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INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW MEETING ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT
FOR LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION'S STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ON
MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities identified sewage as one of the major sources of pollution and assigned it a high priority for action (UNEP(OCA)/LBA/IG.2/7).¹ In response, the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), developed the Global Programme of Action's Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater (UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/4).
2. The Strategic Action Plan seeks to support the efforts of municipalities and countries in addressing the serious public health problems, economic losses and degradation of coastal ecosystems that result from the disposal of inadequately treated municipal wastewater in coastal areas.
3. The Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater was prepared to expand the guidance for dealing with municipal wastewater given in the Global Programme of Action and to set a standard in the approach to municipal wastewater management through promotion of a global consensus on best practices and procedures for addressing municipal wastewater. Among other steps, it does so through a guidance document on municipal wastewater containing recommendations for taking decisions (UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/INF.4).
4. The guide supports implementation of conventions and protocols under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme for dealing with municipal wastewater.

* UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/1.

¹ All documents referred to in this document are or will be available on the Global Programme of Action clearing house Web site (www.gpa.unep.org).

II. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE GUIDANCE ON MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

5. The guidance on municipal wastewater is an essential part of the normative component of the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater. It provides guidance on concrete measures and sustainable management systems for municipal wastewater. The guide is prepared for local and national professionals and decision-makers and describes steps to take to assign a high priority for action to the handling, treatment and management of municipal wastewater and how to make solutions financially affordable by describing sustainable systems for wastewater management.

6. The guide on municipal wastewater seeks to distribute up-to-date knowledge on best practices and procedures and promote their replication. The guide is supported by the global knowledge base, which provides details on the information contained and evaluated in the guidance document. This global knowledge base is part of the Global Programme of Action clearing house and contributes to the Sanitation Connection database. The guide promotes exploration of alternative practices and procedures, including low-cost technologies, new financial mechanisms and innovative partnerships, and promotes the creation of an enabling environment for action.

III. REACHING A GLOBAL CONSENSUS

7. The guidance on municipal wastewater consists of three parts:

(a) Key principles of effective approaches to wastewater management that are recommended for adoption as a standard for action;

(b) Annotated checklists of recommended practices and procedures that describe in detail approaches, infrastructures and tools available to practitioners and decision makers;

(c) Regional annexes that provide additional information on addressing the specific priorities and needs of regions with regard to municipal wastewater management.

8. The following steps have been taken to move toward a global consensus on the guidance on municipal wastewater.

A. Development of a global knowledge base

9. Existing knowledge and a number of source documents and databases in the field of domestic wastewater management have been reviewed and evaluated by the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office together with the International Institute for Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE, the Netherlands), which will become the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Water Education in November 2001. This global knowledge base is part of the Global Programme of Action clearing house and is regularly updated (see UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/INF.9).

B. Sanitation Connection (Sanicon) and links with other sources

10. The global knowledge base is directly linked through the Global Programme of Action clearing house to the Sanitation Connection database (www.sanicon.net), a partnership between the Global Programme of Action, WHO, the International Water Association (IWA), the World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme for South Asia (WSP) and WSSCC. Sanicon provides a range of services, including an interactive help desk and information on policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, institutions, financing and economics, social and health aspects and technical issues. Sanicon is managed by the University of Loughborough (WEDC, United Kingdom) and the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC, the Netherlands). Direct links to other technical sources, for example the UNEP/Division of Technology,

Industry and Economics (DTIE) International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC), are part of the Global Programme of Action clearing house mechanism.

C. First draft of the guide on municipal wastewater

11. Based on existing knowledge, documents and databases, a first draft of recommendations, key principles and annotated checklists for decision-making on municipal wastewater was prepared by the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office in collaboration with WHO, UNCHS (Habitat) and WSSCC.

D. Extensive review of the first draft of the guide on municipal wastewater

12. The first draft of the guidance document was reviewed and amended through consultations using the WSSCC and IWA networks involving a large number of experts from national institutes, international organizations, including WHO, the World Bank, the European Commission, ICLEI, the private sector and other institutions. The resulting working document "Global Programme of Action Recommendations for Decision-making on Municipal Wastewater" is referred to as version 1.0 (November 2000).

E. Regional review and regional annexes

13. Subsequently, the guide on municipal wastewater was reviewed at a series of eight regional meetings organized by the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office in close collaboration with the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, the UNEP regional offices and coordination units, and other international agencies. Regional annexes were prepared that provide annotated checklists selected by the regions as being of particular relevance. The regional annexes address the specific priorities and needs of the regions with regard to municipal wastewater management.

F. Second draft of the guide on municipal wastewater

14. As a result of the regional reviews, the guidance document was further reviewed and revised during the next round of regional meetings. After two regional meetings, of the Wider Caribbean and the Eastern African regions, a second draft of the guide on municipal wastewater was prepared. The second draft is version 2.0 (September 2001) and is available to the Intergovernmental Review Meeting as document UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/INF.4.

G. Submission of the guide to the Intergovernmental Review Meeting

15. The process of reaching a global consensus on the guide on municipal wastewater is being submitted to the Intergovernmental Review Meeting for endorsement and advice on how to proceed.

H. Further drafts of the guide on municipal wastewater

16. On the basis of the outcomes from regional meetings in Latin America (September 2001), East Asia and the North-West Pacific (September 2001), the South Pacific (October 2001), and Western Asia (November 2001), version 3.0 will be prepared. Following the decision of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting, the recommendations for decision-making on municipal wastewater and the regional annexes will be revised and submitted to regional meetings to be held in Western Africa and the Black Sea area (version.40).

I. Expert review of the fourth draft of the guide on municipal wastewater and regional annexes

17. After completion of the series of regional meetings, the final draft of the guidance document and its regional annexes will be submitted to experts, international organizations and other interested parties for peer review and comments.

J. Consultations with national authorities

18. The final draft of the guide on municipal wastewater will be submitted through the permanent representatives to UNEP for transmission to Governments for their input, after which the guidance document will be finalized.

K. Endorsement of the guide on municipal wastewater

19. The final draft of the guidance on municipal wastewater will be submitted to the UNEP Governing Council at its twenty-second session for endorsement.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW MEETING

20. The present document describes the process for reaching a consensus on the Global Programme of Action guidance on municipal wastewater. The annex to this document presents an annotated outline of the second draft of the guide on municipal wastewater and the key principles as they currently stand.

21. The present document relates to document UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/4, describing the Global Programme of Action's Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater, which contains an overview of progress made in 2000 and 2001 in implementing the strategic action plan, including achievements with respect to the guidance on municipal wastewater.

22. The Intergovernmental Review Meeting is invited to:

(a) Consider the content of the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater and recommend that this approach be used as a model for addressing other source categories listed in the Global Programme of Action;

(b) Review the approach taken in developing the draft guide on municipal wastewater, including the recommendations for taking decisions, and make recommendations on how to develop them further as general guidance for wastewater management worldwide;

(c) Consider the follow-up needed at regional, national and local levels to advance implementation of the Strategic Action Plan and the guidance on municipal wastewater.

Annex

OUTLINE AND KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION GUIDANCE ON MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

(Version 2.0, September 2001, contained in document UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/INF.4)

I. OUTLINE

Preface	Prerequisites for adequate wastewater management
Chapter 1	<u>Integrated approaches</u> – Supply and demand-driven approaches, consideration of environmental requirements and social and economic needs of the population, combined water supply and sewage handling, planning based on catchment basins and storm water and sludge;
Chapter 2	<u>Enabling environment and sustainability</u> – Regulations, legislation, operation and maintenance, responsibilities and accountability, emission limits, standards, quality control, surveillance, enforcement, wastewater management performance criteria and evaluation;
Chapter 3	<u>Institutional arrangements and social participation</u> – The structure of the administrative system, public participation, information, stakeholder involvement, role of private and non-profit sectors and voluntary initiatives;
Chapter 4	<u>Appropriate financial mechanisms</u> – Domestic resource mobilization, international resource mobilization, public-private partnerships, other financial instruments, cost recovery and “water service user” and “polluter pays” principles;
Chapter 5	<u>Sustainable cost-effective technologies</u> – Cleaner production alternatives and best practices to minimize wastewater at the source, on-site treatment, wastewater collection infrastructure, low-cost treatment techniques including natural self-purification and attenuation, ecological engineering, lagoons, options for re-use, waste recycling and dry sanitation.

II. KEY PRINCIPLES

- A. Political will and financial resources are prerequisites for adequate wastewater management.
- B. Environment, health and economy are important indicators for action.
- C. Step-by-step implementation of measures is essential to reach long-term management goals.
- D. Demand-driven analyses and prognoses ensure effective investments.
- E. Sustainable solutions for wastewater management build upon pollution prevention at the source, efficient water use and best available technologies, addressing economic aspects, social aspects and low-cost alternatives when available.
- F. “Water user pays” and “polluter pays” are basic principles.
- G. National and local governments must take the lead in creating an enabling environment for sustainable solutions.
- H. Commitment and involvement of all stakeholders are to be assured from the start.

- I. Public-private partnerships and other financial mechanisms are to be explored.
- J. Linking municipal wastewater management systems to other sectors, for example water supply or tourism, ensures better opportunities for adequate cost-recovery. Rates are to be established solidarity-wise and at social equity.
- K. Innovative alternatives and integrated solutions are to be explored fully before taking final decisions on action.

The key principles in addressing municipal wastewater are tentative and will not be discussed in detail during the Intergovernmental Review Meeting as they are being discussed and improved during a series of regional meetings under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme in collaboration with the regional offices and other relevant partners. However, the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office would like to take this opportunity to solicit high-quality input to improve these key principles. Comments are highly appreciated and can be submitted to the Global Programme of Action clearing house Web site, www.gpa.unep.org.
