

Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of the PERSGA newsletter *Al Sambouk*. The name of this newsletter reflects its function: *Al Sambouk* is meant to be a vehicle which will inform and educate the people of the region about the marine environment and the activities which are occurring here to conserve and protect our valuable, shared resources. We wish to thank those people who wrote congratulatory and encouraging letters in response to the first issue of *Al Sambouk*. I would like to invite readers to contribute articles for *Al Sambouk* (in either English or Arabic) about activities you are currently involved in, or if you wish to announce a coming workshop or conference.

One of the significant regional activities which PERSGA is undertaking this year is a number of regional training workshops. The first workshop was held in Jeddah during January and a report of the workshop is included in this issue. Most of the countries in the region are participating in a large scale environmental programme called the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The SAP is being funded by the three partners in the Global Environment Facility (GEF): the UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank. PERSGA has the lead role in this significant regional initiative, by coordinating the activities of most of the countries involved. This issue of *Al Sambouk* features a major article describing the SAP, contributed by one of the GEF partner agencies, the UNDP. There is also a report on the second meeting of the SAP Task Force which took place in Amman earlier this month, and a report on a significant GEF project which has just begun in Yemen. PERSGA receives funding from this project (and another GEF project in Egypt) to ensure that the benefits of both projects are felt throughout the region.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *Al Sambouk*, and that you find it useful.

Dr William Gladstone

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Executive Director of UNEP Visits PERSGA

Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNEP, visited the PERSGA office in Jeddah on Saturday 13 April, as part of a visit to the offices of the Meteorological and Environmental Protection Administration of Saudi Arabia. Ms. Dowdeswell, who was accompanied by Dr. Makram Gerges (Director, ROWA), met with PERSGA Secretary General Dr. Nizar Tawfiq, Dr. William Gladstone, and Dr. Dirar Nasr. During the meeting a Memorandum of Understanding between PERSGA and UNEP was signed. Progress in activities relevant to both PERSGA and UNEP was discussed, in particular the Global Programme of Action for the Prevention of Pollution from Land-Based Activities, the Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea Regional Framework Plan project. Dr Tawfiq stressed the importance to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region of a close and effective working relationship between PERSGA and UNEP.

Regional Training Workshop in Jeddah

A regional training workshop on environmental impact assessment (EIA) was run here in Jeddah by PERSGA from 13-17 January. The workshop was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with the funds coming directly from two major GEF projects which are currently underway in Yemen and Egypt (the Yemen project is described later in this issue of *Al Sambouk*). Funding from these two projects, which is given to PERSGA to organize the training workshops, will ensure that the benefits of these two national projects will be felt throughout the region. Additional support during the workshop was provided by the Meteorological and Environmental Protection Administration (MEPA) of Saudi Arabia, and the workshop was held in the MEPA Conference Room.

The workshop was attended by a total of 23 participants representing Yemen (5 participants); Saudi Arabia (3 participants); Jordan (3 participants); Egypt (5 participants), Djibouti (3 participants) and Eritrea (2 participants). Dr Nizar Tawfiq, Secretary General of

PERSGA, officially opened the workshop and welcomed participants, and he also closed the workshop and presented the attendance certificates.

The workshop consisted of a series of background lectures about the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden marine environment and the principles of marine ecosystems relevant to EIA; background lectures on the principles of EIA; specific case studies of EIA illustrating these principles which concentrated on different uses of the marine environment currently occurring in the region (housing and tourism; industry; waste water and sewage disposal); a detailed case study of a waste disposal project in Jeddah (including a site visit); monitoring in EIA; and small group discussions on regional issues in the marine environment and the use of EIA in each country.

Expert speakers presented different aspects of the workshop programme. They came from Jordan (Mr. Abdullah Ahmed from USAid), Saudi Arabia (Dr. Ziad Hamza Abu Gharahrah from MEPA; Dr. Salah El Din Awadallah from King Abdulaziz University), the GEF Yemen project (Dr. Rifaat Hanna), PERSGA (Dr. William Gladstone and Dr. Dirar Nasr), and MEPA (Dr. David Olsen and Dr. Salah-eddin Elgowhary). Most lectures were presented in Arabic.

For the last session of the workshop the participants split into two small groups and shared information on EIA and the environmental issues in each of their countries. The participants then together raised the following issues for discussion and consideration:

- there is a need for unified procedures for EIA amongst the countries of the region, and utilization of the experiences of other countries in EIA studies
- special consideration needs to be given to environmentally sensitive areas in EIAs to ensure their conservation
- coastal zone management planning in the countries of the region needs to consider the negative impacts of development activities such as landfilling and dredging; it is important that a mechanism for the exchange of information in this field throughout the region be found
- there is a need for a workshop for legal experts from throughout the region to review and update the existing environmental legislation and to encourage countries of the region to join relevant international conventions, with PERSGA playing the lead role in coordinating these activities

- the prevention of the over-exploitation of natural resources by unified legislation among the countries of the region
- the elimination of oil pollution from ships in ports and coastal waters of the region, and the importance of finding a monitoring mechanism.

Strategic Action Programme For The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

The central role of PERSGA in regional environmental issues was realized with the Cairo Declaration and the official approval of the PERSGA Headquarters in Jeddah during the Ministerial meeting of PERSGA member countries in September 1995. One of the important roles of PERSGA will be its participation in the GEF preparatory project involving the development of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. In order to achieve International Waters objectives in the Red Sea, shared by eight countries, a coordinated SAP is necessary to determine regional and national needs and priorities. By analyzing the current state of the region's marine environment and the human-induced threats (pollution, development, over-exploitation), the SAP will pinpoint the "hotspots" to be addressed and the priority actions to be undertaken to remove/reduce the root causes of the problems. The SAP will also provide a programmatic approach to the development of country-based International Waters projects so that such projects may provide, and benefit from, linkages with on-going Regional Seas Initiatives and major International Waters projects. It is believed that the programmatic approach of SAP will assure a concerted international approach to transboundary problems and the realization of global and regional benefits. Such a SAP concept is strongly emphasized in the recently approved GEF Operational Strategy for International Waters.

The development of the Red Sea SAP will be a collaborative process in which PERSGA and the three agencies (UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank) will assist the eight countries, through a SAP Task Force, to develop country reports and hotspot studies prior to the formulation of regional and national priority actions and project concepts. The country reports, hotspot studies and priority actions and project concepts will be incorporated into the Red Sea SAP final document. In view of UNDP's mandate for capacity building, and its

long-standing in-country experiences, UNDP will work closely with Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia. The World Bank will primarily assist the process in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia where investment needs are of high national priority. Further, the World Bank will support the preparation of a regional study on maritime hotspot aspects.

This article will elaborate on the roles and activities of UNDP in the SAP process, in accordance with national needs and priorities. The roles of the World Bank and UNEP will be covered in future issues of *Al Sambouk*.

The SAP will build on a number of GEF supported programmes, among which are two being implemented by UNDP: the preparatory project in Eritrea ("Conservation of Coral Reef Biodiversity Through Community-Based Resource Management"), and the full project in Yemen ("Protection of the Marine Ecosystems of the Red Sea Coast"). The Yemen project is composed of both national and regional components. The regional component is providing a great deal of support to the development of the SAP by the institutional strengthening of PERSGA, partly through the regional CTA (Chief Technical Advisor, Dr William Gladstone) who is stationed in PERSGA. The close integration of the SAP process with the Yemen and Eritrea projects will ensure that national priorities of these two countries are reflected in the SAP. The human and institutional capacity that will be built by the two projects through education and training workshops will facilitate the implementation of the priority actions identified in the SAP.

The SAP will also identify the priority actions needed in countries where no current marine/coastal projects are underway. Specifically, the SAP will resume the momentum generated during the preparation of the Sudan proposal for "Integrated Development and Management of Red Sea Coastal and Marine Ecosystems". This proposal was prepared earlier in view of the importance of the coastal and marine issues in this vast country. Likewise, Djibouti will require assistance in the sustainable management of its coastal and marine resources as economic development takes priority. It is envisaged that Somalia, where institutional stability is lacking, will also benefit from the SAP process, although the latter will only focus on the Gulf of Aden coast of Somalia.

Work towards achieving the above has already started. The project was officially launched during the recent Sea-to-Sea conference held in Jeddah in October 1995. Subsequently, a Chief Technical Consultant,

Dr. Friedhelm Krupp, has been hired and a programme of visits to the sub-region defined. In December Dr. Krupp will meet with the PERSGA Secretary General, Dr. Nizar Tawfiq, and his staff. He will also visit UNEP-Nairobi and the UNDP-Somalia office which is temporarily located in Nairobi. This will be followed by survey work in the Sudan in collaboration with a Sudanese team of experts. Subsequent preliminary visits to Yemen, Djibouti and Eritrea are scheduled for January to be followed by more extensive survey trips to these countries and Somalia in March.

For each of the five countries, national specialists in the field of environmental sciences, fisheries and socio-economics, will play an important role to the SAP process. They are expected to work closely together to analyze the environmental threats and hotspot issues. Together with the Governments and various stakeholders such as fishermen and developers, they will identify priority actions for inclusion in the SAP. Based on the findings of the national teams, supported by the Chief Technical Consultant, country reports will be drafted reflecting national priorities and hotspot issues. It is planned that by June 1996 the five country reports will be close to completion. A regional study on the socio-economic situation as well as fisheries hotspot will follow.

The actual preparation of the Strategic Action Plan is scheduled for the second half of 1996. This will be done with inputs from, and in collaboration with, the Task Force, PERSGA, UNEP and the World Bank. Project/programme proposal outlines will be formulated to put the SAP into action beyond this preparatory phase. The final SAP document incorporating these proposal outlines is expected to be completed in December 1996.

Throughout the SAP process, Task Force meetings are to be scheduled intermittently to bring together the eight countries, PERSGA and the three implementing agencies. It is through open and in-depth consultations with the Governments and stakeholders that consensus on national and regional priorities can be reached, and a truly agreed-upon Red Sea SAP will emerge.

Catherine Cheung
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Second SAP Task Force Meeting

The second meeting of the SAP Task Force was held in Amman, Jordan, from 31 March - 1 April. The meeting was attended by representatives from the governments of Djibouti (Mr. Mohammad Ali Mumen), Jordan (Dr. Saleh Al Share), Saudi Arabia (Mr. Abdulwahab Daqqaq), Sudan (Professor Yousif Abu Gideiri), and Yemen (Mr. Hussein Al Geneid), and from PERSGA (Dr. Nizar Tawfiq and Dr. William Gladstone), UNDP (Ms. Catherine Cheung and Dr. Friedhelm Krupp), UNOPS (Mr. Roger Aertgeerts), UNEP (Mr. Halifa Drammeh), the World Bank (Dr. Stephen Lintner), and the Islamic Development Bank (Mr. Ahmed Hariri). In opening the meeting the Task Force Chairman, Dr. Nizar Tawfiq, warmly thanked both the Government of Jordan for hosting the meeting, and the various representatives for attending. He also praised the considerable progress which had been made in the SAP since the first Task Force meeting was held in Jeddah last October.

The meeting was largely taken up with a review of the progress which had been achieved. In particular, there was a lengthy discussion of the environmental issues which had been raised during the visit of the Chief Technical Consultant, Dr. Friedhelm Krupp, to the southern countries of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (Yemen, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan). The issues which have been highlighted so far include: de-ballasting and, oil and solid waste pollution associated with marine shipping; a lack of enforcement of existing environmental laws; the need for national and regional oil spill contingency plans and additional MEMAC centres; the potential environmental problems associated with free zones; fisheries issues including a lack of stock assessment data, over-fishing, destructive fishing, illegal shark fishing and its by-catch; the lack of information exchange amongst countries in the region; pollution from land-based activities; insufficient environmental data in many parts of the region for planning and management purposes; the effects of tourism on coral reefs; and a lack of public awareness about marine environmental issues. The list is only preliminary and no doubt additional issues will be raised during the forthcoming return visits by Dr. Krupp to the countries over the period from April to June.

The Task Force learnt that in the northern countries of the Red Sea there is already a considerable amount of environmental data available. The SAP, through the World Bank, will review and assemble the relevant information for Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia over the coming three months. The next meeting of the Task

Force will be held in Jeddah in late September, preceding the annual meeting of the PERSGA Council. It is planned that, by that time, a briefing will be prepared on the results of the SAP, for presentation to the PERSGA Council.

The GEF Yemen Project

A three year project with a budget of \$ 2.8 m began in Yemen in December 1995. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The title of the project is *Yemen: Protection of Marine Ecosystems of the Red Sea Coast*. In Yemen the project will be implemented by the Ministry of Fish Wealth/Marine Science and Resources Research Centre. The headquarters of the project are in Al Hodeyda, on the Red Sea coast, from here the project will be managed by the Project Manager Dr. Rifaat Hanna.

Background

Current information on Yemen's marine resources and their use is insufficient to provide the groundwork for regulations to prevent pollution. Most marine pollution in the region is caused by oil and tar from shipping. Landfill activities have also damaged valuable habitats. Shippers have deliberately sought these waters for polluting activities such as tank cleaning, because of the lack of monitoring on this coast. The absence of adequate background marine biological data has also contributed to making such actions relatively simple. In addition, there is concern about latent problems stemming from land-based sources of pollution such as sediment, heavy metal, pesticide and fertilizer run-off. Although no clear evidence exists, even to determine whether the present level of resource use is sustainable, the rise in coastal population has led to plans to increase industrial/commercial fishing.

The project has a three-pronged approach:

- finding out what is important in these waters, where the important areas (such as coral reefs) are, and how much of these have been damaged so far. This activity will require extensive data collection
- educating the public about marine conservation issues and the importance of sustainable development for Yemen

- preparing the ground for effective marine management.

The expected results of the project

This project is intended to increase Yemen's commitment to sustainable use of the Red Sea by creating a sharper awareness of environmental issues. The project will improve the country's capacity to protect its coastal waters from pollution, and to guard against depletion of its valuable biodiversity. These results are prerequisites for Yemen to tackle the mounting problems facing its marine environment. More specifically the project will affect the following:

- marine resource issue will be dealt with more effectively in the national planning process
- there will be an improved ability to recognize, early on, the potential damage from a wide range of marine activities, and a corresponding improvement in the ability to make planning and development decisions to minimize their environmental costs
- staff within government agencies and research organizations will have received on-the-job training through participation in the following activities: environmental survey and monitoring; environmental data collection and interpretation; environmental impact assessment and monitoring; public awareness programmes. Training will also have been provided through workshops, overseas short courses, and completion of degree courses at overseas institutions
- a framework for continuing survey and monitoring systems will have been established
- a marine protected areas system will be recommended, based on sites identified by this project with a review of previously proposed sites.

This report on the GEF Yemen project was compiled from information in the UNDP/GEF project document Yemen: Protection of Marine Ecosystems of the Red Sea Coast, and from information provided by Dr. Rifaat Hanna.

Research Grants for Young Scientists in Developing Countries

The International Foundation for Science (IFS) invites young scientists of merit in developing countries to submit proposals for research projects in the field of aquatic resources.

Projects can relate to research dealing with the ecology and sustainable management of aquatic resources, including artisanal fisheries. Simple surveys should not be included. Project proposals dealing with aquaculture research, i.e., site selection, selection, breeding, rearing, and nutrition of cultivable organisms and disease control are invited. Relevant research in aquatic biology and ecology, environmental impact studies, and ecology of species and systems can be proposed in applications.

The conditions for the grant follow the usual IFS policy. Research grants are awarded up to a maximum value of US\$12,000 for a period of one to three years and may be renewed twice. They are intended for the purchase of equipment, expendable supplies and literature. Applicants have to be native to, and carry out the research in a developing country. As well as being under the age of 40 and at the start of their research career, candidates must possess a higher academic degree, which should be at least an MSc or equivalent. Applicants must be employed at a university or research institution in a developing country; the institution will be expected to provide salaries and basic research facilities.

Besides supporting research in aquatic resources, the IFS also funds projects in the areas of animal production, crop science, food science, forestry and agroforestry, and natural products.

Applications are welcome on a year-round basis. They are evaluated by an international group of senior scientists who are specialists in their respective fields of research. In the PERSGA region, applicants from the following countries are eligible to apply for funding: Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.

Further information and application forms (in English or French) with guidelines are available on request from the International Foundation for Science, Grev Turegatan 19, S-114 38 Stockholm, Sweden. Fax: + 46 8 660 2618. E-mail: rfu@ifs.se