

# Administrative Committee on Coordination

ACC/1999/8  
17 February 1999

ENGLISH ONLY

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INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## REPORT OF THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS (ACC SOCA) ON ITS SEVENTH SESSION

(MONACO, 8-12 February 1999)

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## **I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (IASCD)**

### **Administrative matters:**

1. At their Seventh meeting, the members of the ACC SOCA recommended to IACSD the election of Dr. Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary UNESCO/IOC, as the Chairman and Ms. Anne Rogers, Officer-in-Charge, Natural Resources Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), as the Vice-Chairperson of the Subcommittee. Dr. Umit Unluata, the Head of the Ocean Science Program UNESCO/IOC has been designated as the Secretary of the Subcommittee.

2. The ACC SOCA requests guidance from IACSD in regard to the appropriateness of having two departments from the UN Secretariat serving as members of the Subcommittee.

### **Implementation Planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA):**

3. Sewage has been identified as the major land-based pollutant in all the regional workshops organized by UNEP to date, and this observation was the basis for UNEP's 20th Governing Council to recommend a global conference on sewage to be held in the year 2000.

4. The difficulties related to some of the UN Organizations' role in assuming their lead agency role in regard to some of the pollutant source categories (as identified in General Assembly resolution GA-51/189) persist primarily due to financial and/or human resource constraints.

5. The ACC SOCA noted that its role as the inter-agency Steering Committee on technical co-operation with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (as mandated by UNEP Governing Council decision- 19/14A of 7 February 1997) required further consideration by UNEP as the GPA Secretariat, and welcomed the recent UNEP Governing Council decision at its 20th session to call on the Executive Director of UNEP to improve the effective functioning of the Steering Committee.

6. Greater guidance from UNEP on the specific role(s) of the Organizations represented in ACC SOCA in supporting implementation of the GPA needs to be provided. A particular priority will be to review the revised Strategic Action plan for the purpose of identifying specific roles for the ACC SOCA Organizations to support appropriate components of the GPA. The results will be communicated to the members of both SOCA and the Water Resources Subcommittee for their review and agreement as necessary.

### **United Nations Atlas of the Oceans:**

7. The UN (Turner) Foundation had agreed, in principle, to fund the development of the UN Atlas of the Oceans to an amount of 500.000\$ which represent seventy per cent of the original amount requested, the final provision of the funds being contingent on the development of a detailed work plan and programme. FAO will be the lead agency in this project and the members of the ACC SOCA agreed on a series of matters underlining the work plan and programme as provided in the present report.

### **International Year of the Ocean:**

8. An UNESCO/IOC contribution on the IYO will be submitted as a background document for the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Furthermore, a plan of action for implementing the IYO follow-up activities will be developed and a CD-ROM presenting the activities of Member States in the IYO as an archive and a platform for future initiatives will be produced.

### **Interagency co-operation and co-ordination:**

9. The ACC SOCA took note of the Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and Seas prepared by DESA for CSD.7. Members were invited to provide further information to the CSD and its Working Group as background documents.

10. A number of joint on-going or newly developing initiatives that are in a satisfactory state include: the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), GESAMP, a training network for ICAM, the efforts of UNESCO/IOC and WMO to establish a Joint Technical Commission on Oceanography and Meteorology, the GPA and the UN Atlas of the Ocean. The ACC SOCA, with UNEP acting as the lead agency, will prepare a draft programme framework for inter-agency co-operation in ICAM.

11. A presentation by the ACC SOCA will be made to the governments, NGOs and other organizations' representatives attending the Working Group meetings of the CSD, as a side-event, to provide a transparent perspective of its activities in relation to inter-agency co-operation. This side-event by ACC SOCA will take place in the evening of Wednesday 3 March, 1999 and the topics to be covered are expected to include: Introduction to ACC SOCA; The UN Atlas of the Oceans; The GPA; The GOOS; Inter-Agency Training Networks; and Information from the Chair of the ACC Subcommittee for Water Resources Management. The title of the side-event was tentatively identified as "*Working Together for the Oceans*" and the programme is provided in Annex III of the present report.

12. The ACC SOCA considered that the participation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariats was important to its work and requests clarification from the IACSD as to the membership status of the relevant Convention Secretariats in ACC subsidiary bodies, taking into account the on-going participation of the CBD in the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.

## II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

### A. Opening of the Session

13. The meeting was initially chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. I. Steiner of the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS).
14. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation to Dr. H. Livingston, Director of MEL IAEA, for arrangements made to host the session in Monaco.
15. Dr. H. Livingston welcomed the members of the Subcommittee and provided information on MEL and the local arrangements.
16. Dr. P. Bernal, The Executive Secretary of IOC, informed the Subcommittee that, starting from the present session, the duties of the UNESCO / IOC as the Secretariat of the ACC SOCA will be carried out by Dr. U. Unluata, Head of the Ocean Science Programme of IOC.
17. The Subcommittee extended its appreciation to Mme. Natalie Philippon-Tulloch for her dedicated work as Secretary of the Subcommittee since its inception.

### B. Agenda, timetable and documentation

18. The Chair introduced the draft agenda, documentation and a proposed timetable for the session. The list of participants is contained in Annex I, and the agenda as adopted in Annex II.

### C. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

19. The Chairman introduced this item by noting that since Mrs. Terttu Melvasalo has left UNEP, she could no longer serve as the Chairperson, and the election of a new Chair was therefore in order.
20. Mr. I. Steiner indicated that he will not be available to continue to serve as the Vice-Chairman of the ACC SOCA, and therefore a new Vice-Chair needed to be elected.
21. Considering the need to streamline and to improve its work, the members of the ACC SOCA indicated that it would be highly desirable that the new Chairman and the Secretary of the ACC SOCA should be from the same organization
22. Dr. P. Bernal was nominated for the chair and elected unanimously. Dr. P. Bernal thanked the members of the Subcommittee for the confidence they have shown him.
23. After a brief discussion on the status of the DESA representative, the ACC SOCA nominated and elected unanimously Ms. A. Rogers of DESA/DSD as the Vice-Chairperson and agreed to request guidance from IACSD in regard to the appropriateness of having two departments from the UN Secretariat serving as members on the ACC SOCA.

D. Updating Activities of the Agencies represented in the Subcommittee

24. For updating background information, all the members of the ACC-SOCA presented short summaries of on-going activities in their Organisations that are relevant to the Subcommittee. The information reviewed indicated that there exists a significant amount of activities carried out through inter-agency co-operation.

E. Implementation Planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)

25. The representative of UNEP informed the subcommittee of the status of implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). He indicated that the staffing of the Hague Coordination Office was nearly complete, although the Director's post was being re-advertised. The GPA regional workshops, being held for the purpose of (1) identifying land-based activities and their impacts on the marine environment, (2) defining the regional elements of the GPA Clearing-house mechanism, and (3) identifying the elements of regional action plans to address land-based pollution, were nearly completed. Sewage was identified as the major land-based pollutant in all the workshops completed to date, and this observation was the basis for Upends 20th Governing Council to recommend a global conference on sewage to be held in the year 2000.

26. The difficulties of some UN Organizations to assume their lead agency role in regard to some of the pollutant source categories (as identified in General Assembly resolution GA-51/189), due primarily to financial and/or human resource constraints were noted. The GESAMP marine environmental assessment components of the GPA were noted as being on schedule. It was pointed out that the UNEP Governing Council recommended that the first intergovernmental review of the state of implementation of the GPA take place in 2001.

27. The ACC SOCA noted that its role as the inter-agency Steering Committee on technical cooperation with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (as mandated by UNEP Governing Council decision- 19/14A of 7 February 1997), required further consideration by UNEP as GPA Secretariat, and welcomed the recent UNEP Governing Council decision at its 20th session to call on the Executive Director of UNEP to improve the effective functioning of the Steering Committee.

28. Discussion ensued on several aspects of the GPA. The representative of the FAO noted that concerned units in FAO have agreed in principle to collaborate with UNEP in implementation of the GPA, although FAO was not in a position to provide the full range of clearing-house functions described in GA-51/189 without extraordinary budgetary resources. Specifically, the Land and Water Development Division of FAO (AGL) was considering the ways and means necessary to initiate the creation of a clearing-house mechanism for pollutant source categories relevant to its mandate, namely, nutrients and sediment mobilization. The FAO clearing-house function would comprise (1) acting as a reference and knowledge center for the above-noted pollutant source categories, (2) reviewing proposals for external funding, and (3) provision of technical assistance against payment.

29. The other members of the ACC SOCA also reiterated their agency support for

implementation of the GPA. Several members cited the need for greater transparency and collaboration on the part of UNEP as GPA Secretariat. Further, the Subcommittee agreed to the need for a specific allocation of time at each Subcommittee meeting devoted strictly to discussing the GPA. To facilitate such discussions, the need to prepare and distribute relevant background documentation in sufficient lead time to allow their thorough review prior to discussing the GPA also was highlighted.

30. In response to the need for greater guidance from UNEP on the specific role(s) of the Organizations represented in the Subcommittee in supporting implementation of the GPA, the UNEP representative indicated he would work closely with the Hague office to identify such roles (in addition to those already identified in regard to the Clearing-house mechanism). A particular priority will be to review the revised Strategic Action plan for the purpose of identifying specific roles for the Subcommittee agencies to support appropriate components of the GPA, including (1) ongoing activities that directly support the GPA, (2) activities that could be revised with minimum effort to support the GPA, and (3) possible new activities to support the GPA. The results will be communicated to the members of both ACC SOCA and the Subcommittee on Water Resources for their review, revision as necessary and agreement. The UNEP representative also pledged greater and more timely communication on the part of UNEP to Subcommittee members in regard to GPA implementation.

#### F. United Nations Atlas of the Oceans

31. The representative of FAO first indicated that this project will develop an electronic (CD-ROM and Web-based) UN Atlas of the Oceans to encourage rapid and easy access to strategic data on the state of the ocean resources, development trends and threats to the marine environment. He then presented a status report on recent progress and described a series of issues awaiting the decision / recommendations of ACC SOCA for proceeding with the further development of the digital Atlas.

32. The ACC SOCA was informed, by the FAO representative, of the fact that UN (Turner) Foundation had agreed, in principle, to fund the development of the UN Atlas of the Oceans to an amount of 500.000\$ over three years which represented seventy per cent of the original amount requested. The Subcommittee was also informed that final provision of the funds was contingent on the development of a detailed work plan and programme. In discussing the follow-up required, a number of issues were conceived and agreement reached on the following:

33. FAO should continue to act as the lead agency for the UN Atlas on behalf of the agencies who are the members of the ACC SOCA - in particular, FAO should be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the project, in close collaboration with the core and participating agencies.

34. The Atlas will be an issue and policy driven instrument with a substantial section containing the background information required to fully understand the issues.

35. The Atlas should preferably be based on Web technology (e.g. Netscape) in order (a) to be fully compatible with its Web-version, and (b) to make full use of the internet capacity available in each agency.

36. Other UN organizations (UNCHS, UNIDO UN DOALOS etc ) will also cooperate by providing data, information, peer review etc in their respective areas of competence.

37. IMO, UNESCO/IOC, UNEP, UNDP, IAEA and WMO have confirmed their willingness to be considered Core-Organizations, which will commit resources, in kind or cash for the development of the Atlas. These Agencies will take responsibility for particular sections of the Atlas (to be agreed).
38. It was also agreed to establish an executive group comprising the six Core-Organizations with their ACC SOCA members acting as focal points.
39. Following the development of the first prototype, the Atlas structure should be defined from the onset of the implementation, both in terms of structure of the content, main issues, interface design, and navigation tool.
40. FAO should start looking for a consultant to act as the UN Atlas Project Coordinator and a short list of candidates should be prepared as soon as possible.
41. FAO should also pursue its negotiations with potential publishers with the view to reach an acceptable agreement regarding, *inter alia*, copyrights, respective roles in development and distributions, access by member countries and royalties.
42. It was considered that a revolving fund could be established to be used as agreed by ACC SOCA for e.g. acquiring copies of the Atlas for free distribution to developing countries' institutions; improving the software, updating the data, etc.
43. The shortfall in funding resulting from UN (Turner) Foundation decision not to fund the entire project could be compensated by: (a) accelerating the process, by producing the Atlas in less than 3 years - this would allow savings in the coordinators' cost, and (b) using the Atlas project as "catalytic" funding, complementing it with funds from the Regular Programme or other projects, particularly of the Core-Organizations.
44. FAO should further develop the contacts and negotiations with the competent institutions in Russia on the UN agencies behalf with the view to ensure (a) full use of the material already produced by these institutions (including the material included in the "Man and the Ocean" CD-ROM (b) encourage the further updating of the Russian Atlas of the Ocean and (c) benefit from the high quality of the peer-review process provided by the Russian Academy of Sciences to the Russian Atlas process.
45. FAO is also encouraged further to contact NOAA and other center of excellence in order to broaden the groups of non-UN collaborators to the project.
46. The ACC Subcommittee expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by FAO as lead-agency in securing funds from the UN (Turner) Foundation.

#### G. International Year of the Ocean

47. This agenda item was introduced by Dr. P. Bernal, the Executive Secretary of UNESCO / IOC which was the Lead-Agency for the IYO.
48. P. Bernal recalled that the IYO was adopted at the Seventeenth Session of the IOC Assembly through resolution VIII-17 and, formally, by the UN General Assembly through resolution A/RES/49/13 (December 1994).

49. More than 200 conferences, workshops and training cruises were arranged by dozens of countries. Seventeen major publications were announced as dedicated to the IYO. In addition, a IYO website was created for dissemination of scientific, cultural and educational information related to the IYO and it was quite a success. The details of these activities and many others are described in IOC/EC-XXXI/13 that was distributed to the Subcommittee members.

50. An IOC contribution on the IYO will be submitted as a Background Paper to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Furthermore, a plan of action for implementing the IYO follow-up activities will be developed and a CD-ROM presenting the activities of the Member States in the IYO as an archive and a platform for future initiatives will be produced.

51. The other members of the ACC SOCA also provided summaries of the successful public awareness raising activities of their agencies throughout the IYO.

#### H. Interagency co-operation and co-ordination and reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development

52. The ACC SOCA took note of the Report of the Secretary General on Oceans and Seas prepared by DESA for CSD.7. The members of the Subcommittee expressed their appreciation for the efforts of Ms A. Rogers of DESA in the preparation of the report and its timely submission. The ACC SOCA, which serves as task manager for Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, in answering the invitation of the Under-Secretary-General of DESA to provide a supplementary note to CSD, agreed that there was no need for such action. Members were invited to provide further information to the CSD and its Working Groups as background documents.

53. As a continuation of this agenda item, the Subcommittee had an in-depth discussion on ways and means for effective co-operation and co-ordination among the agencies and organizations represented in the Subcommittee.

54. A number of joint initiatives which were satisfactorily developing were briefly discussed, e.g. the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), GESAMP, and The Training Network for ICAM.

55. The ACC SOCA further noted with satisfaction the efforts of UNESCO/IOC and WMO to establish a Joint Technical Commission on Oceanography and Meteorology to replace the existing CMM of WMO and the Joint WMO/IOC Committee for IGOSS. The Commission will be a jointly managed mechanism for the reporting and coordination of the full range of existing and future IOC and WMO operational marine programme activities.

56. Detailed discussions of the GPA and the UN Atlas of the Ocean, are reported under sections E and F of the present report.

57. In addition, ACC SOCA identified ICAM as one programme area in which an effective Inter-Agency co-operation was most needed. The representative of UNEP agreed to act as focal point, with UNEP acting as the lead agency in this undertaking.

58. The Subcommittee further agreed that each Organization provides to UNEP a detailed

description of their activities related to ICAM in their programmes for the purposes of elaboration a draft Programme framework for further inter-agency co-operation. Submissions to the focal point should be made before the end of March.

59. The Subcommittee also considered the possibility of producing a comprehensive document in the year 2002 which would address various issues related to oceans and coastal areas and which could provide background material to, *inter alia*, the UNGASS for the Rio +10. It was noted, however, that much work is already underway in this direction through the several assessments on the status of Ocean Science by UNESCO/IOC in collaboration of SCOR and SCOPE; the series of marine environmental assessments being conducted under GESAMP; and the assessment of available Coastal Data-bases for the Coastal Module of GOOS.

60. The representative of DESA gave a detailed briefing on the organization of work during CSD.7 and its Ad-Hoc Intersessional Working Groups as well as the side-events by various organizations and the NGOs, and urged members of the ACC SOCA to actively participate in these sessions.

61. Dr. P. Reynolds, the UNDP representative, proposed that a presentation by the ACC SOCA be made to the governments, NGOs and other organizations' representatives attending the Working Group meetings of the CSD, as a side-event, to provide a transparent perspective of its activities in relation to the Inter-Agency co-operation. The Subcommittee expressed its concurrence with this proposal. It was decided that the side-event by ACC SOCA will take place in the evening of Wednesday 3 March, 1999 and that the topics to be covered should include:

Introduction to ACC SOCA

The UN Atlas of the Oceans

The GPA

The GOOS

Inter-Agency Training Networks

Information from the Chair of the ACC Subcommittee for Water Resources Management (pending confirmation).

62. The title of the side-event was tentatively identified as "*Working Together for the Oceans*". The local organization will be carried out by UNDP. The detailed programme for the side-event, including the speakers are provided in Annex III.

I. Other matters

63. The ACC SOCA considered that the participation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariats was important to its work and requests clarification from the IACSD as to the membership status of the relevant Convention Secretariats in ACC subsidiary bodies, taking into account the ongoing participation of the CBD in the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.

64. The members of ACC SOCA were informed of the letter sent 1 February 1999 from the Secretariat of ACC to the Secretaries of the ACC subsidiary bodies requesting comments on the Draft JIU Report on "Review of ACC Machinery". Copies of the document were distributed and comments are to be sent to UNESCO/IOC for forwarding to the ACC Secretary as soon as possible.

J. Adoption of the Report and closure

65. The ACC SOCA adopted the report on its seventh session. The meeting was closed at 18.00 hours on 10 February, 1999.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Acting Chairperson: P. Bernal  
(Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the  
United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

Acting Vice-Chairperson: A. Rogers  
(United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

Secretary: U. Unluata  
(Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the  
United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

United Nations	I. Steiner A. Rogers
United Nations Environment Programme	W. Rast
United Nations Development Programme	P. Reynolds

Specialized Agencies and related organizations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	S. Garcia
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	P. Bernal
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO)	P. Bernal
World Meteorological Organization	P. Dexter
International Maritime Organization	O. Khalimonov
International Atomic Energy Agency	H. Livingston
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	C. Ibe

Annex II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session
2. Agenda, time table and documentation
3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
4. Cooperative action
  - 4.1. Updating Activities of the Agencies represented in the Subcommittee
  - 4.2. Inter-Agency review of implementation planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment From Land-Based Activities (GPA)
  - 4.3. United Nations Atlas of the Oceans
  - 4.4. International Year of the Ocean
  - 4.5. Inter-Agency co-operation and co-ordination and reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development
5. Arrangements for the eighth session, including intersessional activities
6. Other Matters
7. Adoption of the Report and closure

### ANNEX III

## **WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE OCEANS**

An informal briefing by UN Agencies  
6-8 p.m. Wednesday 3 March, 1999  
UNDP Hank Shannon Room  
One UN Plaza, DC-1 21<sup>st</sup> floor

The following short presentations will be followed by questions and answers.

### **The ACC Sub-Committee on Oceans and Coastal Areas**

Patricio Bernal, Chairman ACC/Sub Committee, Assistant DG and  
Executive Secretary IOC/UNESCO, Paris.

### **Global Oceans Observing System**

Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary IOC/UNESCO, Paris.

### **UN Atlas of the Oceans**

Serge Garcia, Director, Fisheries Resource Division  
FAO, Rome.

### **Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities**

Walter Rast, Chief, Technical Cooperation Unit,  
Division of Policy Implementation & Principal Officer (Water)  
UNEP, Nairobi.

### **Inter-Agency Training Network: TRAIN-SEA-COAST (UN/DOALOS-Marine and Coastal Area Development) TRAINFISH (FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries), TRAINMAR (UNCTAD-Ports and shipping), CC: TRAIN (UNITAR Sea level rise impact on coasts)**

Philip Reynolds, Chief, Water Programme, Sustainable Energy and  
Environment Division, (SEED), Bureau for Development Policy (BDP),  
UNDP.

### **ACC/Sub Committee for Water Resource Management - Everyone lives downstream**

Gouri Gosh, Chair ACC/Water and Director

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