



# The Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Reports from the Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

January 23-28, 2006, UNESCO, Paris

## TOWARD THE UNEP/GPA IGR-2 IN BEIJING

Summary prepared by Tom Laughlin (NOAA), and  
Dr. Porfirio Alvarez-Torres (SEMARNAT)

*Adopted in 1995 in Washington, D.C. by 108 Governments and the European Community, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) is the only global program that addresses the interactions between the freshwater and coastal environments; it is a comprehensive action program in response to the fact that some 80% of all marine pollution comes from land-based activities.*

*Implementation of the GPA is, in the first place, the task of national governments, though the importance of stakeholder participation should not be overlooked.*

*As noted by Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd (Coordinator, UNEP/GPA) at the Paris Conference, the First Intergovernmental Meeting, hosted by Canada in 2001, moved the GPA from planning to action with the adoption of the Montreal Declaration and Programme of Work for the GPA office, 2001-2006. Significant progress has been made since the Declaration, largely with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Second Intergovernmental Review of the UNEP-GPA (IGR-2) will be held October 16-20, 2006, in Beijing, People's Republic of China. IGR-2 will focus on the need to incorporate an ecosystem approach into Integrated Water Resources Management, as well as the need to develop domestic financing, legislation, and institution building. IGR-2 will contribute to shaping the*

*international policy agenda on freshwater, coasts, and oceans, advancing the implementation of targets the international community has adopted, and forging partnerships for presentation at IGR-2, including the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands.*

At the Paris conference, participants discussed preparations for upcoming events highlighting freshwater to oceans issues: the Fourth World Water Forum, March 16-21, 2006, Mexico City, and IGR-2. Suggestions put forward at the Paris conference are presented below.

### **WORKSHOPS ON REVIEW OF THE GPA AND THE MONTREAL DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES**

Summary prepared by Tom Laughlin (U.S. NOAA) and  
Dr. Porfirio Alvarez-Torres (SEMARNAT, Mexico)

*Two workshops were convened to evaluate how well the WSSD goal concerning the implementation of the GPA is being met, and to provide input into the 4th World Water Forum and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intergovernmental Review of the GPA. The sessions were chaired by Tom Laughlin (NOAA), Dr. Porfirio Alvarez-Torres*

(SEMARNAT), and Dr. Patricia Munoz (Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico), with assistance from Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd (UNEP GPA).

## Background

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls for “advance implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the Montreal Declaration on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, with particular emphasis in the period 2002-2006 on municipal wastewater, the physical alternation and destruction of habitats, and nutrients, by actions at all levels to:

- Facilitate partnerships, scientific research and diffusion of technical knowledge; mobilize domestic, regional, and international resources; and promote human and institutional capacity building, paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries;
- Strengthen the capacity of developing countries in the development of their national and regional programmes and mechanisms to mainstream the objectives of the Global Programme of Action and to manage the risks and impacts of ocean pollution;
- Elaborate regional programmes of action and improve the links with strategic plans for the sustainable development of coastal and marine resources, noting in particular areas which are subject to accelerated environmental changes and development pressures;
- Make every effort to achieve substantial progress by the next Global Programme of Action conference in 2006 to protect the marine environment from land-based activities.

To help foster these goals, a multi-stakeholder group convened an International Workshop on Freshwater-Coastal-Marine Management Interlinkages, held in Mexico City in January 2006 (see discussion in Freshwater to Oceans section of the newsletter). The group found that “The major benefit of linked management is the scope it provides to ensure that development activities upstream are planned and implemented with full knowledge of the potential impacts on the ecosystems and economic activities and livelihoods in the coastal and marine areas. The costs of inaction are high. It is known from river rehabilitation practices that the costs of ignoring upstream-downstream management linkages have been enormous – the costs of rehabilitation are much higher than the costs of prevention!”

### Progress Towards Achievement of the WSSD Goals:

Progress has been made toward the WSSD goal on a variety of levels. Internationally, the GPA notes that “the

GPA and the international community have been working to provide guidance support, and funding to nations in their attempts to devise and implement NPAs.” Other progress at the international level has included: conclusion of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; regional GPA meetings; capacity building and outreach programs; and partnership development through venues such as White Water to Blue Water.

At the national level, over 60 nations have initiated National Programs of Action. In addition, countries are working together to develop mechanisms for regional coordination (see table below).

<u>Regional Plan</u>	<u>Implementation Status</u>
Wider Caribbean Programme	Protocol exists
SPREP	Protocol being developed
Black Sea	Protocol being developed
Southeast Pacific	Protocol exists
Cartegena Protocol	Protocol exists
Barcelona Convention	Convention exists

### Next Steps:

Specific suggestions to further the WSSD goal included fostering freshwater coast linkages at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum held in Mexico City in March, 2006. To do this, the Global Forum, UNEP/GPA, and NOAA will jointly host a session to address these linkages. In addition, the meeting participants suggested paragraphs including the following themes in the Ministerial Declaration from the WWF4:

1. The goals of sustainable development cannot be met without linking freshwater to coasts and oceans. This is particularly true in small island developing states.
2. Because impacts collect and are concentrated in coastal zones, a key goal of integrated water resource management is to address coastal and oceans impacts.
3. Actions are needed at the local level throughout the watershed.

To build upon the momentum of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum and other international events discussing freshwater oceans linkages, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intergovernmental Review of the GPA will include a Partnership Day that will be modelled after WW2BW. Meeting participants made the following suggestions for inclusion in the Partnership Day:

1. Reports and recommendations from the Freshwater to Oceans sessions at the World Water Forum in order to establish a common vision of actions to manage watersheds and coastal areas.
2. Discussion of future directions/modalities of the Global Forum.

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3. Use of the IOI network to advocate GPA-related approaches and to distribute lessons learned from the GPA.
  4. Showcasing Strategic Partnerships as an opportunity for other regions.
  5. Highlighting the link between land-based activities and the ecological health of marine ecosystems, possibly by partnering with the ICES Conference on Coastal Zone Management which will be held in Norway in 2007.
  6. Conclusion of a GPA/Ramsar cooperative agreement.