

CONCLUSIONS OF THE CO-CHAIRS FROM THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW  
MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION  
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM  
LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES.

MONTREAL 26-30 NOVEMBER 2001

Introduction

1. In pursuance of decision 21/10 of February 2001 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), government representatives, international financial institutions, international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, other stakeholders and major groups, have met from 26 to 30 November 2001, in Montreal, Canada, for the first Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.
2. We are honoured to co-chair this important event and have prepared these conclusions as part of the proceedings of the meeting. We are pleased to recommend the following conclusions as an accompaniment to the Montreal Declaration and commend them for the consideration of Governments in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002 and all other forums at which activities relating to the goals of the Global Programme of Action are dealt with.
3. The 2001 report prepared by the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection - Protecting the Oceans from Land-based activities: Land-based sources and activities affecting the quality and uses of the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environment – highlighted the alarming conclusion that “on a global scale marine environmental degradation has continued and in many places even intensified”.
4. The productive capacity and ecological integrity of the marine environment, including estuaries and near-shore coastal waters, continue to be degraded for a variety of reasons, including pollution from sewage, non-point source runoff from agricultural and urban areas, the physical alteration and destruction of habitat nutrients, sediment mobilization and chemicals. The negative implications for coastal and marine industry, human health, poverty alleviation, food security and safety are continuing, in many cases, unabated.
5. The social, environmental and economic costs to society are escalating as a result of disproportionately low levels of action to mitigate the harmful effects of land-based activities on coastal and marine environments and associated freshwater systems. Some types of damage are serious and irreversible. Indeed, the massive negative implications for human health, particularly as a result of pathogen laden sewage pollution of bathing beaches and shellfish harvesting areas have been seriously underestimated and neglected by the world community. A study by the World Health Organization has shown that such pollution results in millions of cases of disease and thousands of deaths annually.

A. Accomplishments of the Global Programme of Action

6. Since the inception of the Global Programme of Action, its implementation has witnessed considerable progress, and there has been continuing progress in integrated coastal zone management and oceans governance.
7. Many countries have prepared national programmes of action or have integrated the goals of the Global Programme of Action into their national strategies, policies, programmes and legislation.

8. Many regions have cooperatively prepared regional programmes of action, both binding and non-binding. Many of these provide excellent examples of coordination and cooperation and demonstrate the capacity of the regional seas programmes to serve as a central platform for improving coastal and oceans governance.
9. A good example of a regional approach to the Global Programme of Action and its emphasis upon developing partnerships in financing implementation is the Russian National Programme of Action for the Arctic. Similarly, a good example of multilateral partnership is the Africa Process on Cooperation for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.
10. The continuing development of the Global Programme of Action Clearing-house Mechanism by UNEP, in collaboration with respective United Nations organizations has proved to be a major achievement for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. It will prove to be a valuable tool for use by local, national, regional and global stakeholders in implementing the Global Programme of Action.
11. Many Governments have made considerable contributions in support of the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office. Special recognition should be given to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, host of the Coordination Office for the very generous continued support for the Office, and the Government of Belgium for donations allowing the development of national programmes of action in several countries. Many donor countries have also contributed significant funds in support of projects related to the Global Programme of Action in developing nations and regional programmes.
12. With regard to multilateral financing, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has allocated substantial resources to projects relevant to the objectives of the Global Programme of Action. The World Bank has also provided substantial support for projects that address objectives of the Global Programme of Action.
13. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, adopted at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in May 2001, is a major binding instrument which directly addresses one of the pollutant source categories identified in the Global Programme of Action.

#### B. Opportunities and barriers

14. The first Intergovernmental Review Meeting provided Governments and other stakeholders an opportunity to consider the barriers and opportunities associated with the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. The Global Programme of Action is a suitable means of improving governance under ocean-related conventions, including strengthening the regional seas conventions and protocols. It can serve as an effective global harmonizing mechanism to improve coordination and cooperation among these regional conventions and relevant global conventions.
15. The need for international cooperation and for a coordinated approach at the national level to address the problems of fresh water as well as coastal and marine pollution from land-based activities is stressed. Bringing together the many different economic sectors contributes invaluablely to poverty alleviation, food security and peace.
16. Globally, the impact of sewage, physical alteration of coastal and marine ecosystems and high nutrient levels merit the highest priority for action. Addressing these priorities cannot be achieved in isolation of the broader objectives of sustainable development. The causative relationship between poverty, human health, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, poorly managed social and economic development, and environmental degradation must be emphasized when implementing the Global Programme of Action.

17. There is an urgent need to integrate coastal resource management and the requirements of coastal zone protection with river basin management. In this regard, the potential of institutional partnerships to ensure an integrated and holistic approach to coastal zone management, catchment or watershed management, and land-use planning is recognized.

### C. The Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater

18. The Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater expands on what is provided in the Global Programme of Action with the aim of seeking consensus, promoting alternative solutions, and facilitating partnerships and regional cooperation. The three-pronged functional approach outlined in the Strategic Action Plan is widely supported but a number of issues could be expanded upon. Examples include:

- (a) Provision of guidance on implementing new financial mechanisms;
- (b) Giving adequate attention to alternatives to large and costly treatment facilities;
- (c) Consideration of the impact of small industry on sewage systems;
- (d) Role of water conservation measures in reducing demand for water treatment;
- (e) Monitoring and evaluation.

19. The Draft Guidelines on Municipal Wastewater, developed by the Coordination Office as a critical element of the Strategic Action Plan, provide valuable guidance to manage urban wastewater worldwide, in accordance with national policies and plans.

20. The transfer of technology and expertise is critical to the global implementation of the Global Programme of Action, and in particular, with regard to management of municipal wastewater. A shortage of adequately trained personnel with technical skills to manage new facilities, or administrative skills to develop management schemes is holding back the implementation of the Global Programme of Action in some parts of the world.

21. Initiatives concerning technology transfer should be compatible with local environmental and cultural circumstances. In this context, it is noted that a high percentage of coastal communities in developing countries suffer from a lack of basic sanitation services. There is no doubt that initiatives related to the Global Programme of Action in such communities can contribute towards efforts to address this situation.

22. Capacity-building initiatives related to the Global Programme of Action require consistent attention at the local and national levels, and deserve attention within the framework of national development plans.

23. The “polluter pays” principle provides a significant catalyst for changing attitudes and facilitating the wise use of water. It is being used successfully in a number of countries and has the combined effect of raising revenue and discouraging pollution. In implementing this principle, however, there is a need to appropriately consider the social costs and its impact on the poorest members of society. There may also be considerable costs associated with identifying the polluters and establishing a payment scheme. The “polluter pays” principle may also discourage some development and should therefore be balanced with positive economic incentives for reducing pollution.

24. Finally, it would be valuable to further develop the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater in cooperation with international financial institutions.

D. The work programme of the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office for the period 2002-2006

25. The focus of the programme of work is to move the implementation of the Global Programme of Action from the planning to the action phase by developing toolkits, facilitating partnerships, and initiating demonstration and capacity-building projects. In this regard, it aims to:

- (a) Facilitate the mobilization of financial resources;
- (b) Further involve the private sector and civil society;
- (c) Establish stronger working links with the freshwater community;
- (d) Expand capacity-building by enhancing the Global Programme of Action Clearing-house Mechanism;
- (e) Strengthen cooperation with United Nations agencies.

26. The programme of work could be further enhanced through the development of performance indicators, specific targets, and the incorporation of monitoring and assessment. These activities should build upon existing and ongoing programmes and efforts should be made to link the programme of work with those of other United Nations agencies, especially at the regional level, while avoiding duplication and overlapping. The cost-effectiveness of initiatives within the programme of work should also be analysed.

27. Opportunities also exist for achieving efficiencies by combining the efforts of United Nations agencies in cross-cutting issues, such as clearing-house mechanisms, capacity-building, technology transfer, indicators, and monitoring. Specifically, in relation to the clearing-house mechanism, stronger links could be made with the non-governmental organizations community and academia. Furthermore, the meeting was reminded that in many developing countries, access to the Internet is severely limited, especially for local practitioners.

28. Expanding the links with the freshwater community to also incorporate land-use planning would also significantly enhance the programme of work. In all aspects of the programme of work, however, the central role of Governments in setting priorities and ensuring compliance must be emphasized.

29. Many United Nations agencies and other international organizations have initiated activities that complement the proposed programme of work. Significant examples include the regional virtual centers for technology transfer being developed by the International Oceans Institute, and the Coastal Cities Network being developed by the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives.

E. Oceans and coastal governance

30. Recognizing the central authority of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the guidance of Agenda 21, the implementation of the Global Programme of Action can be both a catalyst for, and a beneficiary of, improved coastal and oceans governance. It provides an excellent framework for harmonizing the activities of coastal and marine institutions and mechanisms at the local, national, regional and global levels, and for producing efficiencies by bringing stakeholders together from different sectors, both public and private, to address common objectives. For example, at the international level, the Global Programme of Action could serve as a harmonizing mechanism for the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Its active implementation at the local, national and regional levels will contribute to the protection of human health, food security, economic development and environmental protection.

31. Improvements in coastal and oceans governance should be at a level commensurate with the problem of coastal and marine degradation. However, the harmonizing capacity of the Global Programme of Action is especially relevant at the regional level and the regional seas programmes provide an excellent and existing vehicle for implementing the Global Programme of Action. They are a fundamental pillar for improved coastal and oceans governance.

32. The utilization of twinning arrangements involving information sharing, capacity-building and technology transfer between selected or contiguous regional seas programmes, can also strengthen coastal and oceans governance.

33. The objectives of the Global Programme of Action are complementary to many other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and institutional mechanisms such as the respective regional fisheries management organizations. Consequently, efforts should be made to integrate the Global Programme of Action into these initiatives in a more systemic manner. In this context, coordinating capacity-building amongst multilateral environmental agreements will improve efficiency and expand their reach and positive impacts. To facilitate this process, the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office should take active steps in collaboration with the regional seas programmes to reach out to other United Nations agencies. Consideration should be given to organizing a meeting of all regional seas programmes to coordinate a strategic approach to this effect, and to consider the possible role of the regional seas programmes as a platform for multi-stakeholder participation.

34. At the global level the Coordination Office should explore the potential for memoranda of understanding with multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, to coordinate their initiatives. Similarly, there is a need to ensure the currency of the Global Programme of Action in the United Nations Oceans Consultative Process.

35. The importance of regional and global efforts to implement the Global Programme of Action should not undermine the importance of national action. Indeed, a bottom-up approach to improving global oceans governance is also needed. In this regard, in many countries there is a need for capacity-building and institutional strengthening to improve the governance of coastal and ocean resources at the national level. Similarly, there is a need to better understand the oceans while supporting the economic development of the oceans.

#### F. Financing the Global Programme of Action

36. Financing appropriate action to implement the Global Programme of Action should, in the first place, come from a country's own resources. It is therefore important to engineer a country-driven demand for implementing the Global Programme of Action amongst decision makers, industry, academia and the community.

37. The lack of adequate resources is an major impediment to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. Innovative approaches must be adopted to attract new finances for implementation of the Global Programme of Action. Such approaches should be tailored to national and local needs, including the needs of municipalities and local government entities, and solutions must encapsulate appropriate lower cost alternatives. Lower cost solutions should, however, be assessed for their total economic, social and environmental costs and impacts which may not be immediately apparent in some cases.

38. It is essential to integrate Global Programme of Action related activities into national development strategies and development assistance frameworks in order to facilitate interventions by international financial institutions, regional development banks and the donor community.

39. In implementing the Global Programme of Action increased emphasis should be given to the issues of poverty alleviation, human health and food security. Emphasizing the effect of projects related to the

Global Programme of Action on these issues will attract political will, media attention, and the interest of international financial institutions. In this context, the goals of the Global Programme of Action should be incorporated into national development programmes and sustainable development strategies. Similarly, efforts should be directed towards building the capacity of Governments to assess the economic value of coastal and marine resources, and to fully engage the private sector and community groups in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action.

40. The development of financial partnerships, including public-private partnerships, will benefit the Global Programme of Action by increasing the level of participation in and awareness of, the Global Programme of Action and by opening new financial opportunities. For example, Governments could take action to facilitate wider application of microfinancing and enterprise financing mechanisms, involving the private sector and financial institutions. Similarly, stakeholders of the Global Programme of Action could contribute to national, regional or global studies related to the development of economic instruments, such as water markets and pollution reduction trading mechanisms, and to studies on the need and feasibility of multi-stakeholder water funds.

41. Learning partnerships with organizations such as the World Bank Institute should also be developed by the Coordination Office as an avenue to build national and regional capacity.

42. Finances for the Global Programme of Action can also be obtained indirectly. For example, by requiring the best available techniques in both existing industries and new investment in potentially polluting industries, Government can stem the increasing demand for spending related to the Global Programme of Action. Similarly, the introduction of the “polluter pays” principle will provide both economic disincentives for pollution, and economic incentives for cleaner production. Appropriate debt relief is yet another option for freeing much needed financial resources so that they can be directed towards the Global Programme of Action.

43. Finally, it is imperative that the Global Environment Facility continue to address the priorities and objectives of the Global Programme of Action, especially in relation to the current replenishment process and within established rules and modalities.

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