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Progress in Implementing the Global Regional Seas Strategic Directions

Progress in implementing the Global Regional Seas (RS) Strategic Directions.

A new global strategy highlighting new directions was discussed by the Coordinators/Executive Secretaries of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) at their 5th Global Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2003, and further endorsed by the Chairs of the COPs/IGMs of the RSCAPs at the 6th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas in Istanbul, Turkey, 30th November-2nd December 2004.

Strategic Direction	Achievements/Progress
1. Increase Regional Seas' contribution to Sustainable Development, through the enhancement of local, national, regional and global partnerships with relevant social, economic and environmental stakeholders, and through the strengthened implementation of the mandates of the Regional Seas, as a major contribution to the implementation of the WSSD Plan of Implementation and the goals and targets associated with the Millennium Declaration.	- Consolidated database finalised (and will be launched on 13 October 2006) giving an overview of all major actors and players in the field of conservation and management of the marine and coastal environment of the various Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs), to facilitate partnerships and consultations on cooperation and best practices. This will be on the RS website, now as one database and not individual RS tables. http://www.unep.org/regionalseas. The website also links to other databases of major actors e.g. the GEF, IWLEARN and LMEs. - A Regional Seas brochure on 'Partnerships for Sustainable Development' has been published and can also be viewed on the RS website http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/Publications/default.asp - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) adopted by the MAP COP in November 2005. To be presented to the 9th Global RS meeting. - Several Partnerships achieved and others to be initiated at the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA (IGR-2), 16-20th October 2006: White Water to Blue Water (WW2BW) Partnership in the Caribbean; Regional Seas & Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) Partnership achieved; Global Initiative on Marine Litter, LBSA (protocols) Partnership; London Convention/GPA/Regional Seas Partnership; GEF Strategic Partnerships for International Waters; and UNEP/GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean LME – strengthening protection from LBS and Conservation of Biodiversity.
2. Enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of Regional Seas Programmes through increasing country ownership, incorporating Regional Seas conventions and protocols into national legislation, promoting compliance and enforcement mechanisms, involving civil society and the private sector, building capacities, ensuring viable national and international financial arrangements, as well as developing assessment/evaluation procedures where appropriate.	<u>Legislation</u> - A legal officer recruited and is currently providing legal support and advice to the RSPs in implementing and complying with their conventions and protocols. - Two legal capacity-building training workshops on implementing legislation, strengthening institutional structures for improved compliance and enforcement and identifying means for coordinated implementation of RSCAPs with related environmental conventions, were held in July & August 2005 in the Wider Caribbean and in the Pacific (SPREP), jointly organised with UNEP's Compliance and Enforcement Programme. - Support in the development and revision of LBS/A protocols is being provided in the Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Nairobi Convention. A partnership session on National Implementation of the LBS/A protocols in partnership with the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs). <u>Financing</u> - Increased financing in the RSPs over the years. UNEP continues to provide guidance in strengthening the long-term sustainability of the RSPs and has assisted in mobilizing donor support for various individual RSPs as well as linking partners and stakeholders. - The 7th Global Meeting, 18-20 October 2005 focussed on sustainable financing mechanisms, providing a forum to share and exchange experiences. In follow-up current support in developing viable financial mechanisms is ongoing in various RSPs (PERSGA, CAR/RCU, East Africa). - RSP & GPA published, 'Financing the implementation of regional seas conventions and action plans – A guide for national action' in September 2006. This follows discussions at the last global RS meeting and will provide guidance to all RSPs. It will also contribute to the IGR-2 session on financing. - RSP & GPA in collaboration with PERSGA published, "Financing for the Environmental Conservation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden" in January 2006. An example also for other regions. - RS and Large Marine Ecosystem (LMEs) partnership strengthened through the existing GEF/LME projects in the RSPs (See 6th Strategic Direction below). <u>Civil society</u> - A review was undertaken in 2005 to identify some of the best practices and rules facilitating the cooperation between civil society organisations (CSOs), governments and RS secretariats with the aim to increase the ability of RS to effectively involve CSOs in their work. This is available on the RS website.
3. Enhance Regional Seas' visibility and political impact in global, regional and national policy setting, through strengthening the Regional Seas Partnership, increasing political and public awareness on the economic, social, and environmental importance of coastal and marine resources, promoting concerted information and communication policies, and ensuring participation and	- The new RS website, provides a one-stop centre for information. It includes individual RS sites & profiles, a database of major actors in the field of the marine and coastal environment, links to partner websites and other stakeholders, latest developments within the RS and major related meetings in the international fora, among others. (See: http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/). This will also enable users to identify and collaborate with mutual partners in the RSPs. - The problem of marine litter was recognised by the UN General Assembly, which in its Resolution A/60/L.22 - Oceans and the Law of the Sea - of 29 November 2005 in its articles 65-70 calls for national, regional and global actions to address the problem of marine litter - The RSP published a 'Feasibility Study on Sustainable Management of Marine Litter' (see http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/Publications/default.asp), to

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promotion of Regional Seas in relevant national, regional and global <i>fora</i>.	assess the threat posed by marine litter worldwide and to examine the efficacy of current instruments, programmes and initiatives that address this global threat. This study was also distributed at the 6th UNICPOLOS Meeting, 6-10 June 2005 in New York during the discussion panel on Marine Debris. Taking into account these recommendations, the RSP, in coordination with the GPA, is initiating the preparation of a GEF Medium Size Project proposal on the Marine Litter Initiative, with potential partners including IMO, FAO, IOC of UNESCO and the Basel Convention. • Several RSPs are participating in the process of developing regional activities to address the global problem of Marine Litter through agreements with UNEP/RSP i.e.; NOWPAP, Black Sea, Mediterranean, Caribbean, South Asia, Eastern Africa, PERSGA, East Asia, South East Pacific & Caspian Sea. • UNEP/RSP in collaboration with IUCN's Global Marine Programme published, 'Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Deep Waters and High Seas', summarising facts and options for the conservation and sustainable use of marine habitats and life forms in deep waters and the open ocean. (see also 6th SD below)
4. Support knowledge-based policy making, enhanced public participation, education, awareness, and improved reporting on the state of the coastal & marine environment, its resources, and possible threats to them, through amongst others, contributing to appropriate national and regional monitoring and assessment activities.	• Joint IAEA Marine Environment Studies Laboratory (MESL) publication, which reviews Regional Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment in the RSPs and gives recommendations for improved systems. See http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/Publications/default.asp • Various IAEA/MESL monitoring and assessment activities are ongoing in the individual RSPs e.g. MAP, ROPME & East Africa among others. • RSPs contributed to the Regional Assessments on the State of the Environment. Publication will be disseminated at 8th Global RS Meeting and IGR-2. • A framework for collaboration between the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the RSP has been provided through an MOU between UNEP and IOC of UNESCO, approved by the 37th Session of the IOC Executive Council and signed in March 2005. Cooperation focuses on data and information networking, monitoring, selection of indicators of environmental variability and ecosystem change, remote sensing, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and forecasting models to be used in environmental assessment among others.
5. Increase the use of Regional Seas as a platform for developing common regional objectives, promoting synergies and co-ordinated regional implementation of relevant MEAs, global and regional initiatives, and responsibilities of United Nations Agencies and other international actors, as a contribution to the sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment.	<u>IMO (International Maritime Organisation)</u> • A Joint IMO/UNEP Forum on Regional Cooperation in Combating Marine Pollution took place in May 2006. Among others, the Forum addressed issues on Legal and institutional frameworks and instruments for cooperation, providing an opportunity to share expertise and enhance cooperation in combating marine pollution. A previous such forum was held in 2002. • Various RSPs will benefit from the GEF-UNDP-IMO Globallast Partnership (GBP) through a PDF-B project, intended to assist developing countries to enact, through effective partnerships, the necessary national level policy, legal and institutional reforms, and build capacity to address the risk arising from the transfer of invasive aquatic species and pathogens in ships' ballast water and sediments. • A joint manual between UNEP and IMO is being developed on natural resource damage assessment following major oil spills to serve as guidance to national governments in determining the extent of injury to natural resources resulting from an oil spill, and a guideline to assist countries in preparing claims for compensation. <u>CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)</u> • <u>MPAs</u>: RSP in collaboration with UNESCO (IOC, MAB, WHC) has initiated a UN interagency taskforce on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to coordinate related activities, among others in working towards achieving the 2010 protected area target. Possible participants include CBD, WCMC, UN-DOALOS, FAO, IMO, UNDP, RAMSAR, ICRAN, WB, GEF and IWC. • UNEP/RSP together with UNEP/WCMC, ICRAN, IUCN/WCPA Marine, and in collaboration with the CBD and The Nature Conservancy are finalizing the publication: Establishing national and regional systems of MPAs – a review of progress with lessons learned. • Other joint activities in various regions e.g. Black Sea and East Africa are being undertaken including joint workshops and a training kit on MPAs. • <u>Invasive Species</u>: RSP, CBD and the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) jointly developed a training course tool kit on the management of invasive species. The training course was piloted in the Eastern African region from 14-17 November 2005 in Dar es Salaam. Training courses are now planned for the Caribbean and South East Pacific regions (in Spanish in November 2006) and in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea (in November 2006). • UNEP/RSP, jointly with CBD and GISP organized a workshop on 27-29 June 2005, in Montreal, agreeing on a joint Work Programme on Marine Invasive Species. • A toolkit and guidelines for training programs to enhance capacity on the management of invasive species of the marine and coastal environment in RS is currently being finalized. <u>Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)</u>: UNEP/RSP and CMS jointly produced a publication titled: 'Review of Small Cetaceans; Distribution, Behaviour, Migration and Threats' which will be launched during the next CMS COP in November, in Nairobi, Kenya. Other activities are underway within the Abidjan Convention, to develop a status report and conservation strategy on the Western African manatee.

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	<u>Basel Convention</u>: Various joint activities are ongoing in the RSPs on the Basel Convention e.g. in the Wider Caribbean and the Pacific. <u>GPA</u>: UNEP/RSP in collaboration with the individual RSPs has compiled an overview of GPA Implementation in the Regional Seas for IGR-2. In addition the GPA has published a document entitled, 'Implementation of the GPA at regional level: The role of regional seas conventions and their protocols'. <u>Coral Reefs</u>: The RSP is working closely with the Coral Reef Unit, ICRAN, WCMC and GCRMN. A joint publication detailing experiences and lessons learnt from ICRAN sites in the Regional Seas has been published. Development of proposals for coral reef and ICRAN related activities in the ROPME, PERSGA and South Asian Sea are underway.
6. Develop and promote a common vision and integrated management, based on ecosystem approaches, of priorities and concerns related to the coastal and marine environment and its resources in Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, introducing amongst others proactive, creative and innovative partnerships and networks and effective communication strategies.	• UNEP RSP in collaboration with IUCN's Global Marine Programme published, 'Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Deep Waters and High Seas', summarising facts and options for the conservation and sustainable use of marine habitats and life forms in deep waters and the open ocean. www.unep.org/regionalseas • RS/LME Partnership. A brochure produced, jointly with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), that includes a map overlay of the 18 RS and the 64 Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of the world and provides a list of GEF-LME projects within the RS. See: http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/Publications/RSP_Large_Marine.pdf • RSP published 'Accounting for Marine Economic Activities in Large Marine Ecosystems and Regional Seas.' The report is targeted towards government policy and decision-makers with the aim of highlighting the potential value of goods & services provided by the marine and coastal environment. • UNEP LME Report: Currently being finalised, provides a perspective on the changing conditions of the LMEs of the world's RS. It describes each of their ecological conditions and illustrates the emerging pattern of temperature fronts affecting primary productivity levels of the 64 LMEs. • A handbook on 'Governance and Socioeconomics of LMEs' has been published providing important insights into good governance practices and the socioeconomic dimensions of marine and coastal ecosystems. • UNEP/RSP in collaboration with the Arctic (PAME Secretariat) and NOAA LME commissioned an expert to compile key references for each of the 15 LMEs within or bordering the Arctic, with regard to the ecological criteria for LME boundary delineation. The expert produced a report, 'Delineation of Arctic LMEs' in October 2005. • FAO: UNEP continues to collaborate with FAO, encouraging cooperation between RSPs and Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFB) in ecosystem based management of fisheries. RSP presented suggestions for enhanced collaboration at the 4th Global Meeting of FAO RFB held 14-15 March 2005 in Rome.