bear their responsibilities. He encouraged states to, *inter alia*: identify innovative conservation, development and financing mechanisms; develop partnerships with different stakeholders; strengthen capacities and knowledge; enhance and harmonize research and monitoring; enhance synergies between the GPA and other international organizations and MEAs; and encourage other countries to ratify and implement relevant MEAs.

Elizabeth Thompson, Minister of Housing, Lands and Environment, Barbados, underscored the importance of the marine environment for the Caribbean region's culture and livelihoods, noting that poverty eradication and empowerment of indigenous communities should be an integral part of GPA implementation. She called for increased financial commitment from governments, and: advocated community-oriented partnerships; challenged industry, civil society, NGOs and financial institutions to invest in GPA projects; and encouraged all governments to identify a national focal point for GPA implementation.

Steiner welcomed the ministerial consultation and its informal setting. He said high-level officials are at the front line of efforts to turn the aspirations of the GPA into reality, and invited them to deliberate on, *inter alia*: generating political will; drawing on past experiences; and identifying key factors for successful partnerships. A summary of these statements is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol25/enb2536e.html>.

On Friday morning, the High-Level Segment chaired by Vice-Chair John heard reports from the roundtable discussions that had taken place on Thursday afternoon. Apart from the Arabic-, French-, and Spanish-speaking roundtables, ministers sat randomly at the various roundtables, in order to promote an inter-regional exchange of lessons learned and innovative ideas.

Ghana reported on the discussions of the roundtable chaired by Nigeria and attended by Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Indonesia, Surinam, Canada, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Israel and Guyana. He noted that with regard to mainstreaming of the GPA, roundtable participants had stressed the importance of: developing an NPA; involving all relevant ministries; and promoting the active participation of civil society to ensure the enforcement of environmental legislation. He stressed the importance of local communities' understanding of environmental issues, and called for: increased coordination; pooling of partners' resources and harmonization of their policies; continued exchange of experiences; bilateral discussions; and media communication.

Finland chaired the roundtable attended by the Russian Federation, China, Tanzania, the European Commission, Barbados, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Cook Islands and Maldives.

Finland said participants had stressed the need to: be more responsive to SIDS' needs, particularly regarding capacity building; mobilize civil society; ensure participation of different ministries and the scientific community; focus on the ecosystem approach; and allocate sufficient funds to environmental protection while emphasizing the economic and social benefits. He stated that roundtable participants suggested: better coordination of the work of MEAs; holding meetings back-to-back to use financial and human resources more efficiently; harmonizing reporting requirements; and prioritizing education and public awareness.

Jamaica chaired the roundtable attended by Spain, South Africa, Mongolia, Kenya, Fiji, Grenada, Romania, Sri Lanka and Germany. Jamaica noted participants' appreciation of the GPA's catalytic role and their call for: innovative financial resources; bilateral and multilateral dialogue on shared natural resources; and mainstreaming of marine environmental considerations into the work of different ministries. He said roundtable participants stressed that additional opportunities for effective partnerships should be explored, particularly among and with landlocked states, and called for sharing of best practices and lessons learned, as well as adequate and comprehensive resource mobilization.

Seychelles chaired the roundtable attended by Australia, Malaysia, Iran, Liberia, Philippines, Niue, Italy, Antigua and Barbuda, Mauritius and Iran. He highlighted: the group's experiences with coordination between the environmental sector and other sectors through the establishment of high-level committees at the national and provincial levels; an environmental "green line" in Seychelles; and green police in Mauritius. He said roundtable participants suggested: moving from command and control compliance policies to market-based mechanisms; promoting better coordination between regional bodies with overlapping functions; and placing greater emphasis on addressing the GPA as a terrestrial rather than marine programme.

Pakistan chaired the roundtable attended by Switzerland, Japan, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, the Holy See, Zambia, Kiribati, Belgium and Cambodia. Among the main points raised in the discussion, Pakistan highlighted: integration of various national policies with the GPA; pilot project demonstrations; sharing of information; use of economic instruments; cost-benefit analyses; partnerships; support to subregional initiatives; sharing of post-disaster experiences; capacity building; promoting behavioral change and motivation, especially among school children; and civil society involvement.

The US chaired the roundtable attended by Nepal, Belize, Zimbabwe, Iceland, Thailand, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and India. The US said roundtable participants highlighted: enhancing the role of educated public support; bringing in NGOs; empowering communities; employing websites; increasing communication with the media; and ensuring transparency. He stated that participants had also underscored the importance of: tailoring coastal zone laws to specific conditions; prioritizing activities; focusing on regional seas; bottom-up building of ecosystem-based management; linking the GPA to

the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the JPOI; and making use of scientific observations of the state of the environment.

Gabon reported on the French-speaking roundtable she co-chaired with Congo and attended by Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Mauritius, Mozambique, Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Guinea, Haiti, Senegal and Togo. Gabon explained that participants had stressed the need to: strengthen GPA implementation; mainstream the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities at the national level; ensure that implementation of national strategies and programmes is cross-cutting and not sectoral; encourage environmental ministries to ensure cooperation and coordination among relevant ministries so that marine environmental issues are taken on board; and apply the polluter-pays principle. She said participants had underlined that GPA implementation would contribute to achieving the MDGs and had called for mobilizing national financial resources and strengthening international governance.

Venezuela reported on the discussions of the Spanish-speaking table, attended by Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Mexico. Venezuela said participants had underlined the importance of: involving all sectors of governments when implementing the GPA and replicating this horizontal mechanism at all government levels; involving civil society; developing economic valuation of the benefits and services provided by coasts and watersheds; reinforcing compliance and enforcement mechanisms with increased financing; harmonizing donor's agendas; building capacity of government officials in writing funding proposals; internalizing the environmental costs of private-sector projects; and strengthening the GPA clearing-house mechanism.

Saudi Arabia chaired the Arabic-speaking roundtable attended by Jordan, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Yemen, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine, Libya and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia said participants prioritized: refining legislative instruments and reference documents for NPA and policy development; strengthening local authorities' competence; improving cooperation between ministries, for instance through high-level ministerial committees; establishing strategic partnerships to facilitate NPA development and implementation; and encouraging the development of wastewater treatment facilities. He highlighted achievements discussed, *inter alia*: improved regional collaboration, including through an environmental fund in Egypt; joint projects among many countries in the region; and NPA elaboration. He said participants suggested: creating an emergency center to coordinate efforts in case of disasters; improving financing and awareness raising; and taking the holy month of Ramadan into account when scheduling international meetings.

In summarizing the roundtable discussions, Steiner highlighted ministers' calls for: mainstreaming the GPA into development agendas at the regional level; quantifying the economic values and benefits of implementing GPA measures; using market-based instruments to prevent problems rather than using policy instruments for post-problem clean-up; streamlining and coordinating among the GPA, other international

organizations and MEAs; and improving the GPA's information and experiences dissemination mechanisms. Steiner stressed the need for increased focus on: linkages, including with poverty reduction strategy papers and the MDGs; emergencies and disasters; the GPA's clearing-house function; think-tanks that include the private sector and civil society; resources and capacity building for local authorities; national cultures, contexts, specificities and realities; and prioritization of issues.

Chair John invited comments from delegates on the content of the reports from the roundtable discussions as well as on the format of Thursday's High-Level Segment.

Many delegates thanked the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office for organizing the IGR-2 meeting and the Chinese government for its hospitality. Several delegates welcomed the new format of the High-Level Segment on Thursday, noting that the informal setting had enabled them to exchange ideas and lessons learned, and encouraged UNEP to replicate this setting in other fora.

On national implementation of the GPA, Kenya suggested that seminars be held for ministers of finance to convey the importance of moving the MEA agenda forward. Ghana called for decentralizing environmental efforts and suggested creating environmental desks at different local levels.

On the replication of lessons learned, Mauritius suggested developing a web portal as the first step to establishing a GPA clearing house, which would enable countries to access information on success stories and learn about new technologies used in implementing the GPA. Malaysia called for the wide dissemination of innovative approaches addressed at IGR-2. Mexico remarked that the meeting's outcomes must be presented at the next UNEP Governing Council.

On awareness raising, the South Asian Seas Programme suggested involving religious leaders.

On regional cooperation, Canada urged mainstreaming the GPA into regional organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and highlighted the 2005 Bali Plan of Action: Towards Healthy Oceans and Coasts for the Sustainable Growth and Prosperity of the Asia-Pacific Community. He noted its focus on ecosystem-based management, sustainable management of marine living resources, the social dimension and hazard mitigation. The Dominican Republic called for additional regional meetings to share experiences and examine short-, medium- and long-term objectives. Malaysia supported streamlining regional programmes to avoid duplication.

On other impacts to the marine environment, Lebanon, supported by Venezuela, underscored the need to recognize the impacts of armed hostilities on the marine environment. Chile drew attention to the potential environmental impacts of free trade.

On the GPA and the MDGs, Iceland underlined the role the GPA can play in achieving the MDGs since it contributes to global issues such as sanitation, freshwater and poverty eradication. France recalled its decision to double overseas development assistance in the area of water, and supported proclaiming 2008 as the Year of Sanitation.

On financial resources, Guatemala emphasized the differentiated needs of regions, and that international mobilization of financial resources should match country

priorities. China said environmental goals and targets should conform to national levels of economic development. Mexico called for strengthening the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building with additional financial resources.

Venezuela suggested that environmental swaps could be a means of levying resources for the protection of the marine environment. Benin called for a simple and flexible financing mechanism. France called for strengthening support to governments creating national water policies, as well as to those promoting good governance and local participation. Antigua and Barbuda stressed the need for improved synergies between MEAs and, with China, for increased financial and human resources.

On toxic waste dumping, Benin drew attention to the dumping of toxic waste in least developed countries. Malaysia called on the GPA Coordination Office to work with others in preventing the dumping of toxic waste. The Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighted the expenses associated with the removal of buried wastes. Palestine drew attention to illegal storage and transboundary trafficking of toxic waste, noting large-scale toxic spills induced by the 2004 tsunami, and called for improved law enforcement to prevent such disasters.

Steiner addressed several emerging themes from the discussion, highlighting that: coordination among MEAs is needed so that country activities are supported rather than drained of resources; the problem of toxic waste dumping should be addressed at the next Basel Convention COP; the upcoming UNEP Governing Council meeting will address the issue of globalization and the environment; and that all guidelines and toolkits should be available online shortly. He thanked the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and Chinese hosts for a successful meeting.

THE BEIJING DECLARATION ON FURTHERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GPA

The open-ended working group on elements of the Beijing Declaration, chaired by Murillo, commenced on Monday. The working group had before it the Draft elements of a Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the GPA (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/5), which was used as a basis for negotiations. On Tuesday, a revised conference room paper was circulated among the working group members and the negotiations were finalized on Wednesday morning.

On Monday, the group heard a presentation by the Stakeholders Forum, with specific textual suggestions for the draft declaration, on behalf of stakeholders and other major groups involved in GPA issues.

Early on, the group succeeded in agreeing to most of the text of the draft declaration. While substantive issues of direct concern to the subject matter of IGR-2 presented little difficulty, several points remained contentious until the start of the High-Level Segment.

One was the preambular reference to climate-related natural disasters. A group of countries wished to see climate changes mentioned, evoking the seventh session of the UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

(UNICPOLOS-7) conclusions. Others questioned this proposal on the grounds that it goes beyond IGR-2, which is not a climate meeting. In the end, a Chair's compromise text was accepted.

Another issue that provoked discussion was the ecosystem approach, with some participants favoring its full application by 2010, while others preferred a reference to "helping to achieve" its application.

Delegates debated additional text on ratification of agreements relevant to the goals of the GPA. While one group insisted on a straightforward commitment of states to become parties, others thought the proper way was "to invite" states, or "call upon" them, to "consider" ratification. A small breakout consultation was called by China on Wednesday morning to resolve the differences. Agreed language employed the term "to consider."

Chair Murillo recorded the group's agreement on the draft declaration text a few minutes before Wednesday's morning plenary.

The group also considered a new paragraph on coordination between the GPA NPAs and IWRM and water efficiency plans.

Final Text: The Beijing Declaration (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.2) states that government representatives and the European Commission, with the valued support of stakeholders and major groups, acknowledge that: people are dependent on oceans and coasts and their resources for their survival, health and well-being; a significant number of people derive their food security and economic livelihood from the coastal and marine environment; and many of those areas, in particular low-lying coastal areas and SIDS, are vulnerable to sea level rise and climate-related natural disasters as well as effects on the marine environment of ocean acidification resulting from land-based activities.

It notes the steady urbanization of coastal areas and recognizes that the GPA is an effective tool for integrating environmental concerns into development planning and strategies at the regional and national levels, and that, as such, it contributes substantially to the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals.

It states that governments resolve to recommit themselves to the GPA as a flexible and effective tool for the sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands. Governments also commit to furthering its implementation in 2007-2011 by:

- applying ecosystem approaches;
- valuing the social and economic costs and benefits of the goods and services that coasts and oceans provide;
- establishing partnerships at all levels;
- cooperating at the regional and interregional levels;
- mainstreaming the GPA into national development planning and budgetary mechanisms;
- supporting the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office in undertaking its task of facilitating, furthering and promoting the implementation of the GPA; and
- expressing appreciation for the efforts of UNEP in helping to advance the agenda with respect to the sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands, and invite it to strengthen its support to the further implementation of the GPA through increased contributions from its Environment Fund, enhanced cooperation and coordination with MEAs

and improved cooperation with all stakeholders and relevant organizations, including multilateral development banks, at the global and regional levels.

On national actions, the Declaration states that governments resolve to:

- strengthen efforts to develop and implement regional and national programmes of action and mechanisms, and to mainstream the objectives of the GPA into development planning and implementation, including the UN country-level programmes, the UN Development Assistance Framework, poverty reduction and assistance strategies, common country assessments, and country assistance strategies;
- commit to the continued relevance of the GPA as a fundamental framework, and to mainstreaming its objectives across governments, and advancing them in intergovernmental organizations and in MEAs;
- promote the effective implementation of international agreements to which they are parties, relevant to the achievement of GPA goals;
- improve cooperation and coordination at all levels in order to deal with issues related to watersheds, coasts, seas and oceans in an integrated manner, and to incorporate the integrated management and sustainable use of river basins, seas and oceans into relevant national policies and programmes, in particular by implementing integrated approaches to water resources management, to coastal zone management and coastal area management, to coastal area and river basin management, and to physical alteration and destruction of habitats;
- develop and implement NPAs, in close coordination with the national IWRM and water efficiency plans, as set forth in the JPOI;
- further the application of ecosystem approaches to watersheds, coasts, oceans and large marine ecosystems and island management, and to strengthen national, regional and global cooperation to help achieve increased application by 2010 of the ecosystem approach, as set forth in the JPOI;
- increase efforts to integrate and mainstream economic valuation of the goods and services that oceans, coasts and watersheds provide into accounting and decision-making;
- devote additional effort, finance and support to address point and non-point source nutrients;
- develop durable mechanisms to ensure the long-term financial sustainability and implementation of regional and national programmes;
- improve monitoring systems; and
- promote the involvement of local authorities, communities and other relevant stakeholders.

On regional actions, the Declaration states that governments resolve to strengthen the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and programmes, and work through them and other processes to: apply ecosystem approaches to watershed, coast, ocean and large marine ecosystems and island management; strengthen strategic partnerships; and improve interregional cooperation, scientific understanding, environmental education, and sharing of knowledge, technology and experience.

On international actions, the Declaration states that governments resolve to:

- call upon UN agencies, UN inter-agency groups, and MEAs, in particular the Ramsar Convention, the CBD and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, to increase the integration of the GPA into their policies and programmes;
- call upon financial institutions and donor countries to continue to support the GPA, including by building the capacity of developing countries, particularly SIDS;
- welcome the creation of new partnerships with all sectors of civil society and the strengthening of existing ones, as critical mechanisms for the successful implementation of the GPA;
- support the mainstreaming of the GPA into the major fields of global development activity and promote it as a means to create the integrated processes, intellectual leadership and partnerships that are necessary to achieve global goals and strategies in linked watershed, coastal and ocean areas through ecosystem-based approaches;
- improve the implementation of the GPA through cooperating with other international initiatives, in order to develop joint activities around the integrated management of watersheds; and
- call upon states that have not done so, to consider becoming parties to international and regional conventions, agreements and protocols, as appropriate, relevant to the achievement of the goals of the GPA.

On UNEP's actions, the Declaration states that governments resolve to:

- endorse the GPA programme of work for the period 2007-2011, commend it to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and encourage the latter to devote greater financial resources to its implementation, particularly at the regional level;
- welcome the "Guidance to the Implementation of the GPA for 2007-2011" produced by the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office;
- request the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to endorse the Declaration and the outcomes of IGR-2 as valuable contributions to the implementation of Agenda 21 and other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the JPOI;
- request the UNEP Executive Director to convene IGR-3 in 2011, in collaboration with the relevant organizations and institutions; and
- express gratitude and appreciation to the government and people of the People's Republic of China for hosting IGR-2.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday afternoon, Vice-Chair John chaired the closing plenary session.

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF MINISTERIAL/HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: Vice-Chair John introduced the Chair's summary of the ministerial roundtable discussions (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.4). He explained that representatives focused their discussions on practical measures to integrate and mainstream the implementation of the GPA

into national development planning, and strengthen the implementation of the GPA at the regional and global levels. The summary was approved by delegates without amendment.

THE BEIJING DECLARATION ON FURTHERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GPA: Working Group Chair Mara Angélica Murillo Correa (Mexico) explained that the draft Beijing Declaration is a well-balanced document, which is the result of several days of negotiations carried out in a spirit of compromise. Delegates adopted the Declaration (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.2) without amendment.

OTHER MATTERS: Lebanon asked for an addition to the report of the meeting requesting UNEP to address the impacts of armed hostilities on the marine environment and that this topic be taken up at future GPA meetings.

Gabon requested adding to the report of the meeting a reference noting the Conference's concern with the issue of the transfer of toxic waste on the coast of Côte d'Ivoire, and encouragement to the GPA to collaborate with the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes within Africa to strengthen or implement early warning measures and control of transboundary movements of waste.

Guinea, supported by Palestine, agreed with Gabon's request, and added that the fact that toxic waste transfers are North to South-bound should be specifically mentioned.

ADOPTION OF REPORT: IGR-2 rapporteur Tom Laughlin presented the draft IGR-2 report (UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/L.1, Add.1, 2, and 3) and its five annexes: UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/CRP.1 on the thematic points in relation to mainstreaming, financing, and legislative and institutional strengthening for NPAs; CRP.2 on the Beijing Declaration; CRP.3 on the partnerships day discussions; CRP.4 containing a Chair's summary of the ministerial roundtable discussions; and an unnumbered document containing a stakeholders' submission on the IGR-2, including sections on furthering the implementation of the GPA, and recommended actions by governments and other bodies in implementing the GPA. The report was adopted without amendment.

CLOSURE: UNEP/GPA Coordinator Vandeweerd said the meeting had been "more successful than we had hoped for." She identified integration and mainstreaming as challenges for the future, and announced the publication of a booklet containing the outcomes from the ministerial roundtables by the next UNEP Governing Council in 2007. She praised delegates' willingness to solve issues, take risks, and attempt innovative ways to move forward, and thanked the Government of China, particularly SEPA, for its enthusiasm, dedication and guidance in organizing IGR-2.

IGR-2 Chair Zhou Shengxian highlighted the meeting's achievements and complimented delegates for their productive participation. He closed the meeting at 4:19 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GPA IGR-2

*While water can carry a ship, it can also capsize it.
-Chinese proverb*

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) was marked by unusually smooth progress, which some delegates thought was an evident sign of concerted political will to make the event a success. Clearly, the amiable atmosphere in Beijing rested on a solid foundation: countries' common desire to achieve tangible results in an area that has become a towering environmental concern. The deterioration of the coasts and seas, battered by continuing discharges of agricultural and municipal run-off and waste, hazardous atmospheric emissions and a host of other noxious human-induced factors, is putting human health and livelihoods of over a billion people (some say many more) at a high degree of risk.

The goals set for IGR-2 by governments were straightforward enough: scrutinize the GPA's record so far; pinpoint the newly emerging challenges; share lessons learned; strengthen the implementation of the GPA at all levels, including the achievement of relevant targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI); and provide guidance for the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office in The Hague for the next five years. As delegates applauded the closure of the session on Friday afternoon, the poignant impression they shared was of a well-planned and well-executed endeavor that managed to achieve its goals. To many, the most important outcomes were the plenary's approval of the Coordination Office's new programme of work, and delegates' strong emphasis on new ideas for the further implementation of the GPA.

This brief analysis will examine progress made at the meeting, and some new ideas it introduced.

SOFT LAW – A SUCCESSFUL MODEL?

Proponents of "hard law," i.e., legally binding instruments, have long argued that non-binding arrangements are unable to produce results due to lack of accountability and compliance provisions. However, during the course of the week several IGR-2 delegates reiterated their belief that the time of conventions and protocols is over. As the argument runs, hard law requires protracted negotiations, is difficult to enforce, and has trouble keeping up with changing circumstances. Conversely, soft law arrangements are easier to negotiate, can get more countries on board, and are more flexible and adaptable to national preferences and timetables.

Those appreciative of the GPA's track record were clearly of this view. Time and again they asserted that the GPA was an evolving instrument that can be updated, and this provides a wide field for true innovation.

Since the GPA is not legally binding, government representatives at the meeting appreciated the leeway to adapt the implementation of the programme to changing times, taking into account the recent transformations in the global environment and development agendas.

Other aspects of this meeting also contributed to the overall feeling of achievement. Rather than spending most of the week in official plenary, as is the case in many high-level meetings, delegates interacted mainly in smaller groups and workshops, unrestricted by speaking-time limitations. This promoted genuine discussion, reviews of problems encountered, lessons learned and, refreshingly, practical solutions. During the High-Level Segment, ministers' interactions were not limited to formal country presentations read to one another. Instead, they were deftly put to work in a nine-roundtable format designed to focus on results. This approach has been tried in the past at other UN events, such as the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity earlier this year, but with mixed results. It proved more successful at this meeting because of the Coordination Office's firm stance on promoting dialogue and producing practical ideas. The success of a "Beijing Style" ministerial segment, to use the words of UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, may begin a new trend in international high-level forums.

UPDATING MONTREAL IN BEIJING

A major achievement of IGR-2 was the rapid negotiation of the Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the GPA, an update to the 2001 Montreal Declaration. The minor yet predictable sticking points encountered, including the habitual confrontation on language on climate change, the ecosystem approach, and a call on countries to ratify relevant conventions, were quickly resolved. As one delegate pointed out, these usual suspects were, at this point, more an issue of language than argument over principles. In a refreshing change, the meeting was free of political squabbles and acrimonious North-South divisions.

Chief among new additions to the Beijing Declaration is a shift in focus from international and regional action to national- and local-level action, with calls for creating sustainable financial mechanisms, economic valuation of goods and services provided by oceans, coasts and watersheds, local participation and integrated approaches. Also, links are stated clearly between GPA implementation and poverty reduction and development strategies, as well as the JPOI's targets for implementing the ecosystem approach and integrated water resource management activities. These all are convincing examples of how new guidelines on the implementation of the GPA have been introduced to take into account new trends in international development dialogue.

An entire day was devoted to discussing partnerships, with some successes reported in their operation, and new ones announced. Partnerships are increasingly seen by many as a principal tool under the grand umbrella of the GPA. Partners share experiences and learn from each other, thus replicating, rather than duplicating, successful projects, ensuring that no one is reinventing the wheel. Most delegates perceive partnerships as an efficient use of limited resources. To be fair, however, some feel concern over losing control of donor-driven funding initiatives, which often come with earmarked financial support, and which also entail the risk of added bureaucracy.

In Beijing, the absence of many stakeholders whose involvement is critical for success in partnerships did not go undetected. Absent were the many NGOs that had attended IGR-1, as well as other major groups, especially the private sector. Those government delegates who were hoping to negotiate innovative projects were looking at empty seats, wondering about the reasons.

Despite the minimal representation of the private sector, a lively discussion on financing the implementation of the GPA in one workshop produced a flurry of innovative ideas, such as revolving funds for project preparation and implementation, backed by regional banks, domestic financing through the polluter-pays principle, and other methods of private sector involvement.

Along with newly-created or reinforced partnerships, the guidelines on innovative funding options and ways to mainstream the GPA into national development planning and strengthen legislative and institutional frameworks will be taken back to delegates' respective countries to be put to use nationally and locally to spur practical solutions to the problems of land-based sources of pollution.

BEYOND BEIJING

The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office made a strong push for IGR-2 to be forward looking: what took place in two and a half days in IGR-1 in Montreal in 2001, namely progress reports and reviewing the programme of work, was condensed in Beijing into half a day, in favor of a hands-on debate on updating the GPA and listing practical actions. The Coordination Office is indeed seen as a catalyst in enhancing implementation, vying for concrete results, and in raising the GPA's profile in the global agenda. Workable links are seen across the board: national GPA planning processes in some 60 countries; strategic partnerships with the GEF; the establishment of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands; and, of course, the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. Delegates have pointed to the World Summit on Sustainable Development outcomes, as well as the Mauritius Strategy on the Sustainable Development of Small Developing States (SIDS), which specifically call for advanced implementation of the GPA. In addition, the 13th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development adopted wastewater management strategies in line with the GPA.

In an impassioned intervention at the meeting, Mauritius pointed out that, for small islands, land-based activities impact all other development issues. Indeed, for SIDS, the unanimous acknowledgement of the problem and the related reference in the Beijing Declaration marked an important step forward. The holding of IGR-2 in China was also a symbolic step forward. China's role continues to grow both in economic terms, and in environmental negotiations. Along with India, it is one of the advanced implementers of GPA activities in Asia. As a delegate observed, with both countries on board, the GPA will have a greater chance of succeeding.

As delegates prepared to leave Beijing, most were sobered by the thought that in the final count, the GPA is only a framework arrangement: more national efforts and additional financial resources are still needed to telescope it to the level

of implementation it requires. If it succeeds in changing some of our fundamental perceptions and attitudes, the GPA may significantly contribute to the planet's salvation from the scourge of marine pollution.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

INTERNATIONAL MERCURY CONFERENCE "HOW TO REDUCE MERCURY SUPPLY AND DEMAND":

This conference, hosted by the EC, will take place from 26-27 October 2006, in Brussels, Belgium. Policy makers, industry representatives, NGOs and scientists will be invited to participate. For more information, contact: European Commission; tel: +32-2-743-8949; fax: +32-2-732-7111; e-mail: michel.lepropre@ecotec.com or geraldine.ferdinand@ecotec.com; internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/conference.htm>

CONFERENCE ON EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF WASTEWATER, ITS TREATMENT AND REUSE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: This conference is scheduled to take place from 30 October - 1 November 2006, in Amman, Jordan. The conference will seek to foster the exchange of experience and present state-of-the-art knowledge on issues such as low-cost technologies, operation and management of wastewater treatment plants, decentralization of wastewater treatment, ecological sanitation and wastewater reuse. For more information, contact: Ismail Al Baz, Project Director EMWater; tel: +962-6-5694341; fax: +962-6-5686184; e-mail: emwater@batelco.jo; internet: <http://www.emwater-conference.org>

SECOND MEETING OF THE PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE: This meeting will be held from 6-10 November 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP-8) TO THE BASEL CONVENTION: Basel Convention COP-8 will take place in the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 November to 1 December 2006. The meeting's theme will be "Creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes." In this context, electronic wastes include end-of-life computers, including printers, accessories and television sets. For more information, contact: Basel Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: BaselCOP8@unep.ch; internet: <http://cop8.basel.int/>

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ESTUARIES AND COASTS: This conference is scheduled to take place from 28-30 November 2006, in Guangzhou, China. The conference aims to advance estuarine and coastal engineering research to enhance the ecological environment. Topics to be discussed include: estuarine and coastal processes; estuarine eco-environment and its protection; and maintenance and management of waterways in estuaries and harbors. For

more information, contact: ICEC-2006 Secretariat; tel: +86-20-8711-7249; fax: +86-20-3849-1316; e-mail: icec2006@prwri.com.cn; internet: <http://www.prwri.com.cn/icec2006-eindex.htm>

EAST ASIAN SEAS (EAS) CONGRESS 2006: This Congress will be held from 12-16 December 2006, in Haikou City, China. The Congress will bring together international organizations, experts and multi-sector stakeholders to exchange knowledge and build capacity in developing strategies to implement the MDGs and WSSD goals for the region's coasts and oceans. It will include the International Conference on Coastal and Ocean Governance. For more information, contact: EAS Congress Secretariat; tel: +632-9-202211; fax: +632-9-269712; e-mail: congress@pemsea.org; internet: <http://www.pemsea.org/eascongress>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COASTAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN 2007: ICCCM07 is scheduled for 22-26 March 2007, in Hammamet, Tunisia. Conference themes include: strategic environmental assessment in coastal areas; integrated coastal zone management; living with erosion; and sustainable coastal tourism. For more information, contact: Mohammed Choura, ICCCM Secretariat; tel: +216-98-414118; fax: +216-74-298053; e-mail: contact@ait.org.tn; internet: <http://webpages.fe.up.pt/ihrh/icccm07/>

SECOND INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN WATER ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE "WATERS IN PROTECTED AREAS": This conference will take place from 25-27 April 2007, in Dubrovnik, Croatia. It aims to: present key issues, challenges and strategies; discuss the threats as well as the potentials of protected areas for the conservation and rational use of precious resources, the safeguarding of ecosystems and of cultural heritage; and sensitize the public to these issues. Topics will include water management in national parks, threats to islands and coastal zones, and water and wastewater infrastructure in ancient cities. For more information, contact: Croatian Water Pollution Control Society; tel: +385-1-6307-677; fax: +385-1-6118-570; e-mail: hdzv@voda.hr; internet: http://www.hdzv.hr/about_us.htm

THIRD MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (COP-3): POPs COP-3 will convene from 30 April - 4 May 2007, in Dakar, Senegal. For more information, contact: Stockholm Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int/>

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT 2007 AND RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT 2007: These two international conferences, organized by the Wessex Institute of Technology, will take place back to back from 21-25 May 2007, in Kos, Greece. They will present recent technological and scientific developments associated with the management of water resources, as well as communicate recent advances in the overall management of riverine systems, including advances in hydrological modelling and environmental protection. For more information, contact: Wessex Institute of Technology, tel: +44-238-029-3223; fax: +44-238-029-2853; e-mail:

enquiries@wessex.ac.uk; internet: <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2007/waterresources07/index.html> and <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2007/rm07/index.html>

UNICPOLOS-8: This conference is tentatively scheduled to take place in May or June 2007, at UN headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: UN Division on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea; tel: +1-212-963-3962; fax: +1-212-963-2811; e-mail: doalos@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/>

SECOND IASTED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: This conference, organized by the International Association of Science and Technology for Development (IASTED), will take place from 20-22 August 2007, in Honolulu, Hawaii, US. For more information, contact: IASTED Secretariat; tel: +1-403-288-1195; fax: +1-403-247-6851; e-mail: calgary@iasted.org; internet: <http://www.iasted.org/conferences/home-578.html>

5TH INTERNATIONAL COASTAL AND MARINE TOURISM CONGRESS: This event is scheduled for 11-14 September 2007, in Auckland, New Zealand. The theme is "Balancing Marine Tourism, Development, and Sustainability." Topics include: marine wildlife tourism; education and interpretation; marine protected areas; planning and development; management; island tourism; marine ecotourism; marine recreation; and governance/policies/stewardship. For more information, contact: Michael Lück, Congress Secretariat; tel: +64-9-921-9999 ext. 5833; fax: +64-9-921-9975; e-mail: michael.lueck@aut.ac.nz; internet: <http://nztri.aut.ac.nz/cmt2007>

WETPOL 2007 – 2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON WETLAND POLLUTANT DYNAMICS AND CONTROL: This symposium will be held from 16-20 September 2007, in Tartu, Estonia. It will address process-based topics relating to "pollutant dynamics" in various types of wetlands, as well as pollutant removal in natural and constructed wetlands for pollution control, and wetland restoration aspects. For more information, contact: Ülo Mander, Institute of Geography, University of Tartu; tel: +372-7-375819; fax: +372-7-375825; e-mail: wetpol2007@ut.ee; internet: <http://www.geo.ut.ee/wetpol2007>

4TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS, COASTS AND ISLANDS: This meeting will take place from 7-11 April 2008, at a location to be determined, under the theme "Advancing ecosystem management by 2010 and integrated coastal and ocean management." For more information, contact: Miriam Balgos, Global Forum Secretariat; tel: +1-302-831-8086; fax: +1-302-831-3668; e-mail: mbalgos@udel.edu; internet: <http://www.globoceans.org>

TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE RAMSAR CONVENTION: This conference is scheduled to take place from 28 October - 4 November 2008 in Changwon, Gyeongsangnam-do Province, Republic of Korea. For more information, contact: Ramsar Secretariat; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax: +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org; internet: <http://www.ramsar.org>

THIRD INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE GPA: GPA IGR-3 will take place in 2011 at a location to be determined. For more information, contact: Veerle Vandeweerd,

UNEP/GPA Coordinator; tel: +31-70-3114460; fax: +31-70-3456648; e-mail: gpa@unep.nl; internet: <http://www.gpa.unep.org>

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
IGR	Intergovernmental Review
IOC	UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IWRM	Integrated water resources management
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LME	Large marine ecosystem
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
NOAA	US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
NPA	National Plan of Action
PEMSEA	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
SEPA	Chinese State Environmental Protection Administration
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNDOALOS	UN Division on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICPOLOS	UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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