



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

REGIONAL
SEAS

*Co-operation for
environmental protection in the Pacific*

UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 97

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Regional Seas Programme was initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1974 in response to the selection of the oceans as a priority area by the UNEP Governing Council. It is a global programme implemented through regional components under the guidance of the Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

Each regional action plan is formulated by the Governments concerned to respond to the needs of the region for a comprehensive approach to controlling both the consequences and the causes of environmental degradation through the management of marine and coastal areas. Action-oriented programme activities are generally supported by regional legal agreements.

The oceans are an element uniting the countries of a region in the management of a shared resource. Many marine environmental problems require a common or at least co-ordinated approach by all the governments concerned. The success of the ten Regional Seas action plans involving over 120 coastal states proves the effectiveness of this approach. Nevertheless inter-regional co-operation is important to share experience and to assure the compatibility of the different regional components.

The three Regional Seas Action Plans in the Pacific illustrate the different origins and approaches of regional efforts to manage the marine and coastal environment. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) had its roots in the regional environmental activities of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) starting in 1974, before becoming a joint programme with the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation (SPEC), and then being adopted as a UNEP Regional Seas area in 1979. Its action plan [1] was approved by governments at the Rarotonga Conference in 1982, and a regional convention was signed in 1986. SPREP covers both the terrestrial and marine environments, and includes both scientific and educational components.

In the South-East Pacific, the Member States of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) requested UNEP to assist in the development of an action plan for that region, starting with an international workshop in 1978 and leading to the adoption of both the action plan and a regional convention at Lima in 1981 [2]. The CPPS provides the secretariat for the action plan, which gives major emphasis to the study and control of marine pollution.

The East Asian Seas action plan was developed under UNEP supervision for the ASEAN member countries, which adopted it in 1981 [3]. Its activities are approved by annual meetings of the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), and UNEP continues to serve as the secretariat, with different projects implemented by government agencies or organizations on behalf of the countries of the region. A regional trust fund contributes to project support, but there is no regional convention or co-ordinating unit at present.

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- [1] SPC/SPEC/ESCAP/UNEP. 1983. Action Plan for managing the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 29. UNEP, 1983.
 - [2] CPPS/UNEP. 1983. Action Plan for the protection of the marine environment and coastal areas of the South-East Pacific. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 20. UNEP, 1983.
 - [3] UNEP. 1983. Action Plan for the protection and development of the marine and coastal areas of the East Asian region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 24. UNEP, 1983.

Since these three action plans all concern the same ocean, it is logical that UNEP should make a special effort to encourage inter-regional co-operation. The first meeting to bring together scientists from the three programmes for a joint review of their progress was held at the 15th Pacific Science Congress in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1983, and the results were published by UNEP in *Environment and Resources in the Pacific*, UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 69 (1985). The papers in this volume were presented at a similar UNEP-sponsored symposium, "Regional Co-operation on Environmental Protection of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the Pacific", organized in association with the XVI Pacific Science Congress in Seoul, Korea on 25-26 August 1987, and hosted by Hanyang University. Scientists actively involved in the implementation of the action plans in the Pacific were invited to share their results, to develop contacts with their colleagues in other regions, and to suggest further development of inter-regional activities and co-ordination. A section concerning environmental protection in the North-West Pacific was added to allow scientists from countries in that region to review their marine and coastal research and monitoring activities and to consider the advantages of regional co-operation on the Regional Seas model.

As organizer of the symposium on behalf of UNEP, I should like to acknowledge the co-operation and assistance of the Pacific Science Association, the Organizing Committee for the XVI Pacific Science Congress, Hanyang University, and in particular Professor Tae Hoon Yoon, the local organizer, in facilitating the arrangements for the meeting. Thanks are also due to all the authors for their co-operation in helping to bring these proceedings out quickly.

Arthur Lyon Dahl

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