

UNEP/GPA/WGCAR.1/1

**PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA**

**UNEP/GPA Regional working group on Municipal Wastewater: Regional Cooperation for Innovative action. Jamaica, 19-21 February 2001**

**Background:**

Domestic wastewater discharges are considered one of the most significant threats to sustainable coastal developments worldwide. The priority for action on “sewage” as identified by the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), was reconfirmed by seven regional workshops of Government- designated experts and UNEP's Governing Council.

The priority for wastewater in the Wider Caribbean region led to the development of a special annex of the recently signed protocol (Aruba, 1999). The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, in cooperation with WHO, Habitat (UNCHS) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) developed a Strategic Action Plan to address these priorities. An important part of this Action Plan is the organisation of Regional meetings.

The objective of this regional meeting are to:

- i. Review the Recommendations for Decision-making on Municipal Wastewater and develop regional annexes as required, to reflect common views of stakeholders on priorities, capacities and needs;
- ii. Share technical, administrative and financial experience and expertise as related to the Recommendations for Decision-making;
- iii. Identify demonstration projects, which could illustrate the application of the Recommendations for Decision-making;
- iv. Provide a forum for partnerships creation, based on identified regional capacities, opportunities and partners;
- v. Draft recommendations to the ISTAC, to be incorporated in their workplan

**Day 1: Monday 19 February 2001, afternoon**

**1. Opening of the working group.**

The meeting will be opened by a representative of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, who will introduce the aims and objectives of the working group.

**2. Organisation of the working group**

It is proposed to have the chair of the ISTAC meeting chair this working group. The representative of the GPA Coordination Office will facilitate the working group. The working group will be conducted in plenary for the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. Item 5 and 6 could be held in parallel working sessions.

### **3. Review of GPA Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater and Recommendations for Decision-Making on Municipal Wastewater**

The *Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater (UNEP/GPA/WGCAR.1/2)* is part of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). This document will be briefly introduced at the meeting.

This meeting in the Caribbean is the first of this kind of regional partnership meetings. The result of this meeting and other regional meetings, and the experiences gained with the approach of developing a knowledge base, recommendations and consultative partnership meetings will lead into the first Intergovernmental Review of the GPA, to be held in November 2001 in Canada. This approach can set the example for the addressing of other source categories of marine pollution and threats while assuring that all these activities fit within the framework of regional and national Programmes of Action on Land-based Activities, as advised by the GPA.

The GPA Co-ordination Office hope to receive the endorsement from the working group on the final document entitled *Recommendations for Decision-Making on Municipal Wastewater (UNEP/GPA/WGCAR.1/3)* as a general guidance to wastewater management approaches. It is recognised that this document is written from a global perspective. Therefore, the meeting is advised to develop regional specific annexes to this document which will be discussed under agenda item 5

Coffee Break

### **4. Exchange of experience and expertise with regard to innovative financial, technical or institutional arrangements.**

Experience with the use of new or non-conventional technologies (such as natural ponds and lagoons as primary treatment), institutional arrangements (such as partnerships between local authorities, communities, small entrepreneurs or large service providers) and financial options (such as the contribution of the benefiting water users to the investments costs for wastewater management) are not widespread in the region nor around the globe.

Three case studies will be presented by experts, working in the region. These case studies will present experiences with innovative financial, technical or institutional approaches, illustrating the Recommendations for Decision-making. A cost-benefit study on wastewater management in coastal cities provides examples of new opportunities and partnerships, which could be explored also in other cities (UNEP/GPA/WGCAR.1/4).

The GPA clearing-house on “sewage” aims at making available experiences with new approaches as part of its capacity building objective. A short discussion on making available such experiences from and to the region will conclude this agenda item.

## **Day 2: Tuesday 20 February 2001**

### **Exchange of experience and expertise with regard to innovative financial, technical or institutional arrangements (continued)**

Coffee Break

#### **5. Development of regional specific annexes to the Recommendations.**

Following the main outline of the Recommendations, discussions will be held on :

- a. Technology options
- b. Financing options
- c. Institutional arrangements
- d. Stakeholder involvement
- e. Integrated approaches

To facilitate the discussions at the meeting, the participants are requested to answer the questions on Working document **UNEP/GPA/WGCAR.1/5**. Discussions will be held, plenary or in parallel groups, on the commonalities in these themes.

Lunch Break

### **Development of regional specific annexes to the Recommendations, (continued)**

#### **6. Partnership building: Strengthen capacities of public sector in order to become equal partners of other stakeholders, including the private sector.**

Wastewater management is no longer the sole responsibility of Governments – local or national. The role of Government changes from service provider to service enabler. More and more players are involved and partnerships with NGO's, representatives from households, private sector as service provider - both local and international -; private sector as polluter and as benefiting entity; specialised institutes, etc. established. But this new role also requires different expertise and capacities within the public sector to initiate, co-ordinate and enforce these new partnerships.

Regional organisations, organisations working at the regional level and specialised institutes do often have elements of the required expertise. They are invited to contribute and share their unique expertise and experience to the partners at this regional meeting. This contribution can be in the form of presentations, documents, workshops, etc. The participants of the regional organisations are requested to contact the organisers on their contribution.

## **Day 3: Wednesday 21 February 2001**

**Partnership building: Strengthen capacities of public sector in order to become equal partners of other stakeholders, including the private sector (continued)**

Coffee Break

**7. Inputs to regional action plan on municipal wastewater and Workplan**

The discussions of the last two days on the Recommendations for Decision-making on Municipal Wastewater; the regional annexes, the experiences and lessons learned, and the partnerships provide inputs for advise to the ISTAC with regard to the 2002-2003 regional Workplan and budget on municipal wastewater.

One of the recommendations to the ISTAC by the Working Group could be to form a task force consisting of representatives of selected partners (local authority, central government, private sector as service provider, private sector as water user, regional organisation, regional developer and donor) which could advise the ISATC and could initiate demonstration projects.

**8. Closure of the GPA working group meeting**

Lunch Break

Resume ISTAC Meeting