

SELECTED DOCUMENTS

UNEP

Water Strategy and Policy (Draft)*

2 Statement of Key and Emerging Issues Related to Water

Although much effort has been expended by many governments, international and national organizations and agencies in attempting to address priority water-related problems, the recent report of the UNEP Global Environment Outlook (2000) shows the gaps and weaknesses. It is obvious that UNEP alone cannot address all the freshwater, coastal and marine environment problems. Nor can any single UN agency or government. It will require serious co-ordination and collaboration among all relevant Parties, each capitalising on its comparative advantage.

In the UNEP GEO-2000, leading scientists around the world identified, as major problem areas, freshwater stress and scarcity (including water conflicts), freshwater, coastal and marine pollution, habitat degradation, overfishing and the need for aquatic biodiversity protection as well as the degradation of coastal areas.

Freshwater problems centre on two key issues: Quantity and Quality. Issues of quantity in-

volve both shortage (drought) and excess (floods). The magnitude and severity of these problems varies from region to region and between years. However, the global trend is towards decreasing freshwater availability for human use and consumption due to increasing demand.

Food production places a high demand on water. Between 70 and 80 % of present water withdrawals are intended for irrigation purposes and most of the 800 million people currently suffering food shortages live in the water scarce regions of the world. If current trends continue, food aid in terms of subsidized or free food might have to increase 20 times over current levels. To meet the needs in food deficit areas, food production in the industrialized countries would have to more than double by 2025. Regional water scarcity will thus have far-reaching consequences on a global scale.

The increasing proportion of the world's surface and ground water resources diverted to human use results in severe environmental problems including increased desertification, land degradation, loss of soil fertility and loss of productive wetland and aquatic habitats. Recent estimates suggest that 25 % of arable land is affected by man-induced soil degradation of which

60 % is from water erosion, 22 % by wind, 14 % by nutrient losses, and 4 % by salinization. Poor land-use practices result in enhanced sediment loads and nutrient inputs causing degradation of freshwater and coastal aquatic habitats and ecosystems.

Increasingly, water-related environmental problems are becoming transboundary in scope as local pollution problems increase in spatial extent as a result of more people, more fertiliser and more industries with inadequate pollution controls; long range transport mechanisms contaminate water bodies at a distance from the source; and subsidized and over-capitalized fishing fleets chase declining stocks of transboundary and highly migratory fish stocks. Water supply problems relating to both quantity and quality have been, and continue to be a source of international tension while at the national level conflicts are increasingly apparent between economic sectors and conflicting uses such as urban-industrial, versus rural and agricultural use.

Marine related issues and problems centre on over-fishing and the use of destructive fishing gear; loss and degradation of highly productive ecosystems in the transition zone between land and ocean (due to increasing rates of coastal

* Revised on 23 October 1999. See also page 262.

construction and ribbon development of coastlines); and declining coastal water quality resulting from increased rates of contaminant discharge directly and indirectly via surface and groundwater. The environmental problems of the oceans and coastal areas stem in large part from land-based activities and long distance transport of contaminants by atmospheric and biological processes, resulting in no part of the ocean being immune to human impacts.

The major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land – in coastal areas and further inland. Some 80 % of the pollution loads in the ocean originate from land-based activities. This includes municipal, industrial and agricultural waste and run-off, as well as atmospheric deposition. These contaminants affect the most productive areas of the marine environment, especially estuaries and near-shore coastal waters. The marine environment is also threatened by physical alterations of the coastal zone, including destruction of habitats of vital importance in maintaining marine ecosystems. UNEP's water strategy and policy provides a firm basis for addressing these concerns.

3 Statement of UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy

In light of the growing recognition of the potential severity of water related environmental problems worldwide, UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy will place considerable emphasis on addressing these problems in a holistic, integrated and co-ordinated manner.

3.1 Goals of UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy

- Adopt integrated approach to freshwater systems and coastal and marine environments.
- Conduct a global assessment of freshwater, coastal and marine environment in order to contribute to the global environmental assessment.
- Assist Governments in establishing integrated management plans/programmes for the aquatic environmental hot spots, based on the assessment results.
- Assist Governments in the implementation of the integrated management plans/programmes, through exchange of information, technical training, resource mobilization.
- Promote precautionary, preventive and anticipatory approaches.
- Development of management tools, guidelines, and training manuals relating to integrated water management.
- Application of preventive, precautionary and anticipatory approaches.

3.2 The focal areas include:

- Freshwater scarcity and water conflicts between sectors of human activities and aquatic ecosystems.
- Land-based sources of pollution and alteration of habitats, and their impacts on the aquatic ecosystems.
- Protection of aquatic biodiversity, services and benefits of ecosystem functioning, and their relationship with fisheries and aquaculture.
- Planning of resource use and environmental protection in harmony with economic and social development.
- Transfer of knowledge and technologies in integrated water management.

3.3 Statement on Strategic Activities and Approaches in Support of UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy

- Global assessment of major aquatic ecosystems (river/lake basins, large marine ecosys-

UNEP's Mandate and Role

UNEP Expanded Policy Mandate, 1992

In 1992 the Earth Summit in Rio expanded the UNEP Policy mandate. Priority areas on which UNEP should concentrate include the following:

- (b) Promoting international cooperation in the field of environment and recommending, as appropriate, policies to this end;
- (m) Support to Governments, upon request, and development agencies and organs in the integration of environmental aspects into their development policies and programmes, in particular through provision of environmental technical and policy advice during programme formulation and implementation.

Excerpt from UNCED Report A/CONF.151/26, para. 38.22

UNEP Refocused Policy Mandate, 1997

The 19th Session of the Governing Council adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP which refocused the policy mandate.

- (a) To ... provide policy advice ... based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available;
- (c) To advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies ...;
- (e) ... to serve as an effective link between the environmental community and policy makers;
- (f) To provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution building to Governments and other relevant institutions.

tems, aquifers).

- Provision of data/information for global assessment in co-operation with other organizations.
- Forecasting of freshwater scarcities and development of guideline for equitable sharing of freshwater resources.
- Development of management strategies and tools for land-based activities affecting the coastal and marine environment.
- Transmission of guidelines and programmatic approaches to already existing regional mechanisms for the assessment and management of freshwater, coastal and marine resources, to be implemented through the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and Environmentally Sound Management of Inland Waters (EMINWA).
- Diagnosis of transboundary freshwater problems and their underlying causes.
- Evaluation and promotion of environmentally-sound technologies,
- Development of guidelines and implementation of pilot projects to demonstrate the usefulness of management tools and guidelines.
- Fostering and development, where appropriate, of new and innovative approaches and mechanisms for assessing and managing the aquatic environment and its associated resources.

4 Key components of UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy

4.1. Assessment

The main framework for UNEP's future assessment activities will be the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA). Existing assessment-related activities, such as the Global Environmental Monitoring System

(GEMS/Water), will continue to provide information and data that will be used in the GIWA process (see Box 1 for information on GEMS/Water). In addition, it is UNEP's intention to review the structure of GEMS/Water with a view to aligning it more directly with current priorities and emerging issues. GIWA will make use of the Regional Seas networks and its expert groups dealing with marine pollution assessment. The outputs of GIWA will then be used to guide priority setting within the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA), and in the revitalization of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

The need for the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)

The lack of a comprehensive assessment of transboundary water bodies, both marine and fresh water, has been a unique and serious impediment to the implementation of agreed actions. At present, there is no firm basis on which to identify areas of global priority for intervention. Furthermore, many actions aimed at resolving environmental problems have frequently failed to identify the geographical boundaries of the problem as well as its societal root causes.

Mandate, Objectives and Role

Key Points

GIWA concentrates on topics of critical importance to the international community, comprising 22 issues grouped into 5 major areas of concern (freshwater shortages; pollution; habitat and community modification; unsustainable exploitation of fisheries and other living resources, and global change). GIWA has a broad geographical scope, covering 66 geographical units of assessments, grouped into 9 mega-regions for management purposes. It adopts an holistic approach, involving political, economic and social considerations as well as environmental concerns. With funding provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and partners, GIWA is a complement to UNEP's water programme. Its four year initial funding guarantees its sustainability in the medium term. The development, in the intervening period, of a sustainable financing strategy will secure GIWA's long-term financing needs.

GIWA is executed by UNEP in collaboration with the partners listed below under the Global Environment Facility. It is anticipated that additional partners will be added to this list.

GIWA will make full use of existing assessments and all other available information to avoid duplication of work. Co-operation with and linkages to all relevant international and national organizations will be established.

GIWA's ultimate goal is to provide governments, decision-makers and funding agencies with a quantitative, scientifically accurate identification and assessment of water-related issues in sub-regions around the world. This will facilitate the identification of priorities by the GEF and its partners for remedial and mitigatory actions in international transboundary water bodies, thus enabling countries to manage their water resources in a sustainable manner.

Other aims include the following:

- Serving as an effective mechanism for the consolidation of all water-related information

generated through the various activities of the UN and its specialized agencies.

- Facilitating the provision, by UNEP, of expert input in terms of assessment, policies and strategies.
- Bridging the traditional separation between freshwater and seawater assessments, hence the focus on marine areas and their freshwater drainage basins.
- Providing basic and currently unavailable information to the public. This will help to foster a greater understanding of the severity of environmental problems in international waters, their societal causes and the options available for solving them.

Workplan

GIWA will be implemented in four phases.

Phase One. Work will concentrate on the establishment of the GIWA network consisting of national experts and institutions, regional and global collaborating bodies, GIWA Coordinators (Focal Points and Task Teams) etc. organized around the 66 geographical units of assessment (sub-regions) and nine major regions (mega regions).

Phase Two (Analytical Phase) will entail gathering and analyzing the information necessary for applying the GIWA Assessment Protocol at the sub-regional level.

Phase Three (Predictive and Policy Options Analysis Phase). Scenario development and policy options analysis will be carried out during this phase.

Phase Four (Dissemination Phase) will concentrate on the preparation and dissemination of the global and regional GIWA products, such as reports, reviews, databases etc. that are easily comprehensible to various sectors of society.

Main outputs

- A GIWA Assessment Protocol, including an agreed methodology for conducting causal chain analyses to examine societal causes of water-related environmental problems
- A methodology for making transboundary diagnostic analyses at regional scales sub-regional and 9 mega-regional reviews of the ecological status of transboundary waters and major water-related issues, including analyses of their societal causes
- Mega-regional and sub-regional scenarios for the future state of international waters based on planning boundaries, trends and rates of changes in industrialization, population growth and development;
- A global analysis of the societal causes of identified major water-related concerns and principal issues.

4.2 Management

UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy will cover freshwater management, including sustainable water supplies, management of ecosystems at the drainage level and integrated river basin and coastal area management.

Marine pollution and habitat degradation are mainly caused by land-based activities, with pollutants reaching the coastal environment largely through rivers. In order to address these issues, UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy will adopt an integrated approach to riverbasin management, which will also provide programmatic support to marine and coastal management. Integrated coastal area management will include physical planning and the sustainable development of coastal areas, whilst preventing the environmental degradation of coastal ecosystems

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an international financing entity, of which UNEP is one of the implementing agencies. GEF, which was established in 1991, is designed to meet the incremental costs of achieving global environmental benefits. The GEF is the most significant source of international funding to assist countries in addressing the degradation of aquifers, basins, lakes, oceans, rivers and wetlands of international significance. International waters have been designated as one of GEF's four focal areas, for which GIWA will provide crucial information.

GEF is co-funding GIWA in partnership with the Governments of Sweden and Finland, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Municipality and University of Kalmar, and UNEP.

UNEP is also currently undertaking a GEF-funded assessment of the damages and threats to the environment caused by Persistent Toxic Substances. This regionally based assessment will evaluate priorities for intervention and will support the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) negotiations. This assessment is complementary to, and supportive of, the Global International Waters Assessment.

The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans provide the major legal, administrative, substantive and financial framework for the implementation of Chapter 17, in particular, of Agenda 21. UNEP's Regional Seas Programme was created in 1974 as a global programme implemented through regional components. At present, it includes fourteen regions worldwide with more than 140 coastal States and Territories participating. Based on periodically revised action plans adopted by high-level intergovernmental meetings, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are implemented, in most cases, within the framework of legally binding regional conventions, under the authority of the respective contracting parties or intergovernmental meetings.

The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are action-oriented programmes that focus not only on the mitigation or elimination of the consequences, but also on the causes of environmental degradation. A comprehensive, integrated, result-oriented approach is adopted to combat environmental problems through the rational management of marine and coastal areas.

With regard to the management of the coastal and marine environment, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) will help set UNEP's management goals and priorities. The ongoing revitalization of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans will increase the GPA's effectiveness as they will continue to provide an umbrella context for the implementation of the guidelines and other action proposals emanating from the GPA.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy objective related to the GPA and stated in Agenda 21, agreed upon by Governments at the UNCED conference in 1992, is "to prevent, reduce and control degradation of the marine environment so as to maintain and improve its life-support and productive capacities."

Agenda 21 states that to achieve this policy objective, the following are, amongst others, required:

- application of preventive, precautionary and anticipatory approaches;
- prior assessment of activities that may have significant adverse impacts upon the marine environment;
- integration of the protection of the marine environment into relevant general environmental, social and economic development policies;
- development of economic incentives;
- application of clean technologies;
- internalization of environmental costs through e.g. the polluter pays principle;
- improvement of the living standards of coastal populations, particularly in developing countries.

The GPA, which was adopted by 108 governments in 1995, translates this overall policy objective into national, regional and global level objectives:

- **At the national level,** to develop comprehensive, continuing and adaptive programmes of action within the framework of integrated coastal management, harmonized with river basin management and land-use plans.
- **At the regional level,** to strengthen and, where necessary, create new regional co-operative arrangements and joint actions to support effective action, strategies and programmes at the national and local levels.
- **At the international level,** to strengthen existing international co-operation and institutional mechanisms and, where appropriate, to establish new arrangements, in order to support States and regional groups to undertake sustained action to address the impacts of land-based activities upon the marine environment.

UNEP's Mandate and Role

The GPA recognizes that action to protect the marine environment from land-based activities is, in the first place, the duty of national governments, within the appropriate international institutional frameworks.

The Washington Intergovernmental Conference selected UNEP as the GPA secretariat. As such UNEP's role is, amongst others, to:

- promote and facilitate the implementation of the GPA at the national, subregional and regional levels through, in particular, a revitalization of the Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans;
- catalyze the implementation of the GPA at the international level by, amongst others, UN organizations, development banks and the Global Environment Facility (GEF);
- review progress in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action;
- promote exchange of experience between regions, particularly through the establishment and operation of the GPA clearing-house mechanism;
- consider the need for international rules, as well as recommended practices and procedures, to further the objectives of the Global Programme of Action.

Strategy to Achieve the Policy Objectives and Implement UNEP's Role as the Gpa Secretariat

To implement UNEP's role as the GPA secretariat, three clusters of activities will be implemented in 2000–2001. (The strategy will be revised in 2001 based on the outcome of the first intergovernmental review meeting of the GPA. The three activity clusters are mutually supportive and part of a cyclic process: Analysis for Action; Mobilizing Action at the National, Regional and Global levels; and Evaluation and Further Development of the GPA.) ➔

(i) Analysis for Action

This activity cluster comprises two components: (i) finalizing the publications emanating from the first phase (regional workshops and action planning) of the work programme of the GPA Co-ordination Office; and (ii) providing targeted analyses as a contribution to GIWA and the mobilization of action at the national, regional and global level. The outputs and performance indicators will include:

- A set of regional reviews; global assessment on land based activities; global assessment of the state of the marine environment;
- Analysis of factors contributing to the failures and successes of policy, financial and economic responses to address land-based pollution and resource degradation.

(ii) Mobilizing Action at the National, Regional and Global Levels

Major areas of concentration in this activity cluster include (i) forwarding non-binding and binding agreements; (ii) mobilizing action at the national and regional levels; and (iii) facilitation of the global coordination of the implementation of the GPA. The outputs and performance indicators will include:

- Forwarding non-binding and binding agreements on land-based activities, particularly in the context of the regional seas; the non-binding agreement will involve governments, private and public sectors; the binding/legal agreements will include treaties, protocols e.g. on land based sources of pollution.

The Conference of Plenipotentiaries to Adopt the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, was organized in Oranjestad, Aruba, between 27 September and 6 October 1999. The Conference was co-hosted by the Government of Aruba (Kingdom of the Netherlands) and the United States of America. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries adopted the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. This Protocol will be open for signature at Santa Fe de Bogota, Republic of Columbia, from 7 October 1999 to 6 October 2000 by Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and by any other State that becomes a Contracting Party to the Convention during this period.

- Mobilizing action at the national and regional level, particularly within the framework of the Regional Conventions and Action Plans; The output will also include frameworks for action approved by governments; GPA related GEF projects; capacity-building through twinning within the context of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans; prototype projects for soliciting external funding.
- Global coordination in the implementation of the GPA. The output will include the establishment of a Council to promote co-operation with all Parties concerned.

During 2000–2001, emphasis will be given to the "sewage" pollutant source category and the development of the GPA clearing-house mechanism. The clearing-house will underpin all activities of the GPA Secretariat, while the methodology to mobilize action at the local, national, regional and global levels will be primarily devel-

oped for the source category "sewage" and then later applied to the other source categories.

Evaluation and Further Development of the GPA

As mentioned earlier, the GPA is implemented mainly by national governments. However, international institutes and organizations, non-governmental organizations, conventions secretariats, regional seas and – hopefully – the private sector, will also contribute to the implementation of the GPA. UNEP provides the secretariat services for its implementation by the different stakeholders. Major areas of concentration in this activity cluster include (i) developing overviews on how different stakeholders implement the GPA; and (ii) the further development of the GPA taking the occasion of the first intergovernmental review meeting, planned for 2001. The outputs and performance indicators will include six monthly reviews of the contributions made by the Parties concerned as well as an intergovernmental review meeting in 2001.

Co-Ordination

The implementation of the GPA activities will be carried out in very close consultation and co-ordination with the Parties concerned. This co-ordination will be at various levels, notably, within UNEP (where all the Divisions will play



Courtesy: Financial Times

specific roles); at the governmental level, which will entail regular consultations with governments; at the intergovernmental level (where the GPA Secretariat will work closely with the sub-committees on oceans and coastal areas and freshwater respectively of the UN Administrative Committee on Co-ordination as well as with the Commission on Sustainable Development). At the inter-agency level, collaborative arrangements will be maintained with the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development. The respective agencies are already making contributions in areas of relevance to the nine source categories of the GPA, which fall under their areas of expertise. The on-going co-operation at the sub-regional and regional levels will be strengthened.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The efficacy in implementing the programme, and the ways and means of furthering its implementation will be considered at periodic intergovernmental meetings, both at the regional and global level. In preparation for these meetings, States will be encouraged to provide reports, directly or through relevant regional organizations, on the implementation of the GPA. NGOs and other partners will also be invited to report on relevant activities. These meetings will also review coordination and collaboration among organizations and institutions, both regional and global, that have relevant responsibilities and experience. A reporting format will be developed for this purpose. The major purpose of the intergovernmental review processes will be to promote the further development of the

GPA, rather than being a static review of what has been accomplished. The biannual booklet on the implementation of the GPA by partners is one aspect of this ongoing monitoring and evaluation process.

4.3 Supporting Elements and Instruments Comprising the Strategy for Implementing Unep's Water Policy

The Water Policy is founded on a set of strategic elements, which include the following:

- **Technology Transfer**

Technology has a pivotal role to play in helping us to maintain and improve our environment. Technological skills and innovative ways are required to reduce the generations of waste at source. Significant improvements are also necessary in waste recycling and waste treatment technologies. With regard to agriculture, improvements in irrigation efficiency are necessary. Alternative and less expensive sources of energy to reduce the cost of desalination also need to be explored.

Fortunately, there is an expanding environmental industry around the world capable of providing solutions rather than creating problems. UNEP supports the transfer of appropriate technology, especially in the areas of water management, and it is also providing advisory services to projects promoting cleaner production technologies. Governments in all regions have made substantial efforts to encourage industries to adopt cleaner production methods, with major successes in a number of countries.

Greater attention will be given to the use of local technologies, which are more suitable for specific situations. Identification and analysis of the costs, effectiveness and strengths and limitations of alternative technologies is an important step in this direction. UNEP will also conduct awareness-raising initiatives on technology development and transfer in the water sector.

- **Economic Incentives and Sustainable Water Use**

Ironically, human water use in many places is wasteful, due partly to such factors as inappropriate pricing, water subsidies etc., which work contrary to the goals of water conservation. However, despite such principles as "polluter pays", and human experiments in such areas as water pricing, privatization of water utilities, use of subsidies, etc., the evidence suggests the need for the development, testing and application of more innovative economic instruments for the sustainable use of transboundary freshwater resources. UNEP's actions have included capacity-building measures on integrated environmental and economic assessment.

- **Protection and Conservation of Water-related Ecosystems**

A priority UNEP focus is the protection and conservation of water-related ecosystems. While humans typically allocate water supplies solely on the basis of human water needs, water-related ecosystems provide a wide range of services to humans free of charge. These services include waste assimilation, nutrient recycling, water supply, water regulation, regulation of global cycles, etc. Therefore, destroying or otherwise debilitating these water-related ecosystems will require humans to pay for these previously free services.

UNEP and relevant partners (e.g. IUCN, USAID, Wetlands International) can join forces to develop and refine the concept of ecosystem valuation, particularly in regard to transboundary water resources. This can include using such international fora as the environment and ecology component of the Global Water Partnership.

- **Legal Instruments and Processes**

UNEP will continue to support international legal instruments, particularly with regard to refining regional and international legally-binding agreements relating to water. It will also further its role in this important area by critically examining the experiences round the world to date regarding existing international agreements in water resources.

- **Instruments to Address Issues Relating to Water Equity**

The Fair Share Water Strategy in Africa, which was adopted in March 1996, is an initiative designed to ensure "reasonable access and a fair share of affordable prices for water for the poor majority of people throughout Africa". UNEP is committed to ensuring its implementation by working closely with relevant organizations in Africa and sister UN agencies by testing and applying fair share water principles and approaches in key countries and shared water basins.

- **Public Awareness**

UNEP will undertake various public awareness, media and education activities to promote the sustainable management and use of the Earth's water resources.

- **Best Practices**

UNEP will promote the exchange and dissemination of information on sound water-related policy responses and cost-effective technologies, as well as experiences learnt at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. This approach will encourage discussions on, and development and application of, environmental standards and guidelines based on best practice policy responses.

4.4 Co-ordinating and Mobilizing Actions

UNEP's limited internal capacity necessitates the bringing together of all stakeholders to develop the basis for environmental policy-making and action. This approach is essential in order to avoid duplication of effort, thus enhancing the effective functioning of existing organizations and increasing access to information as well as broadening its dissemination.

Co-ordination and mobilization efforts will be directed at different levels:

Within UNEP

The Division of Policy Development and Law will co-ordinate in-house meetings on water-related policy issues. In order to assist UNEP in identifying emerging water issues and to provide independent policy advice on a continuous basis, the Executive Director is establishing a High Level Advisory Board for water-related issues.

At the UN System-wide (Intergovernmental) Level

UNEP will support the work of the respective Advisory Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) Sub-committees on Water Resources and Oceans and Coastal Areas. These Sub-committees also perform an advisory and coordinating function with regard to the GPA.

At the Inter-Agency Level

Several Inter Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) decisions refer to the relationship between the GPA and these Subcommittees and a plan of action has been established and agreed upon with the chairpersons of the Subcommittees to implement these decisions by April 2000. Inter-agency coordination is thus being ensured through existing mechanisms, as well as through the sessions of the CSD and the IACSD. UNEP will

also continue to collaborate with sister agencies within the framework of the IACSD.

Co-operation with Selected UN Agencies

UNEP will strengthen relationships with key agencies such as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS). The alliance between UNEP and UNCHS will be reinforced, particularly in the areas of water and sanitation and land-based sources of pollution, such as sewage. A joint UNEP/UNCHS water project is currently being implemented to assist African countries to establish early warning mechanisms to detect "hot spots" where sustainability is threatened and to help them deal with the growing ecological impacts of large cities on the continent's resources. Within the framework of the UNCHS/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme, cities around the world are currently participating in the development of, *inter alia*, freshwater management strategies.

Other examples of collaboration between UNEP and UN agencies include the following:

- With IMO, FAO and IUCN, particularly with regard to the various protocols for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

- With UNDP and World Bank within the framework of the GEF.

- With IOC, WMO and ICSU in the global observing systems.

- With its partners listed in Box 1 in the framework of the joint Group of Experts on the Scientific

- Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

- With WHO, WMO and UNESCO in the framework of GEMS/Water.

- **At the Regional and Sub-regional Levels**

The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans cover 14 regions, of which the inter-governmental bodies co-operate directly with UNEP in the development of programmes. A number of river and lake basin organizations also participate in the programme for the Envi-

5. Existing assessment and management programmes and tools (Box 1)

- **The Programme for the Environmentally sound Management of Inland Waters (EMINWA)** was established by UNEP in the 1980s. It is both an assessment and management tool and concentrates on inland waters. EMINWA assists Governments in integrating environmental considerations into the development and management of freshwater resources, with the objective of recognizing and reconciling conflicting interests.

- **The Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Water)** was developed by UNEP in 1978 to address the immediate freshwater monitoring and assessment data needs of Governments in order to assist them to manage the quality of their water resources effectively. GEMS/Water was also designed to serve the data needs of the scientific community. Its revitalization will lay the foundations of a system for predicting "hot spots" and extreme environmental information and for developing information systems to alert Governments.

The joint **Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)** was set up in 1969 with the objective of providing assessment advice on the state of marine and coastal environments. It also prepares periodic reviews of the state of the marine environment with regard to marine pollution, and identifies problem areas requiring special attention. GESAMP is funded by FAO, IAEA, IMO, UN, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO and WMO.

6. The UNEP GEF Water Portfolio

- UNEP's projects and activities within the GEF International Waters portfolio are designed to complement and support UNEP's mainstream water-related actions and programmes. In addition/they build upon UNEP's experience and comparative advantage in the field of environmental actions related to water. The present UNEP GEF portfolio, which has developed since 1996, comprises 19 project development facility activities and 11 full GEF projects, for a total value of US\$ 35.5 million. Over 85 countries in GEF eligible development regions are directly involved in one or more of these activities. It is envisaged that this portfolio will continue to grow in the immediate future in support of the implementation of UNEP's Water Policy.

- UNEP GEF projects are intended to build upon, complement and strengthen the following:

- Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, including activities in the Mediterranean, South China Sea, Western Indian Ocean, and the Canary Current. UNEP's Freshwater Programme, EMINWA, including activities in the Bermejo, Pantanol and Volta Basins.

The implementation of the Global Programme of Action, including activities in the Russian Arctic, Sao Francisco and San Juan river basins. The international chemicals agenda, including national management of Potentially Toxic Substances; DDT phases out in Central America; agricultural run-off to the Caribbean Sea. Strengthen and complement UNEP's assessment activities, including the GIWA, and the Regionally Based Assessment of Potentially Toxic Substances.

- A wide range of executing agencies are involved in UNEP GEF projects including:

The Secretariats of the various Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. The Organization of American States, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the World Health Organization, and major international NGOs such as: the International Geosphere Biosphere Programme, and the World Conservation Union. UNEP anticipates further collaboration with both new and existing partners in implementing future GEF International Waters projects through the vigorous pursuit of the GEF policy to expand the range of implementing and executing agencies.

ronmentally sound Management of Inland Waters, the Global Environment Monitoring System as well as the International Waters Portfolio of the GEF (see page for 22 details). In addition, UNEP has helped organize regional ministerial conferences, which keep environmental challenges and responses under review. These mechanisms and arrangements will facilitate the implementation and periodic refinement of UNEP's Water Strategy and Policy and also the monitoring of water-related issues. Emphasis will also be placed on the co-ordination of UNEP's water-related activities at the regional level by making maximum use of the out posted offices and the regional mechanisms already in place. River basin management and regional co-operation are vital prerequisites for meeting the priority challenges for sustainable water resources management. UNEP's role includes fostering and brokering partnerships between governments that share aquatic ecosystems. Other initiatives at the regional level include the development of guidelines and legal instruments as well as regional assessment activities. ➤

- **Partnerships with the Broader Civil Society**

UNEP recognizes the importance of forging partnerships with NGOs, the scientific community and the private sector through a participatory approach. In order to harness long-term, broad-based support on water-related issues, UNEP will take into consideration different perspectives. Additional partners also mean the more efficient use of resources.

- **At the Global Level**

UNEP will continue to forge partnerships at the global level. This will include collaborating

with existing international partnerships and mechanisms such as, *inter alia*, the World Water Council (WWC), and the Global Water Partnership (GWP). This approach will enhance UNEP's leadership role within the international community in efforts to address current water-related issues.

- **Support to Africa**

With regard to Africa, UNEP will continue to support water policy development, concentrating on the experiences of countries in developing and implementing relevant water initiatives. UNEP's responses to the water problems of Africa have

included an assessment that identified the key issues and challenges facing Africa through "Water for Sustainable Development in Africa: Key Issues". A Water Strategy for Africa has been developed on that basis. Furthermore, UNEP is chairing the water working group of the UN System Wide Initiative for Africa. □