

Section 2 : Conservation and Management of Resources for Development

Chapter 17 : Protection of oceans and seas

A. Integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas

Over half of the world's population lives within 60km of the shoreline, and this could rise to three quarters by 2020. Coastal resources are of vital importance but they have not always been managed sustainably. The coastal environment is being rapidly degraded in many parts of the world.

Objectives

Coastal States commit themselves to integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas under their national jurisdiction.

Activities

Coastal states should:

- establish or strengthen coordinated decision-making, across all sectors involved in the management of the marine environment and the use of its resources. Such a forum could provide for:
 - land, water and fisheries use management and planning
 - preparation of coastal profiles identifying the characteristics of each coastal area
 - environmental impact assessments, and monitoring
 - contingency plans for natural disasters, chemical or oil spills, and sea level rise
- establishment of marine protected areas, and other management strategies for important and sensitive marine ecosystems
- training and public education programmes.

B. Marine environmental protection

About 70 percent of marine pollution is from land-based sources, while maritime transport and dumping at sea account for about 10 percent each. The main containments are sewage, nutrients, synthetic organic compounds, sediments, litter and plastics, metals, radionuclides, oil and hydrocarbons.

Objectives

States should protect the marine environment and preserve (or restore) its life-supporting capacity by:

- adopting a precautionary and anticipatory approach
- integrate protection of the marine environment with all other aspects of environmental, economic and social policy
- concentrate on protecting the marine environment from pollution from land-based sources, especially sewage
- reduce pollution from sea-based sources, in the context of existing international agreements such as the London Dumping Convention.

C. Sustainable fisheries on the high seas, and

D. Sustainable fisheries within national area

These two sections have been summarised together.

Fisheries are under threat from a number of sources including degradation of the marine environment, overfishing, and the use of inappropriate fishing methods such as drift-netting.

Activities

Governments should:

- improve knowledge on fish stocks and maintain at levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield
- minimise waste and by-catch and maximise the proportion of catch
- protecting the marine habitat, marine mammals, and endangered species
- take into account the needs of local communities and indigenous people
- develop aquaculture
- strengthen enforcement and surveillance capabilities
- expand recreational and tourist fishing where appropriate.

E. Uncertainties, including climate change

Much is still unknown about the functioning of seas and oceans, and how they will respond to ozone depletion and climate change. Predictions of sea level rise associated with global warming are still very uncertain. More research is needed; meanwhile a precautionary approach should be taken.

Activities

Governments should:

- promote scientific research and systematic observation of the marine environment and its role in global processes
- collect and exchange information from sources including traditional ecological knowledge, systematic observation and scientific research
- develop response strategies for sea level rise.

F. Strengthening international co-operation

Governments should work with the United Nations and other international agencies to share information and to co-ordinate activities on marine and coastal issues.

G. Sustainable development of small islands

Small islands are ecologically fragile and especially vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise. Thus, many will need increased aid and assistance if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.