

Editorial

The PERSGA newsletter *Al Sambouk* is one year old now and we at PERSGA feel proud of this achievement. We have received many encouraging comments about *Al Sambouk* and we hope that it will continue to grow and serve an important function in the conservation and protection of the region's marine and coastal environments.

Since the last issue was published in October there have been a number of important activities which PERSGA has been involved in, which will be reported in this issue. One of the most significant of these has been the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. This has been one of PERSGA's primary activities since the SAP commenced in October 1995, and it is now nearing completion. This has been a great achievement involving most of the countries of the region, PERSGA, and the partners of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). We plan that the final report will be completed within the next couple of months and that this will stimulate the development of other programmes throughout the region which will be designed to address the issues highlighted in the SAP report.

The SAP has revealed that there are many important environmental initiatives occurring throughout the region, and the level of commitment of the countries of the region is impressive. This is essential nowadays, in part because attracting the support of the international donor organizations for regional programmes depends upon real commitment being demonstrated by individual countries to protect and conserve their own environments.

Some countries in the region are now experiencing the great benefits to be gained from the information which is available through the Internet and the World Wide Web. Sections of *Al Sambouk*, and also information on the SAP, are published on the Internet by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), as a regular feature of their Web page. This will make news from the region available to a much greater international audience. UNOPS has been instrumental in the implementation of much of the SAP activities in individual countries. For readers with access to the World Wide Web, the UNOPS home page can be found at the following address: <http://www.unops.org>

Dr. William Gladstone

PERSGA Council Decisions

The PERSGA Council held its second Meeting at the temporary headquarters of PERSGA Secretariat in Jeddah on 26 October 1996. The meeting was chaired by HRH Prince Fahad Bin Abdullah Al Saud, Assistant Minister of Defence and Aviation and General Inspector for Civil Aviation Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting was attended by heads and

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members of delegations of PERSGA member countries, and concerned Arab and international organizations.

After reviewing the report and recommendations of the preparatory meeting, which preceded the Council meeting, the Council took decisions regarding the report of the Secretary General, the budget and financial term, and the SAP.

The Secretary General of PERSGA was requested to follow up the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the regional and international organizations and prepare similar agreements with related organizations such as the Islamic Development Bank.

The PERSGA Secretariat was also encouraged to continue co-operating with the Global Environment Facility in all fields related to marine resources and their management.

With regards to the financial term of PERSGA and programme follow-up, the Council decided that the duration of the financial term for the PERSGA Council will be bi-annual, starting from the second term 1997/1998. The budget of one term should be divided

on two years, with the constitution of an executive committee to follow-up PERSGA's activities, budget, and implementation of programmes and discuss casual matters. The budget for 1997/98 was also approved.

*SAP Endorsed by
Second Meeting of the
PERSGA Council*

During its Second Meeting the PERSGA Council endorsed the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and in its Decision Number 4, decided to:

- (1) Approve the results and recommendations presented in the Executive Summary of SAP
- (2) Request the Secretary General of PERSGA to continue collaboration with the Task Force members, related organizations and specialised experts, and to take the necessary measures to finalise the SAP process including the development of the necessary supportive projects, and present it to the Council for approval.

The Council also thanked and expressed its appreciation to the following:

- (1) Secretariat of PERSGA for its effective role in coordinating the SAP process.
- (2) Secretary General of PERSGA for the consultation initiated which aimed at encouraging Red Sea countries, whose coasts are environmentally important, in the activities related to SAP process; and urge him to continue such useful efforts.
- (3) President of Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and GEF for their efforts in supporting PERSGA and countries of the region, and for their participation in the SAP process.

Jordan Contribution to PERSGA

PERSGA has received the sum of US \$39,436.62 as the contribution of the Jordanian Government to the budget of 1996. This amount will be utilised in the implementation of the joint projects approved between

PERSGA and ALECSO. Thus, Jordan is regarded as the first PERSGA Member State that fulfils its financial obligations towards PERSGA.

The implementation of the projects and programmes approved by the PERSGA Council in its second meeting in Jeddah (26 October 1996) is expected to start as soon as other Member Countries fulfil their financial obligations.

SAP Task Force Meeting, Sana'a

The third meeting of the Task Force of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden was held in Sana'a, Republic of Yemen, on 12 and 13 January. The SAP Task Force consists of government representatives of all the countries involved in the SAP, PERSGA, the Islamic Development Bank, and the three partner agencies of the Global Environment Facility (the UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank). The Sana'a meeting was also attended by a representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) which has been implementing many of the SAP activities.

The role of the SAP Task Force is to direct and guide the activities of the SAP, under the chairmanship of the PERSGA Secretary General Dr. Nizar Tawfiq. The objective of the Sana'a meeting was to review the SAP's progress, especially the draft report of the SAP, and to plan future activities. The Environment Protection Council, which is PERSGA's focal point in Yemen, organized the local arrangements for the Sana'a meeting; His Excellency Eng. Mohsen Ali Al-Hamdani, Chairman of the Environment Protection Council, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

The Task Force discussed and reviewed the following matters: the statement of the PERSGA Council; the environmental activities currently occurring in each of the participating countries; progress in PERSGA's other regional activities and progress in the activities of the GEF partners; progress in SAP activities in each of the participating countries; the outcomes of the SAP (including regional threats, regional priority actions, and national priority actions); the country report workshops; the update of the regional bibliography; the review of regional environmental programmes; the update of the state of the marine environment report; the planned fisheries study; the navigation study; and future activities in the SAP including the need for the

next Task Force meeting to review the SAP Project Brief which will be presented to the GEF for support.

A report of the meeting has been written and will be distributed, in Arabic and English, in the near future. The next meeting will be held in early May, and in addition to the Task Force, will involve technical experts from each country, GEF headquarters staff, regional and international donor organizations.

Regional Drafting Group

One of the major products of the SAP will be the report which synthesises the results of the individual country reports, and recommends actions at both regional and national levels. This report is being prepared by a Drafting Group which consists of representatives of PERSGA, participating countries, and the GEF partners. The group first met in Jeddah in September 1996 to plan and begin writing the report.

A second meeting of the Drafting Group took place in Sana'a on January 14 and 15 1997, following the SAP Task Force meeting. The Group, which met in the UNDP offices, consisted of Mr. Roger Aertgeerts (UNOPS), Ms Catherine Cheung (UNDP), Mr. Halifa Drammeh (UNEP), Dr. William Gladstone (PERSGA), Dr. Abdul Majeed Haddad (UNDP, Sana'a), Dr. Friedhelm Krupp (UNDP), Dr. Stephen Lintner (World Bank), Dr. Sherif Ramadan (Egypt), and Captain Saeed Yafai (Yemen).

The Drafting Group reviewed and amended the SAP report, wrote additional sections, and planned the review and publication of the final version. The report will contain background information on the region and the SAP; a review of the current and emerging threats to the coastal and marine environments; a programme of actions designed to address these threats; and potential resources for these programmes. The major threats which have been identified by the SAP are the non-sustainable use of living marine resources; navigation, oil production and transport; urban and industrial development; and the rapid expansion of coastal tourism.

A final draft, which will go to review, is expected to be available by the beginning of March. Funding for the involvement of regional experts in the work of the Drafting Group is provided by UNEP as part of their contribution to the SAP.

Navigation Workshop

A workshop on the Navigation Risks of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and the development of a management plan for these risks, was held in Aden, Republic of Yemen, from 17-19 November 1996. The workshop was the first step in a study which is being undertaken as part of the SAP, on navigation risks and environmental protection in the region, which is funded by the Government of Norway through the Norwegian Trust Fund of the World Bank. The study will be undertaken by the Norwegian firm Det Norske Veritas (DNV).

The workshop took place in the excellent facilities of the Maritime Training Centre in Aden. There were 18 participants, consisting of regional experts in the fields of navigation and shipping, and representatives of DNV, PERSGA and the World Bank. The team of regional experts assembled for this workshop will serve as an advisory and review group for the study being undertaken by the DNV consultants.

The objective of the Aden workshop was to review the existing risks to navigation in the region, and needed improvements. This information would guide the DNV consultants in planning their study. Funding for the workshop was provided by the Global Environment Facility, and the organization was undertaken by PERSGA, the Public Corporation for Maritime Affairs, and the Yemen Ports Authority (Port of Aden). Captain Saeed Yafai, Chairman of the Public Corporation for Maritime Affairs, is acting as regional Technical Coordinator for the study and the workshops.

After more than two days of review and discussions the workshop adopted a number of recommendations:

- (1) There is a need for a re-survey of many parts of the region and the printing of updated charts
- (2) A regional agreement on cooperation for Port State Control is needed, as a means of reducing pollution from sub-standard ships
- (3) Additional navigation aids (lighthouses) are required in high risk areas such as the Straits of Tiran and the islands to the south-west of the Bab al Mandeb
- (4) The feasibility of a vessel traffic management system should be examined in the regional navigation study
- (5) Training in Port State Control is needed

(6) The use of traffic separation schemes in the Red Sea at points where ships converge to alter course should be considered

(7) All countries should endeavour to participate in the technical study and the second workshop

(8) There are particular navigation risks around the Huneish Islands associated with the disruption of the lighthouses there

After the completion of the technical study by DNV a review workshop, involving the regional experts who participated in Aden, will be held in Ismailia (Egypt), in April 1997.

Bahrain Workshop

During December 1996 a workshop on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in the PERSGA and ROPME regions, was held in Bahrain. This was the second in a series of similarly-planned regional workshops that UNEP, as Secretariat of the Global Programme of Action, will convene in 1996-1997. These workshops are planned to facilitate the implementation of the Global Programme of Action at the regional and national levels.

The workshop was attended by representatives of nine governments (State of Bahrain, Republic of Djibouti, Arab Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the Republic of Yemen), one United Nations agency (UNESCO/IOC), three regional organizations (GCC, PERSGA, ROPME), and the Islamic Development Bank. UNEP was represented by ROWA, the Water Branch, and INFOTERRA.

Two working groups, representing the PERSGA and ROPME regions, were established to discuss draft overviews which had been prepared for the workshop on land-based sources and activities affecting the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environments in the PERSGA and ROPME regions.

The meeting recommended that the PERSGA and ROPME consultants should receive additional information and comments by 10 January 1997 to prepare a second draft of their overviews. The importance of this deadline was stressed. In accordance with their terms of reference, the consultants will

submit the revised drafts of their overviews to UNEP by February 1997.

The meeting agreed that the Coordination Office of UNEP's Global Programme of Action, PERSGA, ROPME and ROWA should maintain close communications. It was also agreed that in the future they should consider the possibility of meeting to discuss the detailed activities which would lead to the integration of the PERSGA and ROPME work programmes with the Global Programme of Action.

Workshops in Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti

In the framework of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (see *Al-Sambouk 2: 3-4*) reports on the status of the marine environment of all riparian countries of the PERSGA Region have been prepared by teams of national experts. Jordan was the first country to hold a national workshop in order to review its country report. Following the positive experience in Jordan, additional country workshops were held during November and December 1996 in Sudan, Yemen, and Djibouti.

Representatives of Government Agencies, NGOs, and the private sector who are involved in the use and management of coastal and marine resources, were invited. The purpose of the workshops was to review the draft country reports which provide essential inputs for the development of the SAP. After a short introduction to each country, its marine resources and institutional framework, these reports describe and analyse the status of the coastal and marine environment, with special reference to land-based and marine-based activities which have an impact on environmental quality. They also consider socio-economic development, existing and anticipated future threats and environmental initiatives to cope with these dangers. During the workshops completeness and the accuracy of the draft reports were reviewed. Additionally, the meetings were instrumental in obtaining a general consensus on potentially controversial issues.

On 27 November the Sudan Country Workshop, which had been organised by the Vice Chancellor of the Red Sea University - Dr. Abdel Gadir D. El-Hag, was held at the premises of the University in a beautiful setting overlooking Port Sudan harbour. H.E. Mr. Bedawi E.

Idris, Governor of the Red Sea State, welcomed the 32 participants who represented a wide range of organisations. He underlined the Government's commitment to conservation of the Red Sea environment and to sustainable development.

During the discussions of the draft country report socio-economic issues, maritime transport, proposed free zones and shark fisheries received particular attention. Participants provided substantial additional information and documentation.

The Yemen Country Workshop, which was organised by the Environmental Protection Council (EPC), took place on 22 December in the Central Statistics Office in Sana'a. In his opening address, H.E. Eng. Mohsen Al-Hamdani, Chairman of the EPC, informed the 22 participants about his organisation's activities in coastal and marine environmental conservation. The following discussions were co-chaired by the national experts Dr. Abdul Majeid G. Haddad and Dr. Khalid I. Hariri. The draft report was endorsed by the meeting. Gaps of information were identified in the sections on socio-economics and marine based tourism. Participants provided useful clarifications regarding the legal framework, marine transportation and pollution control. The information obtained during the meeting further improved the quality and accuracy of the country report.

The last workshop was held in Djibouti on 26 December 1996 in the premises of the Ministerial Complex. Mr. Mohammed A. Moumen, Deputy Director of Soil Improvement and Environment, opened and chaired the session. In his introductory note he summarised the role of PERSGA and the SAP process in the Region's coastal and marine conservation. The 20 participants of the meeting again provided substantial input into the country report. The discussions focused on priority actions and the meeting emphasised the importance of Djibouti's accession to PERSGA, which is presently considered by the Government, as a top priority.

In all three countries, participants provided substantial input towards the completion and improvement of the reports. The discussions were held in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. These workshops set a good example for a positive approach to problem solving in a co-ordinated, participatory process. It is hoped that they stimulated interagency consultations and regular meetings to coordinate the management of the coastal and marine environment. Similar workshops are planned for the near future in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Friedhelm Krupp, Chief Technical Consultant, SAP

Sanganeb Marine National Park

Sanganeb, a genuine atoll in the Red Sea, has already earned a famous reputation for underwater beauty since the early days of the scientific exploration of tropical seas. Its outstanding features have received brilliant documentation from various books and films, among them Captain Cousteau and Hans Hass. Hence the atoll is visited by an increasing number of diving tourists from overseas.

Sanganeb, which lies at about 28 km north east of Port Sudan, is completely submerged, only its lighthouse rises above sea level. This oval reef is about 6 km long, 2 km wide and lies on top of a rocky base that rises to the surface from a depth of 800 meters.

The Sudanese Government declared Sanganeb a Marine National Park in 1990 to protect the unique coral reef resources of the atoll in such a way, and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Thus, such a protected, naturally functioning Sanganeb atoll will provide many values to the people of Sudan and the world. It will be a standard against which other coral reefs may be measured. It will be a reservoir of genetic materials, ensuring availability of the natural diversity of plants and animals for the use of future generations in mariculture and medicine. A protected Sanganeb atoll will provide a source of replenishment for natural resources in adjacent areas diminished by pollution or fishery harvest. It will be a place that all people will want to visit and enjoy as a premiere example of nature's beauty and wonder, and where they can learn how coral reef ecosystems function.

Sanganeb atoll was visited by Dr. Gary Davis, an IUCN consultant, in 1981 as part of a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a marine national park. It was also visited briefly by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in March 1982. In November 1996, Dr. Danny Elder, a coastal and marine management advisor, accompanied by Dr. Friedhelm Krupp, the UNDP Consultant, and Dr. Dirar Nasr, the Assistant Coordinator in PERSGA, visited Sanganeb atoll to determine its current state and prepare a master plan for its management and operation. Dr. Elder is currently preparing the outline of such a plan for the Sanganeb Marine National Park.

The Lancelet

The Lancelet (Cephalochordata) is a small marine species (5-7 cm) which lives in shallow waters and has both sexes. Though it exists in almost all seas, for instance near the shores of the British Isles and extending north to the Norwegian coastline, its most extensive existence is in the warm seas such as the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The Lancelet belongs to the Cephalochordata and is scientifically known as Amphioxus. It lives near shores in stable waters, where it remains buried under clean sands to sometimes swim and appear in rapid movements. This animal has considerable scientific significance insofar as it characterizes the three basic features of the Cephalochordata in a rather simple manner. It is also quite similar to certain old ancestors of an order that includes vertebrates.

The external shape of the Lancelet is that of a soft-body, prolonged and compressed on both sides as well as being sharp-tipped from the front and back ends. It has no apparent head or other body parts. Its body is almost transparent so that several under-skin organs can be seen. The surface of the skin is soft with three kinds of fins: the dorsal, the tail and the pelvic fins. It has no external skeleton, and the most important part in its internal skeleton is the backbone. The Lancelet feeds by a scooping movement to filter plankton into its stomach. The Lancelet has no hearing organ, but a waxy hole together with a frontal eye dot. It has no ability to formulate images of visible items, and may likely be photosensitive.

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SIOCAM Workshop in New York

The Strategic Initiative for Ocean and Coastal Management (SIOCAM) Workshop was held in the Headquarters of UNDP, New York, during 17-18 December 1996. Dr. Dirar Nasr represented PERSGA at this workshop.

SIOCAM aims at enhancing the effectiveness of current regional and national projects in this field through the provision of a supportive framework for cooperation between projects, governments and donor agencies and the collaborative development of mutually beneficial products.

The major part of the workshop was a brainstorming and prioritization exercise on needs and resources for the following categories: education, training, research results and tools, policy frameworks, institutional framework, sustainable funding mechanisms, project development and management, and exchange of staff and apprentices.

These categories and needs were rated following individual assessments made by the different participants. The ratings were written individually by the five project leaders, the results were summarized mathematically and the group as a whole confirmed the results.

It is hoped that as SIOCAM matures, the outcome of this workshop will be disseminated and updated via the world-wide-web for access and utilization by new and emerging UNDP and GEF Ocean and Coastal Areas projects.

Joint Projects Between PERSGA and ALECSO

In the framework of the Agreement of Cooperation between PERSGA and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) it was agreed to implement two joint projects from among the projects approved by PERSGA Council in its second meeting in Jeddah.

The title of the first project is: "Development of a Programme for the Control of Pollution in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Region: Initiation of Policies for Coastal Zone Management and Capacity Building". The project includes the following activities: preparation of national reports on the state of marine environment in the region; field visits by consultants to PERSGA countries; development of trajectory models for oil spills in the Red Sea (Phase I); organization of a training course in the field of combatting marine pollution; formulation of national plans for combatting oil pollution; feasibility study for reception facilities; an expert meeting for the evaluation of the project results; and development of a programme for public education.

It should be mentioned that some of these activities have already started. For example, the reports on the state of marine environment, and development of the oil spill trajectory models have been undertaken in the framework of the Strategic Action Programme. UNEP participates in the implementation of the latter.

The second project is titled: "Study of Coastal Habitat in the Red Sea and Proposal of Plans for their Protection". It includes the following activities: identification of local experts for field studies; identification of a visiting expert to supervise the field studies; organization of a training course in coastal zone management; preparation of environmental maps for critical habitats; development of public education programmes; and evaluation of the project results.

A second meeting is scheduled to take place in Jeddah during March 1997 between the Secretariat of PERSGA and the Department of Scientific Programmes and Research in ALECSO for consultation in implementing the second project. ALECSO is funding each project with US\$ 50,000 in the framework of its contribution to PERSGA.

PERSGA Project Updates

Update of Bibliography

As part of its contribution to the SAP, UNEP is funding a number of projects which are being implemented by PERSGA. One of these is an update of the bibliography of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Gulf of Suez, which was jointly published by PERSGA and UNESCO in 1990. That bibliography covered all references which had been published until 1984.

The updated bibliography, covering work published from 1985 until the present, is being undertaken in two phases. The first phase, a computer search of published scientific literature, is being done for PERSGA by Professor Ali DouAbul, of the Department of Oceanography at the University of Sana'a. Professor DouAbul submitted a draft report in January and this is currently under review by two international experts.

The second phase of the update involves gathering published scientific reports and university theses (Masters and Doctorates) from the countries of the region. This is currently being done by individuals in each country working under contract to PERSGA, and the results will be combined with the references from the international literature. The updated bibliography will be published jointly by PERSGA and UNEP.

Review of Regional Environmental Programmes

A second SAP-related project to be funded by UNEP and implemented by PERSGA involves a review of regional environmental problems and the programmes

designed to address them. The consultant, Dr. Danny Elder, visited the UNEP and PERSGA offices in November. Building on the results of the SAP, Dr. Elder investigated the range of regional environmental issues in the marine and coastal environments, and also problems related to groundwater.

Dr. Elder's review revealed that some of the environmental issues are being addressed in existing programmes, however there are a number which are not being adequately addressed, or where there is a duplication of effort. These will be detailed in Dr. Elder's report, a first draft of which is expected in the very near future. The recommendations of this study will assist PERSGA to plan its programme in the coming years.

Al Sambouk is produced at the PERSGA office by Dr. William Gladstone (Editor) and Dr. Dirar Nasr (Assistant Editor). Translation by Mr. Yassin H. Yassin and Dr. Dirar Nasr. Graphics by Dr. David Olsen (MEPA). Additional copies can be obtained from PERSGA, P.O. Box 53662, Jeddah 21583, Saudi Arabia. Tel: 966 2 657 3224; Fax: 966 2 652 1901.