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**Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the  
Implementation of the Global Programme of Action  
for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
from Land-based Activities**

**Fifth session**

Online, 15 February 2022

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Draft decision on the intergovernmental review  
mechanism of the Global Programme of Action for the  
Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based  
Activities**

**Draft decision on the intergovernmental review mechanism of  
the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the  
Marine Environment from Land-based Activities**

**Note by the secretariat**

1. The present note serves as a background document for consideration of item 4 of the provisional agenda, on the draft decision on the intergovernmental review mechanism of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. It contains a draft decision for consideration and possible adoption by the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action at its fifth session.
2. At the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting, in 2018, the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to present an analysis of options and alternatives for the Global Programme of Action and its associated coordinating mechanism. An options paper<sup>1</sup> was subsequently presented at the meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP on 27 February 2019. Further consultations took place at the fourth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, held in Nairobi from 4 to 8 March 2019, after which informal consultations were organized with members of regional groups. On the basis of guidance and written input from Member States as well as informal consultations after the meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 23 April 2020, the UNEP secretariat developed a draft decision for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 25 November 2021. The Committee of Permanent Representatives recommended the draft decision for endorsement at a dedicated Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action.

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\* UNEP/GPA/IGR.5/1.

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27513/GPA%20Option%20Paper%2026%20Feb%202019.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>.

## Text of the proposed draft decision

1. *Recognizing* that maintaining a high-quality coastal and marine environment provides ecosystem functions and services in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development),

2. *Recalling* that the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities was created to counter the impact of land-based activities on the marine environment from nine source categories, and that the Global Programme of Action was adopted by 108 Governments and the European Commission at an intergovernmental conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1995,<sup>2</sup>

3. *Recalling also* that sessions of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action have been held in Montreal, Canada (2001), Beijing (2006), Manila (2012) and Bali, Indonesia (2018), whereby Governments, with the participation of stakeholders, met to review the status of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and to decide on the actions to be taken to strengthen the Programme and its implementation,

4. *Recalling further* the Bali Declaration on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities,<sup>3</sup> adopted at the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting held in Bali, Indonesia, from 31 October to 1 November 2018, in which it was agreed to work on the function, form and implications (including legal, budgetary and organizational) of the Global Programme of Action, including the future of the intergovernmental review process and the work coordinated by the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action,

5. *Noting with appreciation* the regional consultations on the future of the Global Programme of Action held by the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme in 2019 and 2020, as well as the related briefings by the secretariat to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme,

6. *Noting with appreciation also* that the United Nations Environment Programme has hosted the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action since its establishment, and the work of the office in preventing land-based sources of marine pollution at the global level through demonstration projects, policy recommendations, research, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, as well as the valuable role of its three global partnerships, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, and the Global Wastewater Initiative, for which the Coordination Office provides secretariat functions,

7. *Recognizing* that the general objectives and activities of the Global Programme of Action form part of the medium-term strategy<sup>4</sup> and programme of work<sup>5</sup> of the United Nations Environment Programme and remain relevant to its mission, as well as to a number of resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, namely:

- (a) Marine plastic debris and microplastics (UNEP/EA.1/Res.6);
- (b) Oceans and seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res.10);
- (c) Marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.2/Res.11);
- (d) Sustainable coral reefs management (UNEP/EA.2/Res.12);
- (e) Environment and health (UNEP/EA.3/Res.4);
- (f) Managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development (UNEP/EA.3/Res.6);
- (g) Marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.3/Res.7);
- (h) Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.3/Res.8);
- (i) Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (UNEP/EA.3/Res.10);

<sup>2</sup> A/51/116, annex II.

<sup>3</sup> UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/5, annex.

<sup>4</sup> UNEP/EA.5/3/Rev.1.

<sup>5</sup> UNEP/EA.5/3/Add.1.

- (j) Marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6);
- (k) Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (UNEP/EA.4/Res.11);
- (l) Sustainable nitrogen management (UNEP/EA.4/Res.14);
- (m) Implementation plan “Towards a pollution-free Planet” (UNEP/EA.4/Res.21);

1. *Decides* to hold no further sessions of the periodic Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, recognizing that the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme can continue to provide guidance on priorities and actions to address marine pollution from land-based activities;

2. *Recognizes* the continued relevance and valuable role of the Global Programme of Action and its three global partnerships, namely the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and the Global Wastewater Initiative, in tackling land-based pollution, and as tools that contribute to the implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets, in particular target 6.3, target 6.a and target 14.1, and calls upon all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant regional and international organizations, the private sector, academia, civil society, non-governmental organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to support the activities of the Global Programme of Action;

3. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, to continue to support the general objectives of the Global Programme of Action as well as its three partnerships of tackling land-based pollution within the framework of the programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme, and to maintain and strengthen the capacity of the Programme to support Member States in implementing and reporting on national, regional and global programmes to address land-based sources of marine pollution;

4. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Assembly to continue to review progress in the prevention of land-based sources of marine pollution in the context of the implementation of the programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme and, where relevant, to consider the results of scientific assessments and reports on emerging issues that contribute to achieving high-quality coastal and marine environments, in line with the operational frameworks of partnerships;

5. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session to take note of the present decision and to include it in its report to the General Assembly.