



Administrative Committee on Coordination

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Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development

Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas on its eighth session

(The Hague, 19-21 January 2000)

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Matters brought to the attention of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development	1-16	3
II. Summary of discussions	17-72	5
A. Opening of the session	17-18	5
B. Agenda, timetable and documentation	19	5
C. Updating activities of the organizations represented in the Subcommittee . . .	20-23	5
D. United Nations Atlas of the Oceans	24-31	6
E. Status of implementation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA).....	32-36	7
F. Enhancing inter-agency cooperation at the regional level	37-40	8
G. Status of implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) . . .	41	8
H. Creation of the new consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly on 24 November 1999 and implications for the United Nations system: roles of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and United Nations agencies	42-50	10
I. Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21: United Nations-wide action programme for oceans and coastal areas: reporting and participation.	51-54	12
J. Making the Subcommittee more transparent, effective and responsive	55-60	13

K.	Revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)	61–67	14
L.	Other matters	68	14
M.	Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee and closure of the session	69–72	14
Annexes			
I.	List of participants		16
II.	Agenda		17
III.	Report of the first meeting of the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee (Rome, 9 and 10 December 1999)		18
IV.	Activities of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, August-December 1999: a progress report (20 January 2000)		24
V.	Role and responsibilities of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in facilitating inter-agency cooperation on implementation of the GPA: draft paper by the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and the Chairs of the ACC Subcommittees		30

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development

United Nations Atlas of the Oceans

1. Considerable progress has been made in developing agreements with non-United Nations partners and centres of excellence and in particular with the United States of America National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which supports Dr. John Everett as part-time manager of the United Nations Atlas project. The preliminary work plan, as developed by the Atlas Technical Committee (annex III) was adopted.

2. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas agreed that the Atlas Core Group should consist of only those agencies that had a direct involvement in its development and were committing substantial specific resources for this purpose. It was confirmed that, in that respect, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) were the core agencies. They will nominate experts to stand in for the development of the Atlas and participate at their own expense at the technical meetings. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank confirmed their will to be "cooperating partners" in this project.

Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)

3. The Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) is a project with a US\$ 14 million budget (50 per cent funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)) for its four-year work programme. GIWA will conduct assessments in 66 subregions, organized into 9 mega-regions, and is expected to cover transboundary marine and freshwater areas. The analytical phase of its work will begin shortly, with preparatory and regional

reports due in 2002; the final GIWA assessment is to be issued in 2003.

4. The Subcommittee considers the GIWA project a potentially valuable contribution to its own work in addressing marine and coastal issues, including the promotion of implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA),¹ and has agreed to help facilitate its work when possible, drawing on the relevant expertise of the United Nations system as represented among its members.

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

5. As requested by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) at its fourteenth meeting (Vienna, 9 and 10 September 1999), a draft document prepared by the GPA Coordination Office and the Chairs of the two Subcommittees, and previously circulated by the Chair to the members, was officially endorsed by the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (see annex V). The Subcommittee agrees that the main role of the Subcommittees is to provide a platform for enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation in matters related to GPA implementation.

6. The central node of the GPA clearing house was launched at the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,² in September 1999. As previously agreed by the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, the source category nodes are being developed by the respective lead agencies. Partnerships have been also established between the GPA Coordination Office and international conventions and programmes, such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Convention on Biological Diversity,³ the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) offices and divisions (in particular the Global Resource Information Database (GRID) centres).

7. The GPA Coordination Office is assessing the feasibility of holding a global conference on municipal

waste water in 2001. The members of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas will indicate how they could contribute to the preparatory process for this conference, including the regional meetings.

8. Preparation of the 2001 GPA review is being organized (12-14 April 2000, The Hague). A format for reporting on progress in implementing the GPA at the national, regional and global levels is being prepared. In this context, the members of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas were invited to contribute to the booklet on "Partners in Implementation of the GPA" by providing information on their activities directly related to implementation of the GPA.

Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21: reporting and participation of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas

9. Three areas of the work of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas that drew on the contributions of all or nearly all its members should be regarded at this stage as inputs to be provided by ACC/Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas to the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21⁴ process. These areas are:

- (a) United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;
- (b) Inter-agency coordination of implementation for the GPA;
- (c) State of the Marine Environment report of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

This list does not preclude additional initiatives' being added at a later stage.

Making the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas more transparent, effective and responsive

10. As a follow-up on the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas towards making its work more transparent that had been endorsed by IACSD at its fourteenth meeting (Vienna, 9 and 10 September 1999) and taking the opportunity

offered by its eighth session, the Subcommittee gave, as a side event to the session, a briefing for the diplomatic missions in The Hague on its activities as the task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21.

11. Thirty-seven diplomatic missions attended the briefing. After a short introduction by the Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, four topics were presented:

- (a) Status of implementation of GPA (by the GPA Coordinator);
- (b) Creation of the new open-ended consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly (by the representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat);
- (c) United Nations Atlas of the Oceans (by the representative of FAO);
- (d) Addressing critical uncertainties for marine environmental management and climate change (by the Director of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) Project Office).

A question-and-answer period ensued after the briefing.

12. IOC is leading the development of a web site for the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas. All the eligible members of ACC/Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas appear on the front page with active linkages to their own web sites. A separate page containing a list of the active members of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas identifying their sub-task manager roles is being jointly designed and populated with links provided by each agency. Further active Subcommittee linkages to GPA, GESAMP, United Nations Atlas, GIWA and Commission on Sustainable Development sites will be placed on the Subcommittee's web site. All reports of ACC/Subcommittee meetings will be on the web site.

13. The Subcommittee is in the process of developing a Subcommittee brochure, describing its role and current activities. The Subcommittee agreed on a format that should not be more than seven pages. The Chair indicated that the publication costs of the brochure would be met by IOC, whose contribution should set a precedent for future Subcommittee Chairs.

Creation of the new consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly on 24 November 1999 and implications for the United Nations system: roles of the ACC Subcommittee and United Nations organizations

14. The Subcommittee members unanimously recognized the importance of General Assembly resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999 on the results of the review by the Commission on Sustainable Development of the sectoral theme of "Oceans and Seas": international coordination and cooperation, and of the process created thereby, and shared the concerns expressed by the Assembly therein as regards the need for increased coordination and cooperation on ocean issues. Accordingly, they expressed the will of their organizations and their collective willingness to actively participate in this new, very comprehensive consultation on oceans and their readiness to respond to the specific requests defined by the Ocean Consultative Process and duly endorsed by the Assembly.

15. The Subcommittee also agreed to provide a joint written report to the Ocean Consultative Process on its activities, and to invite all agencies and organizations members to actively participate in the upcoming first Ocean Consultative Process meeting, by being represented in the proceedings.

Revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)

16. In response to the recommendation of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session on GESAMP in its decision 7/1 on oceans and seas,⁵ an updated Memorandum of Understanding dealing with GESAMP's operational procedures and guidelines for their implementation was prepared and sent to sponsoring agencies in September 1999 requesting their endorsement or comments. To date, only a few agencies have responded. There is an urgent need to receive the responses from all the agencies that support GESAMP.

II. Summary of discussions

A. Opening of the session

17. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation to Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd, the Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), for the excellent arrangements made to host the eighth session of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas at the GPA Coordination Office in The Hague.

18. Ms. Vandeweerd welcomed the members of the Subcommittee and provided information on the local arrangements.

B. Agenda, timetable and documentation

19. 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 adopted agenda in annex II.

C. Updating activities of the organizations represented in the Subcommittee

20. As regards updating background information, all the members of the Subcommittee presented short summaries of ongoing activities and recent events in their organizations that were relevant to the Subcommittee.

21. The World Bank representative informed the participants that a review was being undertaken of its cooperative experience in the management of transboundary waters. This review would initially focus on management of rivers and lakes and would be extended to activities concerning coastal and marine areas. The findings from this process would be shared with the members of the Subcommittee.

22. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that the Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (J-COMM) had been established by the decisions of the thirteenth WMO Congress (May 1999) and the twentieth IOC Assembly (June-July 1999). As agreed by the WMO Congress and the IOC Assembly, J-COMM is to provide the institutional umbrella and coordinating/integrating mechanism for all existing and

future operational marine-related activities of WMO and IOC. All existing bodies of the former WMO Commission for Marine Meteorology and WMO/IOC Committee for the Integrated Global Ocean Services System continue to work within the J-COMM area of responsibility. The First Transition Planning Meeting for J-COMM took place in St. Petersburg (Russian Federation) in July 1999; the second meeting is scheduled to be held in Paris in mid-June 2000. A number of meetings of the subsidiary bodies of J-COMM are planned for year 2000. Their results will be reported to the first session of J-COMM scheduled to take place in mid-June 2001 in Iceland.

23. FAO informed the Subcommittee of the adoption in 1999 of the first Strategic Framework of the Organizations, which will be framing the FAO activities for the future. The FAO representative stressed that the main points would be in implementing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing with a view to ensuring sustainability as well as food security. It was further indicated that more efforts would be directed towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries. A world conference on "Fisheries in the Ecosystem" will be arranged in September 2001 in cooperation with Iceland in Reykjavik, the outcome of which might feed into the 10-year review of the Agenda 21 process.

D. United Nations Atlas of the Oceans

24. In the role of lead agency for this joint project of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, the representative of FAO presented the report of the first meeting of the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee (TC) (FAO, Rome, 9 and 10 December 1999). He presented the results of the TC deliberations on (a) the structure and content of the Atlas; (b) the software options for the Atlas web sites; (c) the status of the various institutional agreements; and (d) the arrangements for data and information collection (see annex III).

25. In its capacity as the Steering Committee for the United Nations Atlas project, the Subcommittee adopted the report of the Technical Committee and, in particular, endorsed the following technical decisions:

(a) The original data used for charts and maps should be available and accessible to the users;

(b) Priority should be given to using existing information (as opposed to generating new information);

(c) Priority should also be given to data clearly related to policy matters;

(d) General background information should take account also of the needs of a broad community of users;

(e) Maps, charts and, in general, all documents should have a common "look and feel";

(f) In the information pyramid, top (introductory) documents should be short (one-page) policy-oriented notes leading to more detailed specific as well as background information and should probably be translated into many languages;

(g) Documents should be, as far as possible, written in a timeless manner so as to increase their "shelf life" and reduce need for updating;

(h) Lead agencies will be nominated for specific issues, uses and information domains so as to coordinate the inputs into the Atlas.

26. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction the progress made in developing agreements with non-United Nations partners and centres of excellence and was pleased in particular with the agreement with NOAA and the provision by NOAA of highly qualified expert help through the secondment of Dr. John Everett as part-time manager of the United Nations Atlas project.

27. In addition, in response to the various proposals and recommendations of the Technical Committee, the Subcommittee decided the following:

(a) The group of experts nominated by each United Nations core agency to assist in developing the Atlas would be called the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee. The Subcommittee requested that clear terms of reference for the Technical Committee be drafted and examined at the next session;

(b) FAO should continue its negotiations with Elsevier, taking into account the strong preference of the Subcommittee for an agreement limited to the duration of the project;

(c) The model agreement discussed at the Technical Committee should serve as a basis for the

agreements required between FAO (as executing agency) and the United Nations core agencies. FAO should send the model formally to each agency, as a draft, for consideration by the appropriate services and for signature in the shortest time possible. Each agency will adapt it to its own requirements, keeping in mind that it should annex to the agreement a note confirming (or explicating) its commitment towards development of the Atlas;

(d) The Community Directory Server (CDS) software developed by FAO should be adopted and customized to serve as the basis for the *Ocean@tlas* web site;

(e) In case of urgent need of a decision by the Steering Committee, e-mail could be used as a means of communication to obtain such decisions. In this case, FAO will send the request to the Subcommittee secretariat with the necessary background information. The secretariat will contact the Subcommittee members, receive their reply and inform FAO (and the Technical Committee) about the outcome of the consultations. Such decisions should be formalized at the next Subcommittee meeting;

(f) The Atlas Core Group should consist of only those agencies that had a direct involvement in its development and were committing substantial specific resources for the purpose. It was confirmed that, in that respect, FAO, IAEA, IMO, IOC-UNESCO, UNEP and WMO were the core agencies. They will nominate experts to stand in the Technical Committee and participate at their expense at its meetings;

(g) The preliminary work plan, as contained in the report of the first meeting of the Technical Committee (annex III) was adopted.

28. The Subcommittee took note of the information given by UNDP regarding the *www.NetAid.org* web site that it was developing. It also noted the confirmation by the World Bank of its willingness to put at the disposal of the Atlas, regional geographical information systems (GIS) information (for example, on the Red Sea).

29. The World Bank requested that it be listed as a “cooperating partner” in this project. The key types of information to be provided by the World Bank would include information on policies and procedures concerning development, environmental and social guidelines; global and regional statistical data; and

information concerning model regional- and national-level activities concerning management of coastal and marine areas.

30. UNDP requested that it should also be listed as a “cooperating partner” in the Atlas process. UNDP will provide data (in CD format) on its annual Human Development Reports and information on its programmes and projects.

31. The Subcommittee agreed to the requests by UNDP and the World Bank.

E. Status of implementation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)

32. The item on “Status of implementation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)” was introduced by Mr. Per Wramner, Scientific Director of this UNEP-led initiative, who had been invited by the Subcommittee to give a briefing on GIWA and discuss possible areas of collaboration with the United Nations system in general, and the Subcommittee in particular. GIWA currently has a US\$ 14 million budget (50 per cent funded by GEF) for its four-year work programme and is seeking an additional US\$ 10 million. Its secretariat, which is still under recruitment, is located in Kalmar, Sweden. Although a global assessment, GIWA will be executed in 66 subregions, organized into 9 mega-regions, and is expected to cover transboundary marine and freshwater areas. The analytical phase of its work will begin shortly, with preparatory and regional reports due in 2002; the final GIWA assessment is to be issued in 2003.

33. Mr. Wramner explained that GIWA would be based on other studies in the marine and freshwater areas and that coordination and cooperation, *inter alia*, within the United Nations system, was necessary to avoid duplication of efforts. He suggested that both the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources could serve as informal “facilitating” bodies and expressed his interest in attending (as a UNEP staff member) further meetings of both groups. In response to questions about the evolution of the GIWA exercise from its original conceptualization as a purely freshwater study to its current status encompassing the intention to cover both marine and freshwater areas, the Scientific Director noted the need for a

reinforcement of the freshwater issues in the implementation phase.

34. The Subcommittee welcomed the GIWA project as a potentially valuable contribution to its own work in addressing marine and coastal issues, including the promotion of implementation of the GPA, and agreed to help facilitate its work when possible, drawing on the relevant expertise of the United Nations system as represented among its members. The Subcommittee also expressed its hope that the ACC/Subcommittee on Water Resources would collaborate with the GIWA project, keeping in mind its complementary linkages to the freshwater assessment initiative of the Subcommittee on Water Resources, namely, the World Water Development Report, which it is proposed should be completed in time for submission to the 10-year review of Agenda 21 in 2002.

35. The Subcommittee expressed its concern with regard to the gap between the wide scope, level of ambition and time-frame of the project and the availability of resources, particularly human resources.

36. The representative of the World Bank indicated that it is participating in the Steering Group for GIWA and will be involved in the testing of the GIWA methodology in the Baltic Sea region. The World Bank will also be inviting representatives of GIWA and UNEP/GPA to participate in a consultation on World Bank experience in the management of transboundary water resources to be held in Berlin in June 2000.

F. Enhancing inter-agency cooperation at the regional level

37. Following up on the initiative proposed at its informal session (London, 16-18 August 1999), the Subcommittee discussed further the possibility of enhancing cooperation at the regional level, taking into account General Assembly resolution 54/225 of 22 December 1999 on promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. The Subcommittee noted that integrated management (presumably of natural and other resources) in the Caribbean area would, in principle, have to address such issues as resource inventory and evolution; resource allocation and control of access to resources; participation mechanisms; monitoring and risk assessment; systems

of indicators; and management performance assessment, among others.

38. The policy implication of such work would require that such a task be undertaken by the United Nations organizations at the request of, and together with, an institutional mechanism/authority with the mandate, authority and means to implement integrated management at the regional level, and make the difficult policy decisions required.

39. The Subcommittee concluded that, while improving collaboration at the regional level was a worthwhile objective, the available resources were too limited to expand the present work programme further. It therefore agreed that regional collaboration exercises would better be undertaken in the scope of ongoing programmes such as the GPA, GIWA and the United Nations Atlas.

40. The representative of the World Bank indicated that he would provide the Subcommittee secretariat with information concerning relevant environmental management activities in the Caribbean Sea region. The World Bank representative noted that a major focus of activities was on coastal and marine management activities in the Central American coastal region. The representative stressed the need to have a clearly defined counterpart organization within the region if the Subcommittee was to proceed with evaluation of the proposed cooperative activities.

G. Status of implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)

41. The Coordinator, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office in The Hague, briefed the meeting on the major activities undertaken by the Coordination Office between August and December 1999 and described a series of issues awaiting recommendations of the Subcommittee. Detailed information can be found in the progress report submitted by the GPA Coordination Office to the meeting and annexed to this report (see annex IV). The topics were the following:

(a) Role and responsibilities of the ACC Subcommittees in respect of implementation of the GPA:

As requested by IACSD at its fourteenth meeting (Vienna, 9 and 10 September 1999), a draft document prepared by the GPA Coordination Office and the Chairs of the two Subcommittees, and previously circulated by the Chair to the members, was officially endorsed by the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (see annex V). The Subcommittee agreed that the main role of the Subcommittees was to provide a platform for enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation in matters related to GPA implementation. It also agreed that the Chairman of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the Coordinator of the GPA Coordination Office would bring the draft document to the attention of the fifteenth session of IACSD;

(b) Development of the clearing house:

(i) The central node of the GPA clearing house was launched at the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in September 1999. As previously agreed by the Subcommittee, the source category nodes are being developed by the respective lead agencies. The GPA Coordination Office is supporting two regional seas (through the Caribbean Environmental Programme and South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme) in the development of their regional nodes;

(ii) Partnerships have been also established between the GPA Coordination Office and international conventions and programmes, such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Convention on Biological Diversity, SIDSNET and UNEP offices and divisions (in particular the GRID centres);

(iii) The members of the Subcommittee were invited to keep the GPA Coordination Office updated on the development of the source categories for which they were the lead agencies and to discuss further developments at the next meeting;

(c) Strategic action plan and global conference on sewage:

In response to the outcome of the twentieth session of the UNEP Governing Council, the GPA

Coordination Office prepared a strategic action plan on sewage, in consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). A "Framework for Action" on sewage is being drafted and will be soon sent to the members of the Subcommittee for comments. The GPA Coordination Office is also assessing the feasibility of holding a global conference on municipal waste water in 2001. The members of the Subcommittee were also invited to indicate how they could contribute to the preparatory process for this conference, including the regional meetings;

(d) 2001 review process on implementation of the GPA:

(i) As called for by the Governing Council of UNEP at its twentieth session (decision 20/19 B of 5 February 1999⁶) an expert group meeting, with the participation of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, to facilitate the preparation of the 2001 GPA review, is being organized (12-14 April 2000, The Hague). A format for reporting on progress in implementing the GPA at the national, regional and global levels is being prepared. In this context, the members of the Subcommittee were invited to contribute to the booklet on "Partners in Implementation of the GPA" by providing information on their activities directly related to implementation of the GPA. Members were also informed that some of their agencies would be invited to the April 2000 preparatory meeting;

(ii) The Subcommittee was also informed that appropriate links were being established among the GPA review meeting (late 2001), the possible global conference on waste water (mid-2001), the World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference (The Hague, March 2000), the Global Water Conference (Germany, 2002) and the preparatory process for the 10-year review of Agenda 21;

(iii) The Coordinator acknowledged the representatives of UNDP and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat in regard to the opportunity that their agencies had offered to the GPA Coordination Office to work together with

them on the TRAIN-SEA-COAST programme. It was also agreed that the possibility of twinning the Mediterranean with another, less developed region of the Regional Seas Programme, would be explored by the GPA Coordination Office and the Regional Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan;

(iv) In relation to the roles of individual agencies in implementing the GPA, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) informed the Subcommittee that, since its last meeting in 1999, there had been certain positive developments. In 1998, IMO had informed UNEP that it would not be in a position to undertake the recommended duties for setting up the clearing-house mechanism for oil and litter owing to the budgetary constraints arising from the “zero nominal growth” policy;

(v) In 1999 however, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Marine Environment Divisions of IMO and Environment Canada was signed and a pilot project was launched to assist the IMO secretariat in developing a node on oil and litter. The project will be evaluated in March 2000. Following the evaluation, a work plan will be considered to implement the clearing-house recommendation;

(vi) The representative of the World Bank indicated that it would work with the GPA Coordination Office in the planning of the “sewerage initiative”. This would include provision of information concerning the findings and recommendations from the ongoing review of the implementation of the Water Resource Management Policy of the World Bank, information on the current lending portfolio, and joint review of potential approaches towards a “sewerage conference” in 2001 or an appropriate alternative to mobilize interest in this key issue. These activities would be coordinated with the World Bank representative to the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.

H. Creation of the new consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly on 24 November 1999 and implications for the United Nations system: roles of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and United Nations agencies

42. The representative of the United Nations-Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea introduced this agenda item by referring to General Assembly resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999 and the letter of the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs to the United Nations agencies dated 13 December 1999 regarding that resolution.

43. The representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea indicated to the Subcommittee that the first meeting of the Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process (Ocean Consultative Process) established by General Assembly resolution 54/33 would take place in New York from 30 May to 2 June 2000. Since the resolution had established that the meetings would deliberate on the Secretary-General’s report on oceans and the law of the sea with due account given to any particular resolution or decision of the Assembly, any relevant special reports of the Secretary-General and any relevant recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and given the short time-frame for preparing for this first meeting, it was decided that the existing report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/54/429 and Corr.1) would be the base document for the discussions in May.

44. However, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as the Division responsible for producing this report, is requesting new inputs from the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations in order to update the report through an addendum in time for the first Ocean Consultative Process meeting. Accordingly, the supplementary inputs are due 31 January 2000. In addition to requesting each agency contribution, the representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea also encouraged the Subcommittee to provide a joint statement for this addendum.

45. The Chair welcomed the report of the representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and stressed that General Assembly resolution 54/33 in paragraph 8 (b) had also requested the Secretary-General to undertake measures aimed at improving the effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and to include information on progress in that regard in his next report on oceans and the law of the sea, that is to say, the report for year 2000. Furthermore, the resolution underlined the importance of the participation of the Subcommittee, among others, in the consultative process and of its inputs to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea.

46. Considerable discussion ensued. The Subcommittee members unanimously recognized the importance of General Assembly resolution 54/33 and shared the concerns expressed by the Assembly therein as regards the need for increased coordination and cooperation on ocean issues. The Subcommittee further agreed that there existed a need for increased cooperation in view of the fact that degradation of coastal areas in certain regions and of the marine environment in general was still a major concern and was even increasing in some cases, as exemplified by a number of recent developments bordering on disasters such as fish kills, health epidemics, coral bleaching and harmful algal blooms. Subcommittee members expressed the will of their agencies and their collective willingness to actively participate in this new, very comprehensive consultative process on oceans and their readiness to respond to the requests defined in terms of the Ocean Consultative Process and duly endorsed by the Assembly.

47. The Subcommittee also shared the following points made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/131-E/1999/75) to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly on measures taken in the United Nations system to accelerate progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21:⁷

(a) Additional tasks such as those implied in many decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development could not be implemented fully by individual United Nations agencies without additional resources. An example included the need for necessary financial and human resources to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine

Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), as had been recently recognized by the Governing Council of UNEP. Governments and respective governing and budgetary bodies should be encouraged to work together to provide the resources to implement their decisions particularly at the outset (para. 41);

(b) There was often a perception that the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and other United Nations conferences was primarily the responsibility of the United Nations system in general, and of task managers in particular. It needed to be emphasized that actions need to take place primarily at the national level, with Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and others as the main actors. The role of the United Nations system was, *inter alia*, to facilitate cooperation among major actors to enhance action at the national level (para. 43).

48. The Subcommittee also noted that, while ACC was made up of the heads of the agencies of the United Nations system with management authority over programme and budget, the Subcommittee was made up of senior sector specialists from the agencies of the United Nations system undertaking activities in ocean and coastal areas with a mandate to:

(a) Facilitate inter-agency coordination;

(b) Undertake joint initiatives and activities as appropriate;

(c) Serve as a forum for the review of trends and emerging issues in ocean and coastal area management.

49. Accordingly, coordinated executive action can only ensue following the due process of endorsement and financing within each agency's governing structure. The Subcommittee agreed to ask its Chair to report to IACSD and to the Ocean Consultative Process on the ongoing and planned activities of the Subcommittee which currently comprised:

(a) Proactive production of contributions to the task of system-wide reporting to international bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (as the task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21), the General Assembly (contributing to the annual report on oceans and the law of the sea), the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the GPA and the new Ocean Consultative Process;

(b) Joint production of the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(c) Forward implementation of the GPA as detailed in annex IV below;

(d) Assisting GIWA in the production of a policy-oriented global water assessment process;

(e) Development of regional applications of joint activities as necessary;

(f) Ensuring a coordinated input to the 10-year review of Agenda 21 and its preparatory process, ensuring that due attention would be given to the oceans and coastal areas.

50. The Subcommittee also agreed to provide a joint written report to the Ocean Consultative Process on its activities, taking advantage of the ongoing initiatives of producing the Subcommittee web site and brochure, and to invite all agencies and organizations members to actively participate in the upcoming first Ocean Consultative Process meeting, by being represented in the proceedings.

I. Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21: United Nations-wide action programme for oceans and coastal areas: reporting and participation

51. Item 6 on the “Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21” was introduced by the representative of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, who briefed the Subcommittee on recent action taken by the General Assembly on preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21. Resolution 54/218, adopted by the Assembly on 22 December 1999, had emphasized, *inter alia*, the importance of the continued active and collaborative involvement of all relevant bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and requested collaboration of organizations and bodies in contributing to several reports to be submitted to the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, during 2000. In addition, Assembly resolution 53/188 of 15 December 1998 and decision 7/9⁸ adopted by the Commission on

Sustainable Development at its seventh session had called for a report of the Secretary-General on possible ways and means of ensuring effective preparations for the 10-year review, to be submitted to the Commission at its eighth session, and subsequently to the Council and the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

52. IACSD at its fifteenth session (New York, 24 and 25 January 2000) had been scheduled to discuss modalities for ensuring participation of United Nations organizations in the process. Its recommendations would be included in the reports that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was preparing for the consideration of the intergovernmental bodies. The views and suggestions of the Subcommittee regarding specific activities that might be undertaken or proposed by the United Nations system in conjunction with the 2002 review, as well as on the possible scope and format of analytical documentation that could be prepared by IACSD and the task managers for the review, would be extremely helpful in this regard.

53. Subcommittee members mentioned a number of ocean-related events that they were already aware of or involved in. These events — including a World Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Ecosystem in Iceland in late 2001, which FAO was helping to organize — were expected to provide inputs to the 2002 review. In addition, a major new assessment by GESAMP called the State of the Marine Environment is expected to be released during 2000; UNEP will hold the first intergovernmental review meeting of the GPA in 2001; and UNEP was assessing the possibility of holding an International Conference on Sewage in 2001. Meanwhile, the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans project, for which the Subcommittee is coordinator, will be finalized at the end of year 2001.

54. The Subcommittee agreed to recommend to IACSD that three areas of its work that drew on the contributions of all or nearly all its members should, at this stage, be considered inputs to be provided by the Subcommittee to the 10-year review of Agenda 21 process. These are:

(a) United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(b) Inter-agency coordination of implementation for the GPA;

(c) The GESAMP State of the Marine Environment report.

This initial list does not preclude additional initiatives' being added later.

J. Making the Subcommittee more transparent, effective and responsive

55. The Chairperson recalled that, at its informal meeting (London, 16-18 August 1999), the Subcommittee had agreed to recommend a number of proposals to IACSD that could improve its transparency, effectiveness and responsiveness to member States, as called for by the Commission on Sustainable Development. IACSD at its fourteenth meeting (Vienna, 9 and 10 September 1999) endorsed the following suggestions by the Subcommittee:

(a) Subcommittee members would provide regular annual briefings to delegations and interested observers during every session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (not just when oceans were discussed, as had been past practice), subject to the financial and time constraints on travel to United Nations Headquarters;

(b) Each member would explore the feasibility of conducting briefings on the work of the Subcommittee to Governments and agency representatives and non-governmental organizations during regular sessions of the respective governing bodies;

(c) The Subcommittee would develop its own web site linked to that of ACC and relevant organizations, as well as the United Nations Atlas of the Ocean web page;

(d) A Subcommittee brochure would also be produced, which would be made available at the briefings described in (a) and (b) above.

56. As a follow-up to these recommendations and taking the opportunity offered by its eighth session, the Subcommittee, as a side event, gave a briefing for the diplomatic missions in The Hague on its activities as task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21.

57. Thirty-seven diplomatic missions attended the briefing. After a short introduction by the Chairperson of the Subcommittee, four topics were presented:

(a) Status of implementation of the GPA (by the GPA Coordinator);

(b) Creation of the new open-ended consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly (by the representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea);

(c) United Nations Atlas of the Oceans (by the representative of FAO);

(d) Addressing critical uncertainties for marine environmental management and climate change (by the Director of the Project Office of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)).

A question-and-answer period ensued after the briefing.

58. As regards the Subcommittee web site, the Chairperson informed the Subcommittee of the web site being developed on the IOC server. By linking to the site, he explained its structure. After seeing the prototype, the members agreed that all the eligible members of the Subcommittee should appear on the front page with active linkages to their own web sites. A separate page containing a list of the active members of the Subcommittee, identifying their sub-task manager's roles, is being designed to be populated with links provided by each agency.

59. It was further agreed that active linkages to GPA, GESAMP, United Nations Atlas, GIWA and Commission on Sustainable Development sites should also be placed on the Subcommittee web site. The Subcommittee also agreed that all the past reports of Subcommittee meetings should be included on the web site. The Chair asked the members to indicate the relevant links in their web site for inclusion. Subcommittee members agreed to provide this information by 1 February 2000, so that the web site could be up for upcoming events.

60. The Subcommittee is in the process of developing a Subcommittee brochure, informing on its role and current activities. The Subcommittee agreed on a format that should not be more than seven pages. The Chair indicated that the publication costs of the brochure would be met by IOC, whose contribution should, hopefully, set a precedent for future Subcommittee Chairs. The members further agreed to contribute, by 5 February, to a draft annotated outline to be prepared by 31 January 2000 by the Chair.

K. Revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)

61. The representative of IMO, who serves as Administrative Secretary of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), a joint inter-agency advisory group sponsored by IMO, FAO, UNESCO/IIOC, WMO, WHO, IAEA, UNEP and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, briefed the Subcommittee on the August 1999 intersecretariat meeting held in London to review the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the Group in accordance with the recommendation of the Commission on Sustainable Development in its decision 7/1 on oceans and seas.⁵

62. An updated Memorandum of Understanding dealing with GESAMP's operational procedures and guidelines for their implementation had been prepared and sent to sponsoring agencies in October 1999 requesting their endorsement or comments. The Administrative Secretary noted that to date not all of the agencies' Technical Secretaries for GESAMP had responded and he urged the other agencies to reply as soon as possible.

63. The representative of UNEP advised the Subcommittee that her organization had some concerns regarding the current working methods of GESAMP, which were not adequately addressed in the revised Memorandum of Understanding. A lively discussion ensued concerning many aspects of the work of GESAMP in particular and independent scientific advice in general. Special concern was expressed on how the proposed changes in GESAMP's working procedures might impact on its independent status, specifically with respect to the recommendation to allow government scientific experts and those from non-governmental organizations to participate in the Group.

64. While recognizing the need for improving the functioning and effectiveness of GESAMP and welcoming the forward-looking efforts of its intersecretariat meeting in August, Subcommittee members highlighted the value of independent scientific advice on oceans issues and considered it

essential for the sponsoring agencies to continue to have access to such advice from GESAMP.

65. Many agencies were satisfied with the current way in which the outcome of GESAMP's work in sectoral areas was channelled to individual agencies, but acknowledged there might be problems concerning how its scientific advice dealing with global and cross-sectoral issues was carried forward to the intergovernmental process. Concerns about the "ownership" of such advice and its peer review by individual sponsoring agencies were expressed. Concern was also expressed that the opening up of GESAMP membership to government nominees could threaten the independence of its work.

66. The question of institutional constraints, namely, the lack of a global body on oceans to receive such advice, was raised, and the potential role for the new informal consultative process in the General Assembly was discussed. It was generally agreed that concerns about GESAMP's effectiveness were not due to GESAMP's own working methods but rather to the lack of a consolidated cross-sectoral process that carried forward its advice to the intergovernmental level. In conclusion, the Subcommittee urged all sponsoring agencies of GESAMP to respond in writing to the letter from IMO as soon as possible, including any suggestions for further changes in, and revisions to, its working procedures

67. In discussing GESAMP, the Subcommittee noted that similar concerns might be relevant to other global assessment processes, for example, GIWA.

L. Other matters

68. The Subcommittee expressed concern that the first draft of the "Framework for Action", to be presented at the March 2000 water conference in The Hague, displayed lack of consideration of issues related to oceans and coastal areas and asked the Chair to raise this issue with those responsible for its production.

M. Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee and closure of the session

69. At the time of the adoption of the report and in reviewing the record of the discussion of agenda item 8, the Subcommittee members engaged in reflection on the driving forces behind the creation of the new Ocean Consultative Process. First, it was stressed that, today, because of the increased awareness and involvement of many constituencies, expert advice, almost always required a clear intergovernmental process of review before it could be adopted and appropriated by Governments. For sectoral technical issues within the mandate of each agency, the governing bodies of the agencies provided that intergovernmental process. For trans-sectoral issues involving more than one agency, the situation was different, and sometimes required ad hoc mechanisms to be set in place, for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) mechanism. The discussion of Subcommittee members concerning GESAMP was a case in point. The conferences of the parties to the global conventions was another example where the intergovernmental review process was also available.

70. Several members underlined that trans-sectoral comprehensive reviews were particularly needed with respect to the oceans, but they pointed out that, given the sectoral nature of the United Nations and national institutions, there existed two symmetric obstacles which had hampered them in the past: on one side, the lack of clear structure or technical mechanisms for producing truly trans-sectoral assessments and prospective studies that went beyond the collation of sectoral reports conducted in isolation; on the other side, the lack of a clearly defined forum or process for their subsequent intergovernmental review and eventual endorsement. The Chair stressed the fact that attaching the Ocean Consultative Process to the General Assembly expressed a clear political will; this secured the highest forum of the United Nations to undertake the intergovernmental review and endorsement, but in no way did it secure the removal of the first category of obstacles, an area that needed active consideration to ensure the success of the Process. The Chair decided that the relevance of this collective reflection deserved its inclusion in the minutes of the meeting.

71. The Subcommittee agreed to hold its ninth session at IMO headquarters in London from 26 to 29 July 2000.

72. The ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas adopted the report on its eighth session.

Notes

¹ A/51/116, annex I, appendix II.

² *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

³ See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

⁴ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

⁵ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 9 (E/1999/29)*, chap. I, sect. C.

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/54/25 and Add.1)*, annex.

⁷ General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

⁸ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 9 (E/1999/29)*, chap. I, sect. C.

Annex I

List of participants

Chairperson: P. Bernal

(Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

Vice-Chairperson: A. Rogers

(Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat)

Secretary: U. Unluata

(Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

United Nations	A. Rogers
	I. Steiner
United Nations Environment Programme	V. Vandeweerd
	F. S. Civili
	O. Vidal
	D. Tromp
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	P. Bernal
World Meteorological Organization	E. Sarukhanian
International Maritime Organization	O. Khalimonov
International Atomic Energy Agency	H. Livingston
World Bank	S. Lintner
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	U. Sveusson

Observers

Global International Waters Assessment	P. Wramner
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Annex II

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Agenda, timetable and documentation.
3. Updating activities of the organizations represented in the Subcommittee.
4. United Nations Atlas of the Oceans.
5. Status of implementation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA).
6. Enhancing inter-agency cooperation at the regional level.
7. Status of implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA).
8. Creation of the new consultative process on oceans established by the General Assembly on 24 November 1999 and implications for the United Nations system: roles of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and United Nations Agencies.
9. Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21: United Nations-wide action programme for oceans and coastal areas: reporting and participation.
10. Making the Subcommittee more transparent, effective and responsive.
11. Revised Memorandum of Understanding for the joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee and closure of the session.

Annex III

Report of the first meeting of the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee

(Rome, 9 and 10 December 1999)

The first meeting of technical staff from the six United Nations agencies that have agreed to contribute directly in kind and cash to the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans project was held in Rome on 9 and 10 December 1999. The session was hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the chairmanship of Serge Garcia. Representatives of FAO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) attended. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) representative was unable to be present. The group agreed to be called the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee, working under the guidance of the United Nations Atlas Steering Committee (constituted formally by the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas).

The list of participants and agenda are included respectively in appendices I and II. The present report is arranged as per the agenda.

Structure and contents of the Atlas

The draft structure and content of the Atlas were discussed, some revisions made and key assignments agreed for preparation and oversight of information material. Not all assignments could be made, nor could all lead roles be identified. Additional follow-up will be conducted by e-mail.

Regarding the information to be collected and submitted, the group agreed on the importance of linking to original data sources used for maps and charts so that scientists and others interested in the material could gain access to them. It also agreed that, whenever possible, existing data, analyses and graphics were to be used, particularly where there had been adequate peer review. Because of the limitations of the funding available, additional material should be carefully considered. In general, information material produced by, or in close collaboration with, the United Nations should be used as a priority.

When deciding whether particular topics should be included in the Atlas, the guideline is that material should be related to the purpose of the Atlas as a tool for policy-making. Thus, for example, it may not be necessary to have an extensive coverage of the formation of sedimentary layers of the seabed unless a United Nations agency, for which this information would be useful, proposes a strategic issue. However, it was agreed that general background information would be of interest to a broad community of potential users and therefore appropriate.

Writing should be done in "timeless" terms, avoiding dates as much as possible, to avoid early obsolescence of the Atlas and reduce needs for updating. It

might be useful to have timeless and time-sensitive elements of information separately identified.

There should be a common look and feel to sections, text and maps, where feasible.

At the start of each cell in the information architecture, the Atlas should contain a common one-pager (or one-screen) mini-home page for the topic. Everyone should keep in mind the possible (necessary?) future translation of these “top” information elements pages into the official languages of the United Nations. As a consequence, the lead agency for each USES line is designated by boldface type. Such agencies are expected to coordinate the development of materials for their line.

Material should be well reviewed and cleared in each agency and in line with agreed formats before submission for inclusion into the Atlas. The publication editor (for example, Elsevier) should have full discretion for the final editing needed to ensure consistency and quality.

Software options for the Atlas

Discussion of software possibilities for organizing the Atlas included the history that had drawn the project to its present path. Considering the apparent reticence of the Publisher to use KnowledgeView software and preference for “in-house solutions”, the most feasible approach appears to be to build on the FAO effort to develop a “Community Directory Server” (CDS). In this approach, United Nations editors (or their selected partners) are responsible for the technical content of the Atlas CDS in their areas of responsibility (subject to overall editing by the Publisher and Peer Review Panel) Submitted material would be first edited and approved by them.

The discussion and presentation of the CDS was led by FAO consultant Greg Searle, of World Tree, with Kurt Vertucci of FAO. Under this approach, the Atlas Project would pay about US\$ 25,000 to adapt or modify the system being developed for FAO for other purposes. In addition to the relatively low development cost, the United Nations would own the software and thus have greater flexibility in respect of how the Atlas is used and how its content would be made available in future years. The group agreed that this was the most feasible approach and recommended its adoption.

Status of agreements

In the discussion of agreements, Mr. Garcia briefed the Committee on two signed agreements with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The first agreement names a point of contact and agrees to collaborate on the project. The second agreement provides a senior NOAA manager (John Everett) to work as the Atlas Project Manager. He will work half-time on the project and will also have access to another half-time NOAA person for support. NOAA will pay the salary and travel costs. FAO will offset part of Mr. Everett’s costs while in Rome.

An agreement with the Russian Head Department of Navigation and Oceanography (HDNO) on the use of its maps and material has been negotiated and

submitted for its approval. A first informal response is expected in a few days. The Agreement might be formally signed in January. The group reviewed their impressive printed "Ocean Atlas", a large, colourful collection of maps.

The agreement with the French Institute of Research and Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) (France) is in an early stage of development. The formal agreement is expected to take the form of an addendum to the framework agreement already signed between FAO and IFREMER some years ago, facilitating the signature. Beyond the sharing of information, licence to use IFREMER information materials, and general cooperation, the agreement may include services to translate parts of the Atlas into French.

A draft model for agreements between FAO and participating United Nations agencies (referring to UNEP only as an example) was discussed. The conclusion was that each agency should take the most rapid and appropriate path, whether it is a formal Memorandum of Understanding or a simple letter agreeing to participate according to the commitments made in the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) proposal. Each agreement should refer to, and update, the commitments contained in the UNFIP project.

The group discussed at length the philosophy of using an outside publisher (and contacting only one of them) for the follow-on publication of the Atlas in two years, if the project is successful. The group agreed that the draft document that had been negotiated with Elsevier should be pursued. Eventually, the FAO Publications Division would be asked to assist in contacting other potential candidate publishers.

Arrangements for data and information collection

Formal arrangements for data and information transfer must wait a few months for the web-based input system to be prepared. Meanwhile, each agency will be starting the development and storage of documents on its own existing means and be ready to start populating the Atlas by around 1 March 2000.

Beyond the Agenda, the group also discussed administrative procedures to enable formal decision-making by the Steering Committee between semi-annual meetings of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas. It was recommended that the principle of e-mail procedures be considered by the Steering Committee.

The group agreed that it should meet regularly and reach decisions of a technical nature. Policy decisions will be submitted, with recommendations, to the United Nations Atlas Steering Committee.

The following are the action items from the meeting.

Action items from meeting of the United Nations Atlas Technical Committee

<i>Item</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Due date</i>
Review candidate list of maps from Russian Atlas	Fabio Carocci and John Everett	15 December
Review assignments and suggest other cooperators or leads	All agencies	15 January
Comment on approach for formalizing agreement between FAO and United Nations agencies	Each agency	15 January
Determine if Community Directory Server (CDS) approach of FAO should be used	Steering Committee	15 January
Arrange a LISTSERVE for Committee communications	John Everett and Fabio Carocci	15 January
Deliver detailed specifications of customization needed to adapt CDS for the Atlas	Greg Searle	15 January
Review ABOUT content to suggest assignments from United Nations Agencies and cooperators	John Everett and Heiner Naeve	1 February
Develop a prototype First Screen for each cell, using climate change/food as model	John Everett	1 February
Formalize agreement between FAO and United Nations agencies	Each agency and Heiner Naeve	15 February
Deliver generic version of CDS to support Atlas inputs	Kurt Vertucci/Greg Searle	15 February
Determine arrangements for inputting materials to generic version of the CDS	Kurt Vertucci/Greg Searle	15 February
Assemble materials for Atlas in preparation for initial populating of the Atlas	All agencies	1 March
Catalogue the contents for each cell in the matrix, including issues, background, tables and graphics	All agencies	15 March

Appendix I

Meeting on the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans

(Rome, 9 and 10 December 1999)

Agenda

1. Structure of the contents of the Atlas.
Please find attached a draft (in Excel) prepared by John Everett for information/comments. At the meeting we will discuss the chart with John Everett, amend it and agree on a final version.
2. Software options for the Atlas.
The company Worldtree is currently collaborating with FAO in the production of a CDS (Community Directory Server) software, and is preparing system requirements specifications, adapted to our Atlas. The document is expected to be ready by 3 December. We will send it to you then for in-house discussion. At our meeting we then will have the opportunity to discuss the structure with a representative of Worldtree.
3. Status of agreements:
 - (a) Between FAO and NOAA;
 - (b) Between FAO and the other United Nations agencies;
 - (c) Between FAO and outside participants, for example, IFREMER, HDNO;
 - (d) Between FAO and the commercial publisher (Elsevier).We will bring you up to date on the status of the different agreements and, in particular, discuss needs and format of agreements to be stipulated between FAO and your agencies.
4. Arrangements for data and information collection.
Decisions will have to be taken concerning the day-to-day information flow and data transfer from agencies into the Atlas.
5. Flow chart of responsibilities for the Atlas development.

Appendix II

Meeting on the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans

(Rome, 9 and 10 December 1999)

List of participants

FAO

Garcia, Serge	<i>serge.garcia@fao.org</i>
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Vertucci, Kurt	<i>kurt.vertucci@fao.org</i>
Everett, John	<i>john.everett@noaa.gov</i>

IAEA

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IMO

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Kohn, Roger	<i>rkohn@imo.org</i>

IOC-UNESCO

Hood, Maria	<i>m.hood@unesco.org</i>
Pissierssens, Peter (unable to attend)	<i>p.pissierssens@unesco.org</i>

UNEP

Korporal, Kenneth	<i>k.korporal@unep.nl</i>
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WMO

Guzman, F. (unable to attend)	<i>fguzman@netra1.wmo.org</i>
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WorldTree

Searle, Greg	<i>greg@worldtree.net</i>
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Annex IV

Activities of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, August-December 1999: a progress report

(20 January 2000)

Implementing the GPA is, in the first place, the task of national Governments. The majority of activities on implementation of the GPA are being undertaken by Governments. International and regional organizations and programmes, non-governmental organizations and others also contribute. The present progress report contains information related only to the activities of the GPA Coordination Office. Through its booklet on "Partners in implementing the GPA" (the first issue, focusing on the regional seas, was released in October 1999), the Coordination Office will provide updated information on the progress and contributions by other partners.

Within the new strategic direction of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office-The Hague, the three main areas of activities are (a) assessment/analysis for action; (b) mobilizing action at national, regional and global level; and (c) evaluating progress and further development of the GPA. This progress report provides a summary of the main activities carried out by the GPA Coordination Office from August to December 1999 in these three areas.

1. Assessment/analysis for action

Global

Under the leadership of UNEP, the GESAMP's Working Group on Marine Environmental Assessments (MEA) is preparing two global assessment reports, which will be finalized by mid-2000:

- Seas of troubles: the state of the world's oceans;
- Land-based sources and activities affecting the quality and uses of the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environment.

Other

- A brochure on the need for the GPA with facts and figures pertaining to the impact of land-based activities is being finalized;

- A set of documents outlining the involvement and perspectives of the private sector in the implementation of the GPA: water, tourism, insurance, fisheries/aquaculture, chemicals and harbours.

Regional

Several regional assessments emanating from technical workshops of Government-designated experts carried out by the GPA Coordination Office, 1996-1999, have been published in UNEP's Regional Seas Reports and Studies (RSRS) or is in the process of being finalized/published. These include:

- Assessment of Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine, Coastal and Associated Freshwater Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (RSRS 172, in English, Spanish and French);
- Overview on Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine Environment in the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) Sea Area (RSRS 168, in English);
- Assessment of Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine, Coastal and Associated Freshwater Environment in the South-East Pacific (RSRS 169, in English);
- Overview on Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine, Coastal and Associated Freshwater Environment in the Upper South-West Atlantic (RSRS 170, in English and Spanish);
- Overview of Land-based Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine, Coastal and Associated Freshwater Environment in the West and Central African Region (RSRS 171, in English and French);
- Overview of Land-based Pollutant Sources and Activities Affecting the Marine, Coastal and Freshwater Environment in the Pacific Islands Region (RSRS 174, in English).

In addition, a document summarizing the findings on the regional overviews on land-based activities and a brochure are being prepared and expected to be finalized in early 2000.

2. Mobilizing action at national, regional and global level

Advancing binding and non-binding policy and programme agreements

These activities have been conducted in the context of the GPA regional workshops of Government-designated experts referred to above and within the framework of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme.

National:

- National programmes of action on land-based activities have been prepared by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka;
- The GPA Coordination Office is a member of the steering group and is co-financing the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-Project Development Facility (PDF) B project on support to the national plan of action for the protection of the Arctic environment from anthropogenic pollution in the Russian Federation;
- Contacts with Canada have been established regarding its national programme of action on land-based activities.

Regional:

- A regional programme of action on land-based activities for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden is being prepared in cooperation with the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Marine Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA);
- A regional programme of action on land-based activities for the South Asian Seas is being prepared with the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP);
- Support to the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Caribbean Environment Programme as secretariat of the Cartagena Convention, leading to the

adoption (in late 1999) of the Protocol on land-based sources of pollution for the wider Caribbean region;

- Contacts with the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) have been established regarding the regional programme of action for the protection of the Arctic environment from land-based activities.

Voluntary agreements by groups of stakeholders

The GPA Coordination Office is cooperating with the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics in preparing the ground for, and supporting implementation of, voluntary agreements (for example, codes of conduct, declarations and statements) by key component of the private and public sectors. Activities with specific industries included:

- Support to the adaptation of the European Blue Flag campaign to Asia-Pacific and Caribbean regions;
- Support to the Tours Operators Initiative.

Making connections with the policy frameworks of conventions and international programmes

In addition to the links related to the clearing house and sewage (see below), connections on areas of mutual interest with the following have been established:

- Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
- Global and regional conventions (through UNEP's Division on Environmental Conventions) via annual meetings with the regional seas and relevant convention's secretariats.

Promoting capacity-building efforts

Besides those activities related to sewage (see below), the GPA Coordination Office has undertaken the following activities:

- (a) Twinning within the context of the regional seas, including:
 - Eastern Africa and the Baltic;
 - Caribbean and the South Pacific;

(b) TRAIN-SEA-COAST programme:

- A project proposal is being developed between the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP and the GPA Coordination Office.

GPA-related GEF projects

The GPA Coordination Office is a member of the Steering Committee and/or is supporting the following GEF projects:

- Global International Waters Assessment;
- Regionally based assessment of persistent toxic substances;
- Support to the national plan of action for the protection of the Arctic environment from anthropogenic pollution in the Russian Federation (with the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea, and other partners);
- Sao Francisco river basin and coastal zone (Brazil).

GPA strategic action plan on sewage

To respond to UNEP Governing Council decision 20/19 B, paragraph 1 (d), in 1999 the GPA office developed a strategic action plan on sewage and is assessing the feasibility of holding a global conference on municipal waste water. The following preparatory activities have been undertaken:

- A set of case studies showing the environmental, social and economic benefits of addressing sewage in coastal areas (in East Asia, South Asia and Eastern Africa);
- A general "Source Book" with best practices on municipal waste-water management and possible physical measures, policy measures, public awareness/education measures and external financing possibilities (this "Source Book" will be available as hard copy, in CD-ROM and through the clearing house);
- A brainstorming meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the World Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) to identify the scope and content of a

global action plan on sewage and the associated global conference on municipal waste water.

3. Evaluating progress and further development of the GPA

Regular publication "Partners in the implementation of the GPA"

This publication will provide a means of taking stock and moving forward on GPA implementation. The first issue, on regional seas, was published in 1999. Additional issues will follow concentrating on Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and others.

Preparations for the first GPA intergovernmental review process

The UNEP Governing Council at its twentieth session (decision 20/19, para. 1 (e)) decided to undertake the first intergovernmental review of the status of implementation of the GPA in the year 2001, and invited UNEP's Executive Director to organize an expert group meeting, with participation of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, in order to facilitate the preparations of such a review.

Preliminary ideas on the scope, expected outputs and possibly process for the two above-mentioned meetings were discussed at a brainstorming meeting with experts from several Governments (The Hague, 7 and 8 October 1999), and afterwards further developed by the GPA Coordination Office. A format for reporting on progress in implementing the GPA at the national, regional and global levels is being prepared. An expert group meeting will be held from 12 to 14 April 2000 in The Hague, the Netherlands, with participation of representatives from Governments, United Nations agencies, regional organizations (for example, regional seas, regional banks), environmental non-governmental organizations and the private sector (for example, tourism, water industry, fisheries/aquaculture, oil and gas, chemical industry, information, marine transport).

Coordination among United Nations-relevant agencies on implementation of the GPA

The role and responsibilities of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in facilitating

inter-agency cooperation on implementation of the GPA have been agreed with the chairs of the two Subcommittees. The Subcommittees will provide a platform for enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation in matters related to GPA implementation, by:

- Facilitating input of the individual partner agencies in GPA implementation;
- Commenting and providing advice on the status of GPA implementation and on its future development plans;
- Reviewing, as required, the roles and responsibilities of individual agencies in GPA implementation;
- Providing for outreach on the GPA.

4. The GPA clearing house (www.gpa.unep.org)

As a means of mobilizing experience and expertise, including facilitation of effective scientific, technical and financial cooperation, as well as capacity-building, States agreed to cooperate in the development of the GPA clearing-house mechanism. As GPA secretariat, UNEP has the responsibility of coordinating the development of the clearing house, in close cooperation with the lead organizations designated for each of the GPA source categories. 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 developed for the source category "sewage" (which has been identified as a major priority in developing countries) and then later applied to the other source categories.

Central node

The central node of the clearing house was launched at the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in September 1999. During 2000-2001, regional nodes will be developed, as well as the source category nodes for which the GPA Coordination Office will liaise closely with the United Nations lead agencies identified by Assembly resolution 51/189 (1996).

Since its launch, the central node has been regularly updated to give access to the most up-to-date information. The web site, which is hosted by the Earth Resources Observation System (EROS) and the Global Resource Information Database (GRID), Sioux Falls (United States of America), will become a mirror site and the production server will be hosted by UNEP Chemicals (Geneva). The following applications are under development:

- Search facility to search GPA site and related web sites on the Internet;
- A universal resource locator (URL) database on Internet sites that have information and data that are relevant to the GPA.

New modules under development include:

- A joint web page with the clearing house of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- The ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21: information and links.

Pollutant source category nodes

At the global level, the clearing house is structured around organizations responsible for pollutant source categories. Several of these nodes are under development, including:

- WHO node on sewage: a letter of agreement was signed in December 1999 and some seed funding was provided by the GPA to develop a prototype of this node. The prototype will be available for review by the GPA Coordination Office and WHO collaborating centres by 15 February 2000 and the launch-ready version of the node is scheduled for 22 March 2000;
- FAO node on nutrients and sediment mobilization: a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in December 1999 and some seed funding was provided by the GPA to develop a prototype node. The prototype node will be available for review by the GPA Coordination Office and FAO collaborating centres by 15 March 2000, and the launch-ready version of the node is scheduled for 20 April 2000;
- IMO node on oil and litter: IMO and the Marine Environmental Division of Environment Canada are working on a pilot project to develop this

node, which will be completed in early 2000. The pilot project will be evaluated by March 2000 and further steps for its full implementation will be considered;

- IAEA node on radioactive substances: discussions between IAEA and the GPA Coordination Office are under way for the development of this node;
- UNEP nodes on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), physical alteration and habitat modification, and heavy metals: UNEP Chemicals (Geneva) is undertaking the substantive development of the POPs node, in close consultation with the GPA Coordination Office, and a six-month project (beginning in 2000) has been prepared for this purpose. The Nordic Council of Ministers has recently approved a grant to help fund the development of the POPs node. The structure of the node on physical alteration and habitat modification was designed by the GPA Coordination Office and UNEP's Division of Environmental Information, Assessment and Early Warning, and a prototype developed. Expansion and enhancements are planned for the first half of 2000. No substantive activities have taken place for the heavy metals node; discussions to initiate activities are planned for early 2000.

Partnerships with international conventions and programmes:

- Close relationship and linkages have been established with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre;
- Links have been established with the clearing house of the Convention on Biological Diversity through a joint web page on each web site. This joint web page will be launched during the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in January 2000 in Montreal;
- Other potential partners have been identified (for example, UNESCO-IOC, World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), World Resources Institute (WRI));
- Close linkages have been established with SIDSNET and a Memorandum of Understanding should be developed in early 2000;

- Cooperative partnerships and activities are being established with other UNEP offices and divisions, in particular the GRID centres;
- The GPA Coordination Office is the UNEP focal point for the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans project, and close linkages will be developed with the GPA clearing-house mechanism.

Regional implementation of the clearing house

At the regional level, the regional seas programmes and commissions provide an institutional framework for establishing clearing-house activities regionally. With the support of the GPA Coordination Office, two regional seas (through the Caribbean Environment Programme and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) have started to develop their regional clearing-house nodes. The main activities under way include:

- Conduct of a needs evaluation;
- Preparation of a strategic work plan;
- Preparation of prototypes of the regional GPA clearing-house nodes. The prototypes of the two regional nodes are expected to be ready by late February 2000.

News forum

An electronic version, as well as a hard-copy version, of this interactive component of the clearing house was released in September 1999 at the special session of the General Assembly on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

5. Second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference (March 2000, The Hague)

The following activities are or have been carried out by the GPA Coordination Office:

- On behalf of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, the office is coordinating the exhibition of the United Nations water-related programmes at the World Water Fair;

- Co-convening, with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the session on Water and Megacities;
- Consultations with the International Fertilizer Association on cooperation regarding the impact of nutrients and a possible workshop:
 - Connections with the World (fresh) Water Vision/Framework for Action;
 - Member of preparatory body for Ministerial Conference;
 - Input to several work groups (for example, Chief Executives Officers, Deltas, Tourism).

Annex V

Role and responsibilities of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in facilitating inter-agency cooperation on implementation of the GPA^a

Draft paper by the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and the Chairs of the ACC Subcommittees

At the fourteenth meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), it was agreed that the Coordinator of the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office should organize a joint meeting with the Chairs of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, to clarify the responsibilities of the two Subcommittees on implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and report back to IACSD at its fifteenth session (New York, 24 and 25 January 2000).

The role of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas in implementation of the GPA was considered and agreed upon at its last informal session (London, 16-18 August 1999). The outcome of these discussions formed the basis of the draft discussion paper prepared by the GPA Coordination Office for the consultation with the Chairs of the ACC Subcommittees on 15 December 1999.

The role of the Subcommittee on Water Resources in implementation of the GPA was considered at its twentieth session (Geneva, 4-8 October 1999; see report of the meeting (ACC/1999/18)). UNEP was authorized by the Subcommittee on Water Resources to take the lead in exploring possible modalities for cooperation with the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas. UNEP was also requested to submit to the twenty-first session of the Subcommittee on Water Resources concrete proposals regarding the modalities for collaboration between the two Subcommittees.

A joint meeting between the Coordinator, GPA Coordination Office and the Chairs of both ACC Subcommittees took place through a telephone conference on 15 December 1999, and considered a discussion paper prepared by the GPA Coordination Office. The present draft paper is a revised version of this document and incorporates the outcome of the

discussions. It was agreed that (a) the GPA Coordination Office would revise the draft paper and send it to the Chairs of both Subcommittees for comments; and (b) after incorporating these comments, the paper would be circulated to all members of the Subcommittees for comments. Based on the comments/suggestions received, the GPA Coordination Office would further revise the paper and submit it to IACSD at its fifteenth session.

1. Role and responsibilities of the ACC Subcommittees on GPA implementation

UNEP, as the secretariat of the GPA, has the responsibility for the coordination of all GPA-related activities. This includes facilitating the input of relevant United Nations agencies with respect to implementing the GPA. The Subcommittees and the GPA Coordination Office agreed that the main role of the Subcommittees in implementation of the GPA was to provide a platform for enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation in matters related to GPA implementation, by:

- (a) Facilitating input of the individual partner agencies in GPA implementation;
- (b) Commenting and providing advice on the status of GPA implementation and on its future development plans;
- (c) Reviewing, as required, the roles and responsibilities of individual agencies in GPA implementation;
- (d) Providing for outreach on the GPA.

1.1 Facilitating input of the individual partner agencies in GPA implementation:

(a) Each United Nations agency will provide relevant information for the biennial booklet "Partners in Implementing the GPA", following the reporting framework proposed by the GPA Coordination Office and amended by the agencies as required. The purpose of this booklet is to inform Governments and other stakeholders of how United Nations agencies contribute to the implementation of the GPA;

(b) Based on the GPA Coordination Office strategic action plan for the period 2000-2001,^b the GPA Coordination Office will forward to the Subcommittees (through their Chairs) specific proposals for cooperation, which will, in particular, include:

- The further development of the GPA clearing house, including linking the web sites of the agencies to the GPA clearing house (www.gpa.unep.org);
- Sewage strategic action plan and 2001 global conference on sewage;
- GPA 2001 review meeting.

1.2 Commenting and providing advice on future development plans for GPA implementation, such as:

(a) GPA strategic action plan for the period 2000-2001;

(b) GPA strategic action plan for the period 2002-2007, as submitted for the consideration of the 2001 GPA review meeting;

(c) Preparations and scope of:

- Expert meeting (April 2000) to prepare the first GPA review meeting;
- GPA 2001 review meeting;
- Sewage strategic action plan and 2001 global conference on sewage;

(d) Formats and mechanisms to report progress on GPA implementation, in order to avoid duplication with the reporting formats being used by other United Nations agencies.

1.3 Reviewing, as required, the roles and responsibilities of individual agencies and the GPA Coordination Office as they relate to GPA implementation, in particular with regard to:

(a) The further development of the GPA clearing house;

(b) Relevant inter-agency programmes and initiatives (for example, GESAMP, GIWA, the World Water Development Report, the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources initiative on water quality, the United Nations Atlas on the Oceans);

(c) Preparatory process for the ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the General Assembly open-ended informal consultative process on oceans.

1.4 Providing forums for outreach on the GPA:

Each agency will, as appropriate, provide a forum for raising awareness on the GPA (for example, by inviting the GPA Coordination Office to attend relevant meetings/events, by distributing materials prepared by the GPA Coordination Office to its constituencies).

2. Modalities for cooperation

(a) The GPA will be a standing item in the agenda of the annual meetings of both ACC Subcommittees;

(b) At these meetings, the GPA Coordination Office will inform the Subcommittee members on:

- Relevant discussions in the other Subcommittee;
- Status of implementation of the GPACoordination Office strategic action plan;
- Barriers encountered in the implementation of the GPA and proposals of ways and means to overcome them;
- Opportunities for cooperation with other agencies and partners;

(c) The GPA Coordination Office will convene joint meetings of the Chairs and Secretaries of the Subcommittees, as the need arises.

Notes

- ^a To be brought to the attention of: (a) eighth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (The Hague, 19-21 January 2000); (b) fifteenth session of IACSD (New York, 24 and 25 January 2000); (c) special session of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (23 March 2000); (d) eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, May 2000); and (e) twenty-first session of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (Bangkok, 16-20 October 2000).
- ^b In line with the provisions of the GPA (1995), the first intergovernmental review meeting will take place in 2001. This meeting will, *inter alia*, discuss the strategic direction of the GPA Coordination Office for the period 2002-2007.
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