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Emerging policy issues: environment and development

**Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the
Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine
Environment from Land-based Activities**

Note by the Executive Director

The annex to the present note sets out the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, as adopted at the third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, held in Manila on 25 and 26 January 2012. The Declaration is being submitted pursuant to its paragraph 13.

* UNEP/GCSS.XII/1.

Annex

Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities

We, the representatives of 64 Governments and the European Commission, with the valued support and concurrence of representatives of international financial institutions, international and regional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, other stakeholders and major groups,

Having met in Manila on 25 and 26 January 2012 at the third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities,

Recognizing that all people depend on oceans, coasts and their resources for their survival, health and well-being, and that a substantial proportion of the world's population derives its food security and economic livelihood from the coastal environment and marine resources such as fisheries and shellfish from highly productive coastal and estuary zones,

Recognizing also that marine and coastal ecosystems, in particular those of low-lying coastal areas and small island developing States, are vulnerable to rising sea levels, climate-related natural disasters and ocean acidification resulting from land-based activities,

Acknowledging the large increases in the levels of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus entering the world's environment as a result of human activity, and noting the severity of the environmental problems caused by nutrient excess, including eutrophication of coastal waters and oxygen depletion, and the associated damage to ecosystems, biodiversity and coastal water quality,

Noting the rapid growth of urban areas and their impingement on coastal zones and the fact that the major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land,

Recognizing that sewage and wastewater, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, oils (hydrocarbons), nutrients, sediments and marine litter, whether carried by rivers or discharged directly into coastal areas, take a severe toll on human health and well-being and on coastal and marine ecosystems and the food and services that they provide,

Recognizing that marine litter is a problem that is global in scale and underestimated in impact; that it directly threatens coastal and marine habitats and species, economic growth, human health and safety, and social values; that a significant portion of marine litter originates from land-based activities; and that movement of litter and debris, exacerbated by storm events, has significant impacts on the marine environment, as do ship-based activities,

Recognizing also that the marine environment is particularly threatened by loss of marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems through physical alterations of the coastal zone, poor land-use planning and social and economic pressures, including destruction of habitats of vital importance to maintaining ecosystem health, as well as goods and services provided by ecosystems such as coral reefs, coastal tidal flats, deltas, mangroves, seagrass beds and estuaries,

Recognizing further the intrinsic value of, and links between, marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems and human well-being and the need for integrated watershed and coastal management in efforts to achieve the effective sustainable management of land-based activities, including the incorporation of the value of ecosystem services into planning processes,

Acknowledging that the Global Programme of Action is an effective tool for integrating environmental concerns into development planning and strategies at the international, regional and national levels and that, as such, it contributes substantially to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing the lack of capacity in terms of science and technology and the need to integrate research, education and extension advisory services, in particular those of developing countries, as tools to build capacity to sustain the ability to address land-based activities that affect the marine environment,

Recognizing also the importance of the existing regional seas conventions and action plans in tackling the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas by engaging concerned

countries in comprehensive and specific actions on land-based sources and activities, and through integrated coastal zone management, among other things,

Recognizing further the important contributions of the regional seas programmes, the Global Environment Facility and international financial institutions in implementing the Global Programme of Action,

Recognizing the achievements in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action over the period 2007–2011 and, in particular, the contribution of the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office in the Freshwater and Marine Ecosystems Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation,

Recognizing also the importance of improved coastal water quality and the need for improved monitoring to identify threats to the marine environment at the regional, national and local levels, as encouraged by the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects,

Recognizing further that litter does not belong to the sea and therefore emphasizing the relevance of the Honolulu Commitment and the Honolulu Strategy of the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference,

Recognizing the significant progress made by some countries in building both human and institutional capacity and developing legislative frameworks, environmental policies and market-based instruments in the context of a proper regulatory framework that protects public interests for the sustainable management of fisheries, marine resources and the coastal environment,

Emphasizing the need to support and enhance developing countries' capacity to manage marine and coastal ecosystems in a sustainable manner in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,

Acknowledging the important contribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships and United Nations inter-agency partnerships in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and of intergovernmental commitments to advance action on the Millennium Development Goals,

Stressing the importance of marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, given their role in identifying and addressing the underlying drivers of marine and coastal ecosystem loss and destruction and improving the sustainable management of coastal and marine areas,

Recalling the 2009 Manado Declaration,¹ decision SS.XI/7 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on oceans and other global initiatives to tackle marine and coastal ecosystem loss and destruction and the need to achieve long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources and coastal habitats to, among other things, increase climate resiliency, achieve global food security and reduce poverty,

Acknowledging the importance of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012,

1. *Stress* our commitment to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action at the international, regional and national levels as a flexible and effective tool for the sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands, and for human health and well-being;
2. *Resolve to commit ourselves* to comprehensive, continuing and adaptive action within a framework of integrated coastal management relevant to respective national and regional priorities;
3. *Dedicate ourselves* to furthering the implementation of the Global Programme of Action with a focus on the identified priorities for the period 2012–2016 and invite additional efforts and adequate voluntary financial resources to expedite the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for that period;
4. *Decide* actively to engage ourselves and step up our efforts to develop guidance, strategies or policies on the sustainable use of nutrients so as to improve nutrient use efficiency with attendant economic benefits for all stakeholders, including farmers, and to mitigate negative

¹ International Institute for Sustainable Development, *World Ocean Conference Bulletin*, final issue, vol. 162, No. 5, 18 May 2009. The text of the Declaration is available at <http://woc2009.org/home.php>.

environmental impacts through the development and implementation of national goals and plans over the period 2012–2016, as necessary;

5. *Decide* that the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office should over the period 2012–2016 focus its work on nutrients, litter and wastewater as the three priority source categories for the Programme, using global multi-stakeholder partnerships, and request the Coordination Office to develop its activity plan on the basis of the following strategic directions:

(a) Supporting the further development of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and associated regional and national stakeholder partnerships, in addition to their activities, including assessments agreed upon by the partnership, and sharing best practices using extension and advisory services for policymakers and farmers;

(b) Working with all stakeholders concerned to find innovative solutions and initiatives to the problem of marine litter, including by sharing best practices, technical information about capacity-building and legal, policy, community-based, economic and market-based means of preventing, reducing and managing marine litter, and working to establish a global partnership on marine litter;

(c) Supporting the further development of a global partnership on wastewater and sharing among stakeholders information, lessons learned and best practices for wastewater management, including technologies that do not adversely affect the environment and biodiversity, and resource reduction, reuse and recycling approaches for the purposes of protecting the environment, improving sanitation and human health, combating climate change and ensuring nutrient benefits so as to prompt coordinated action, and encouraging new investments in wastewater management that meet these objectives;

6. *Also decide* to consider using the Global Programme of Action as a platform to promote delta management through delta and inter-delta cooperation schemes and to support a proposal to declare an international year of deltas in the near future;

7. *Further decide* to improve cooperation and coordination at all levels to deal with issues related to oceans, coasts, islands and their associated watersheds by applying integrated management approaches, such as the “ridge-to-reef” concept, involving stakeholders and developing innovative solutions to improve situations and resolve problems identified;

8. *Welcome* the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, which is intended to strengthen regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking at the global, regional and national levels;

9. *Decide* to strengthen and promote the implementation of the existing regional seas conventions and action plans and other relevant global and regional arrangements, agreements and programmes for the protection of the marine and coastal environment with a view to furthering the implementation of the Global Programme of Action;

10. *Invite* United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, United Nations inter-agency groups such as the coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system (UN-Oceans) and the coordination mechanism on water resources (UN-Water), the United Nations Development Group and multilateral environmental agreements to strengthen the integration of the Global Programme of Action into their policies, plans and programmes, consistent with their mandates;

11. *Invite* the Global Environment Facility, other global and regional financial institutions, development partners and donor countries to make coordinated efforts to support countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action through financial and technical support and capacity-building;

12. *Express appreciation* for the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme in supporting the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office and expediting the implementation of the Global Programme of Action, and welcome the provision of additional extrabudgetary resources to support the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in that regard;

13. *Request* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to forward the present political declaration to the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as a contribution by the participants at the third session of the Intergovernmental Review

Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities to the deliberations on sustainable development;

14. *Also request* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to convene the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in 2016 in collaboration with the relevant organizations and institutions, and to seek the support of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in organizing the session;

15. *Decide* that Governments should provide technical and policy guidance to the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office during the intersessional period 2012–2016, as necessary;

16. *Express gratitude and appreciation* to the Government and people of the Philippines for hosting the third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

Manila, 26 January 2012.
