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**Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment
Regional Activity Center**

**The First NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting
Toyama, Japan, 25-28 February 2003**

REPORT OF THE FIRST NOWPAP CEARAC FOCAL POINTS MEETING

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Background leading to this meeting

1. The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) and three Resolutions were adopted at the first Intergovernmental Meeting (Seoul, 14 September 1994: UNEP (OCA)/NOWPAP/IG.1/5). Resolution 1 identified five areas of priority for implementation of the Action Plan, one of which was NOWPAP/3: Establishment of a collaborative, regional monitoring programme.
2. Following the decision of the 3rd Intergovernmental Meeting, the responsibility for NOWPAP/3 (Regional Monitoring Programme) was jointly shared by the Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center (CEARAC) and the Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center (POMRAC) to carry out regional activities.
3. Following the results of discussions at the First NOWPAP/3 Meeting (Beijing, China, 21-22 May 2001), the 7th Intergovernmental Meeting (Vladivostok, 20-22 March 2002) approved the resolution 3 Para.6, "the demarcation of the responsibilities and activities between CEARAC and POMRAC as presented by the secretariat in document UNEP/NOWPAP IG.7/8". Subsequently CEARAC was allocated with the responsibility to implement activities related to Working Group (WG) 3: HAB including red tide and Working Group (WG) 4: Remote Sensing of Marine Environment.
4. The 7th Intergovernmental Meeting approved also the budget of \$125,000 for 2002/2003 for CEARAC WG3 and WG4 activities (UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP/IG.7/10 Annex IV Resolution 1).
5. In accordance with the Workplan approved by the Resolution 1 of the 7th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP/IG.7/10 Annex IV), CEARAC in coordination with UNEP Regional Seas Programme invited CEARAC Focal Points from NOWPAP Members to organize the first Focal Points Meeting.
6. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been supporting NOWPAP/3 activities and provided initial inputs for the first CEARAC FPM.
7. In order for the participants to recognize the present status and future concerns in the region and to focus on the immediate and productive CEARAC activities, NOWPAP Members were requested to submit respective National Reports relevant to CEARAC and its WG3/WG4 activities.
8. The First Focal Points Meeting was scheduled to review and adopt its own Terms of Reference for the FPM, and then to examine the requirements for the WG3/4 and the work to be implemented by the WG3/4 as well as to define their immediate activities through in-depth discussions.

9. Representatives of NOWPAP Members: People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as China, Japan, Korea, and Russia, respectively) participated in the meeting. The representative of the UNEP, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Environmental Remote Sensing Regional Activity Center of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP/ERSRAC), NOWPAP/MERRAC (Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Center) and NOWPAP/POMRAC (Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center) and the Secretariat of CEARAC also participated. A full list of participants is attached in Annex I to the present report.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

10. The meeting was opened at 10:00 am at the Conference Room of Toyama International Center, Toyama, Japan, on the 25th of February 2003 by the Director of CEARAC, Mr. Hiroyuki Shitobi. He welcomed and thanked all participants and hoped that the participants would have an excellent stay in Toyama. He also wished them to have a fruitful time from both professional and personal perspectives.

11. The Director of CEARAC introduced Dr. Elik Adler, Senior Programme Officer, Regional Seas Programme Coordinator, Division of Environmental Conventions, of the UNEP, who provided the opening remarks on behalf of the Executive Director of the UNEP. He expressed his thanks to Toyama Prefecture and NPEC, for hosting the first Focal Points Meeting (FPM). He, then, explained that the objectives of the meeting were to institutionalize the activities of CEARAC and discuss the work priorities in 2003, 2004 and 2005 as well. He also referred to the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) which is to be co-hosted by Korea and Japan and that the UNEP would do its utmost effort to accelerate its set-up.

12. Mr. Yutaka Nakaoki, the Governor of Toyama Prefecture, welcomed the participants and solicited for the support of UNEP in the early establishment of the RCU.

Agenda Item 2. Organization of the Meeting

13. The meeting unanimously elected Mr. Osamu Mizuno, the Focal Point of Japan, as its Chairman, and Dr. Choi Hee Gu, the Focal point of Korea, as the Rapporteur.

14. The meeting agreed that the rules used be those of the Governing Council of UNEP, adjusted as appropriate to suit the nature of the meeting.

15. English was set to be the working language of the meeting. The Secretariat presented a provisional list of documents as presented in Annex II.

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the Agenda

16. The Provisional Agenda (Annex III) was introduced by the Secretariat with the Annotated Provisional Agenda (Annex III-1).

17. Dr. Adler made comments that the meeting should be conducted flexibly so as to reflect any contributions and/or inputs by all meeting participants. He also suggested that the meeting could be split into subworking groups as necessary.

Agenda Item 4. Overview of relevant existing activities related to Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) and Remote Sensing (RS), reports from UNEP Regional Seas Programmes/NOWPAP RCU, UNESCO/IOC, MAP/ERSRAC and NOWPAP Members

18. In order to commence the CEARAC activities, it was necessary to correctly perceive the status of global and/or regional marine environment as well as human endeavors to protect it at global, regional and national level. Participants from each NOWPAP Members, including international and regional organizations, were requested to make presentations on their programmes or on their country's activities on Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) and Remote Sensing (RS).

19. Dr. Adler briefed on NOWPAP evolution including the organizational change of RACs authorized by the 7th Intergovernmental Meeting (Appendix I).

20. Ms. Dong Guangxia, the Focal Point, explained the situation of China based on the national report (Appendix II).

21. Dr. Hee Gu Choi, the Focal Point, presented the national report on HAB and Remote Sensing in Korea (Appendix III).

22. Dr. Vladimir Shulkin, the Focal Point, made a presentation on status report on HAB and eutrophication problems in the Russian sector of NOWPAP region (Appendix IV-1).

23. Dr. Leonid Mitnik, the Focal Point, made his presentation on Russian remote sensing activities and on oceanic dynamic features in NOWPAP sea studied with satellite synthetic aperture radar (Appendix IV-2).

24. Dr. Yasuwo Fukuyo, the Focal Point, made a presentation on HAB status in Japan (Appendix V-1). He indicated the importance of assessment of the relationship between environmental changes and HAB occurrences.

25. Dr. Ichio Asanuma, the Focal Point, introduced on remote sensing activities in Japan. (Appendix V-2). He stressed the importance of consistency of data from different satellite sensors.

26. Following the national reports, the representing international organizations made their contribution to the meeting. Dr. Victor A. Akulichev, Chairman of NEAR-GOOS/IOC-UNESCO, briefed on GOOS and NEAR-GOOS, framework (Appendix VI).

27. Dr. Henrik Oksfeldt Enevoldsen, Coordinator of the UNESCO/IOC HAB Programme referred to the IOC HABs programme adopted in 1992 by member states with a broad goal of fostering the effective management of and scientific research on HABs (Appendix VII).

28. Mr. Giovanni Cannizzaro, Director of MAP/ERSRAC, reported on Remote Sensing activities in MAP/ERSRAC (Appendix VIII).

Agenda Item 5. Review and adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Focal Points Meeting of the Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center (CEARAC) of NOWPAP

29. The Revised Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Focal Points Meeting of the Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center was presented by the Secretariat.

30. Dr. Adler provided comments and clarifications to the meeting. After a lengthy and productive discussion and after a comprehensive review of the members, all the comments had been taken into consideration. Subsequently, the Chair called for the adoption of the revised CEARAC Focal Points Meeting Terms of Reference. The meeting adopted the document as reflected in Annex IV.

31. Dr. Adler explained that the approved text of the TOR will be forwarded by the CEARAC Secretariat to the 8th Intergovernmental Meeting for final adoption.

Agenda Item 6. Review of “Requirements and Work to be implemented for the Working Group 3 : Harmful Algal Blooms – in order to conceptualize and define the Terms of Reference for the Working Group 3, and to define and adopt WG3 immediate activities and Workplan.

Agenda Item 7. Review of “Requirements and Work to be implemented for the Working Group 4 : Remote Sensing of Marine Environment” – in order to conceptualize and define the Terms of Reference for the Working Group 4, and to define and adopt WG4 immediate activities and Workplan.

32. The chair proposed that discussion of agenda 6 and 7 could be processed in parallel and then the members of FPM could then divide into two subgroups: the subgroup relating to Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB subgroup) and the subgroup relating to Remote Sensing of the Marine and Coastal Environment (RS subgroup). He emphasized that the documents did not need an approval but served as initial information for the Focal Points members. Following the agreement by the meeting on this proposal, the Secretariat presented briefly two documents regarding requirements and work to be implemented for both WG3 and WG4, respectively. (Annex V and Annex VI).

33. Dr. Adler informed the meeting that the purpose of the discussion of the two subgroups was to establish priorities and initial steps that should be undertaken by the WGs. The results would serve as a basis for the discussion of WGs that would subsequently advise the CEARAC Secretariat in setting up the Workplan for CEARAC in the coming years. After this FPM, the CEARAC Secretariat would have to prepare a concluding document, possibly with the assistance of a consultant, for the upcoming WG meetings.

34. The FPM divided into two subgroups and reconvened afterwards. The two chairs of the subgroups made brief presentations on the results of their discussions.

35. The HAB subgroup, chaired by Dr. Fukuyo, and the RS subgroup, chaired by Dr. Asanuma, requested for more time to discuss these important issues. The FPM agreed to extend discussion of each subgroup and more discussion continued.

36. The Chair of the FPM asked the two Chairs of the subgroups to summarize their discussion and submit it to the Secretariat in written form.

37. In the evening, a small working group was convened and the results of which was presented by the Secretariat in the next FPM meeting day. The discussion was mainly on the summaries in both subgroups as well as on the provisional methodology to provide a directive for the WGs and the CEARAC Secretariat. This was reexamined further by the body.

38. Based on the review of the HAB subgroup members, Dr. Fukuyo presented the following conclusion. Based on their lengthy discussion, the HAB subgroup agreed that four main issues need to be focused on, namely:

1. Review of the integrated national reports which will be prepared by CEARAC with the view to:
 - Standardize and establish a system to update national reporting;
 - Establish a metadata base on HAB while taking into consideration existing relevant databases; and
 - Consider environmental parameters to be added to the metadata base.
2. Identification and prioritization of the needs and capabilities through:
 - Intercalibration exercises;
 - Capacity building to improve the quality of monitoring;
 - Training (taxonomy, toxicology, etc.); and
 - Identification and dissemination of new techniques.
3. Identification of important scientific issues and assessment of the potential to incorporate these within the NOWPAP framework.
4. Establish information dissemination strategies through the development of regional and national portals which would deal with specific sectors such as aquaculture, tourism, public education with the final aim of enhancing the visibility of CEARAC HAB.

39. Based on the review of the RS subgroup members, Dr. Asanuma presented the following conclusion. Based on their lengthy discussion, the RS subgroup agreed that the following issues need to be focused on, namely:

1. Applications supported by Remote Sensing
 - Oil spill
 - Eutrophication (primary productivity)
2. User's needs and gaps should be defined
3. Towards the operational monitoring
 - Modeling of phenomena
 - Monitoring methods
 - Prediction of phenomena
 - Funds

4. Public outreach
 - Website preparation for working group
 - Contributions to NOWPAP website
5. Capacity building of NOWPAP Members
 - Trainings
 - Facilities including acquisition, processing, storage, and network among RS center
 - Funds

The meeting had also agreed that the following issues will be discussed in both WG3 and WG4 meetings:

1. Long term strategy
2. Proposed working plan for 2004/5
 - Prepare for the second FPM
 - Inter-session activities
3. Capability of CEARAC
 - Facility and personnel, cooperation among RACs

40. Furthermore, the MAP/ERSRAC representative agreed to assist in the review of the working document for RS while UNESCO/IOC HAB programmes will be involved deeply in assisting and guiding the CEARAC Working Group on HAB.

41. The FPM agreed that the WG3 meeting should be held in August or September 2003 and WG4 meeting should be held in October 2003. The RS subgroup on RS decided to conduct a preliminary and preparatory meeting of four Focal Points at Vladivostok, Russia in April 2003. This meeting will discuss and decide on the issues to be reviewed by the WG4 with the assistance of consultant(s). The documentation for WG4 October 2003 meeting will be prepared by the CEARAC Secretariat with the assistance of the consultant(s).

42. The HAB subgroup decided that the documentation for the coming WG3 meeting should be prepared by CEARAC Secretariat, with the assistance of consultant(s), if necessary.

43. The meeting of the FPM agreed with the issues to be examined and discussed by the two WGs and also approved the methodology of the preparatory work.

Agenda Item 8. Review and agreement of CEARAC 2003 Workplan

44. After reviewing the Draft Workplan and budget for CEARAC in 2003 in consultation with Dr. Adler and referring several comments from the participants, the new Workplan and budget was presented by the Secretariat and discussed. Finally, the FPM adopted the new Workplan as reflected in (Annex VII)

45. In addition, the framework plan of work for CEARAC for 2004/5 was presented by the Secretariat. The meeting took note of the intention of the Secretariat to present this framework plan of work to the Intergovernmental Meeting (Annex VIII)

Agenda Item 9 Arrangement for intersessional work and venues of second FPM

46. The meeting decided about the intersessional work in previous agenda items and agreed to hold its 2nd FPM in January 2004 in CEARAC, Toyama, Japan.

Agenda Item 10. Other Matters

47. Mr. Masamitsu Oritani, Executive Director of the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC), introduced their survey on washed-up driftage along the coasts in Northwest Pacific Region. (Appendix XI)

48. Dr. Adler said that the issue of marine litter is of major concern to the marine and coastal environment and that UNEP and IMO will cooperate in this regard with MERRAC, as this is considered "marine-based pollution". He called upon NPEC to cooperate with MERRAC on this issue.

Agenda Item 11. Adoption of the report of the meeting

49. A draft report of the meeting was prepared by the Rapporteur for consideration and adoption.

50. The meeting adopted the report with minor modifications.

Agenda Item 12. Closure of the meeting

51. The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 19:00 on 27 February 2003.