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**First Meeting of the Coordinating Working Group
for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Database
and Information Management System (NOWPAP/1)**

Beijing, China, 23-24 May 2001

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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Introduction

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).
2. The Second Intergovernmental Meeting, which was held on 20 November 1996 in Tokyo, adopted the Programme Document describing the implementation of NOWPAP projects. Regarding NOWPAP/3, IOC of UNESCO was designated as the implementing agency to prepare the proposal for the second phase for the implementation.
3. The Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting (Beijing, 6-7 April 1999) adopted the proposal for the second phase of the implementation for NOWPAP. Resolution 1 adopted at this meeting requested the member states to designate necessary members for participation in the NOWPAP/1 Coordinating Working Group. Following up on the establishment of the Coordinating Working Group, UNEP decided to convene a First Meeting of the Coordinating Working Group for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Database and Information System (NOWPAP/1) with a view to establishing a working relationship between the different actors and the Regional Activity Centre. The Meeting was originally scheduled for Beijing, 14-16 December 1999, but this meeting subsequently had to be postponed to the present.
4. This document is the record of the discussions and deliberations of the First Meeting of the Coordinating Working Group for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Database and Information System (NOWPAP/1), in Beijing, P.R. China during 23-24 May 2001.
5. Experts designated by the States in the Northwestern Pacific Region (Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation) participated in the meeting. Additional experts, designated by the States for the corresponding NOWPAP/3 programme on the Establishment of a Collaborative Regional Monitoring Programme (NOWPAP/3), also participated in the meetings as observers. Additional observers were present from Japan, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea. The directors of the Regional Activity Centres corresponding to NOWPAP/1 and NOWPAP/3 were also present in addition to a representative of the Mediterranean Action Plan. UNEP and IOC functioned as secretariat for the workshop. The full list of participants is attached to this report as **Annex 1** to this report.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING

6. The meeting was opened at 09:00, 23 May 2001, in Beijing, People's Republic of China by Mr. Elik Adler, Coordinator of Regional Seas Programme UNEP. He informed the meeting that he would act as Chairperson until the arrival of the officially elected chairperson of the present meeting.
7. On behalf of Mr. Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director and Mr. Jorge Illueca, Director of the Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Elik Adler opened the meeting and introduced the various representatives. He stressed the

significance of the First Meeting of the Coordinating Working Group, particularly so in view of the slow progress made under NOWPAP/1. He further emphasised the need for a practical and achievable workplan for the Regional Activity Centre. He finally thanked the Chinese Government for hosting the meeting.

8. Mr. Maarten Kuijper, representative of the IOC, made a statement on behalf of Mr. Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary IOC, emphasising the role of IOC as implementing agency under both phase I and phase II of NOWPAP/1 since 1997. He further thanked the Chinese Government for the excellent arrangements made by the local organisers.
9. At the request of the Chairperson, the various delegations and Mr. Wang Jianguo, Director of the Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (DIN/RAC) provided short opening statements.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

10. The meeting participants elected a Chairman and a Rapporteur as follows:
Chairperson: Ms. Zhang Mengheng, People's Republic of China (and until she arrived Mr. Elik Adler of UNEP).
Rapporteur: Mr. Masamitsu Oritani, Japan.
11. The Chairperson proposed for the meeting's consideration that the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council, as applicable to the meetings convened by the Executive Director, would apply mutatis mutandis for this meeting. The meeting approved the proposal.
12. The Chairperson proposed that the meeting carry out its work in plenary session in principle. The meeting approved the proposal. Furthermore the proposed timetable was introduced and approved.
13. The meeting was conducted in English. The Chairperson introduced the provisional list of documents (UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP WG 17/inf.1). The final list of documents is attached to the present report as **Annex 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

14. The Provisional Agenda (UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP WG 17/1) and the Annotated Provisional Agenda (UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP WG 17/2) were introduced by the Chairperson. The meeting adopted the agenda, with minor modifications suggested by a delegate of Japan and a delegate of the Republic of Korea. The adopted agenda is attached to the present report as **Annex 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: OVERVIEW OF THE PREPARATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NOWPAP/1 PROJECT

15. Mr. Wang Jianguo, Director of DIN/RAC, provided a report on the establishment of the centre, including an idea on future operations, which included plans for the production of a contact list of Coordinating Working Group members, and the relevant institutions and organisations in each member state, and the construction of a prototype homepage accessible by member institutions.
16. In addition, the Director of DIN/RAC suggested that DIN/RAC would work on a manual on NOWPAP/1 and a directory/database of marine environmental institutions. He further proposed that the next meeting of the Coordinating Working Group be held in 2002, preferably with another country than China as the host. With the aid of an organogram, the DIN/RAC Director finally explained the institutional arrangements of DIN/RAC as part of the Environmental Information Centre including details on staffing.
17. On the concern raised on how DIN/RAC would avail itself of the necessary expertise on marine data management and quality assurance / quality control, the DIN/RAC Director suggested that he

would seek the collaboration with the National Marine Data and Information Service (NMDIS) in Tianjin, China.

18. A discussion ensued on the responsibility of the RAC in hosting and organising the activities of NOWPAP/1. It was agreed that most of the activities and meetings should be organised by DIN/RAC in China. However, the Member States were encouraged to invite and organise NOWPAP related activities.
19. Prior to the presentation by each of the countries on the national activities, the IOC representative informed the meeting about the status of the National Reports on Marine Data Information and Exchange and the National Reports on Monitoring that were prepared under Phase I of NOWPAP/1 and NOWPAP/3 respectively. Pending the final revision of the Chinese reports, these reports could be published soon. Following a short discussion, the Meeting recommended that the final compilation, harmonisation and publication of these reports be carried out by DIN/RAC. The final reports would include a short update on activities and changes that came into effect since the completion of the national reports.
20. Mr. Jeong Heedong presented the national activities of the Republic of Korea. The report is included in **Annex 8-A**. The responsible institute for the depository and management of marine and coastal environmental data is the Korea Oceanographic Data Centre (KODC) under the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries ensures appropriate coordination among various data collecting agencies and institutions in the country.
21. Mr. Igor Rostov presented the report on the status of data and information management systems in the Russian Federation. The report is included in **Annex 8-B**. Mr. Rostov referred to the various agencies and institutions that have a responsibility for collecting and processing data. The Regional Oceanographic Data Centre (RODC) has assumed the responsibility of archiving and processing oceanographic data of the Pacific region. Authorisation for contributing data to international programmes is difficult to obtain. Since the completion of the National Report on Data and Information Management under Phase I of NOWPAP/1 in 1998, there has been a significant increase in the use of the Internet, which offers new opportunities to the data centres and monitoring agencies. The Russian Federation has also embarked on an ambitious federal research programme that will contribute new techniques, methodologies and data of benefit to NOWPAP.
22. Mr. Satoshi Sato of the Japan Oceanographic Data Centre (JODC), explained that in Japan many institutions and agencies belonging to four major ministries are responsible for data collection. The JODC is responsible for the central data management of oceanographic data generated by these agencies. The report is included in **Annex 8-C**.
23. Mr. Wang Jianguo finished the national presentations with his summary of activities carried out in the People's Republic of China. A brief overview of these activities is presented in **Annex 8-D**.
24. Mr. Saverio Civili, the representative of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) provided a comprehensive overview of the status of data and information management under the MAP. MAP in principle collects a wide range of data from national sources which are then stored in the various databases of each of the different Regional Activity Centres and the Regional Coordinating Unit that are established in the region. Different RACs hold different data, which can roughly be divided in the following categories: socio-economic data, information on coastal zone management programmes in the MAP region, landuse data obtained from remote sensing, inventories on biodiversity, marine and coastal protected areas, and endangered species, legal information and the marine pollution database. The latter two data types are managed and maintained by the RCU through MEDPOL, the monitoring programme for the Mediterranean Sea.
25. Under phase III of MEDPOL, which commenced in 1996, an effort is made to expand the data archive to include compliance monitoring data and biomonitoring data. Data are collected and analysed in the region using unified data formats. Another new development under MEDPOL is a

pilot study on the inventory of all movements of toxic substances from manufacturing or import to their release in the environment, or export from a country, currently being implemented in Egypt.

26. A question was raised by Mr. Kang Haesok, Delegate of the Republic of Korea on the data exchange policy in the MAP region. The representative of MAP explained that an important aspect of the data and information management system of MAP is that it started at a time when few countries had a system for data and information management in place. Through the capacity building provided under the programme, MEDPOL was able to establish a central data management and information system for data exchange and archiving in the region using an harmonised approach in terms of QA/QC, data formats and sampling methodologies, whilst the countries were able to develop their national capabilities. In the early years of the programme, the neutrality of the UN office guaranteed that countries were willing to contribute their data. Nowadays, marine environmental data are no longer considered to be sensitive issue in the MAP region as it is increasingly difficult for the countries to hide their findings.
27. Some questions were raised on the quality of the data generated under the MEDPOL programme, and the value of these data for the countries. In response, the representative of MAP explained that poor quality of data is indeed a problem, but that the major achievements of the MEDPOL programme lie in the capacity building associated with the monitoring programme, and the publication of useful documents such as the assessment reports that include not only the status of pollution by a category of contaminants but also suggests remedial measures that can be taken at the national level to reduce the pollution.
28. The IOC representative subsequently made a presentation on the Northeast Asian Region Global Ocean Observing System (NEAR-GOOS), which is an exchange system for marine oceanographic data. This programme covers the same region and countries of NOWPAP and shares many of its objectives. The presentation included a discussion of the various challenges that the programme faces with particular emphasis on the need to be a user-driven programme and the inclusion of biological and chemical parameters. A risk of NEAR-GOOS and NOWPAP is that these programmes may result in a duplication of efforts. Ensuring good collaboration among the two programmes can prevent this.
29. The IOC representative presented some other programmes relevant to NOWPAP/1, notably the IODE programme under IOC and EANET, the Network for Acid Deposition Monitoring in East Asia.

AGENDA ITEM 5: TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND WORKPLAN FOR THE COORDINATING WORKING GROUP

30. At the request of the Chairperson, the representative of UNEP, provided an introduction to this agenda item, emphasising on the different need to come up with a practical mechanism that will facilitate the implementation of the activities of NOWPAP/1 Phase II. He also pointed out the urgent need for specific definitions and agreement on the role of the Coordinating Working Group vis-à-vis the Regional Activity Centre.
31. The meeting then discussed a draft Terms of Reference that was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the document UNEP/IOC/NOWPAP WG. 12/2/REV.2 (titled: "Proposal for NOWPAP/1 Phase II"), which was approved in the Expert Workshop on the Establishment of a Comprehensive Database and Information Management System, held in Beijing, the People's Republic of China, 6-8 July 1998 and endorsed by 4th Intergovernmental Meeting in Beijing , the People's Republic of China, 6-7 April 1999.
32. The meeting subsequently adopted the Terms of Reference of the Coordinating Working Group as specified in **Annex 7** to this report.
33. In view of the adopted terms of reference, the Coordinating Working Group agreed that following the meeting, UNEP will request the NOWPAP focal points in each of the countries to reconsider, and if necessary re-nominate the country representatives to the NOWPAP/1 Coordinating Working

Group.

34. The IOC representative introduced the Working Document UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP WG 17/4 that was provided to the meeting. The purpose of the document is to highlight the essential elements of the work under Phase II of NOWPAP/1, and some of the issues under consideration. The meeting took note of the document and agreed to pay due attention to these issues in their discussion of the workplan for the next biennium (2002-2003).
35. To facilitate the discussion of the workplan and budget, the representative of UNEP referred to the document UNEP/IOC/NOWPAP WG. 12/2/REV.2 (titled: "Proposal for NOWPAP/1 Phase II"), and proposed to revisit the activities detailed therein and prioritise where needed. The IOC representative then introduced the different activities item by item.
36. The meeting discussed and proposed concrete actions for each of the subjects under consideration. As a result the meeting drew up and subsequently adopted a workplan and budget as specified in **Annex 8** to this report.

AGENDA ITEM 6: NOWPAP/1 SERVICES AND DATA PRODUCTS

37. The chairperson introduced this agenda item by referring to the Working Document UNEP(DEC)/NOWPAP WG 17/4 that was provided to the meeting. She invited the meeting to specifically consider the type of variables and parameters that will need to be considered within the context of NOWPAP/1.
38. The meeting understood that it would be difficult for some countries to provide raw data. The meeting recommended that a consultant be hired by the Regional Activity Centre to formulate a concept paper for NOWPAP/1 Data products and services, in close consultation with the various working groups under NOWPAP/3. The concept paper should define the priority and feasibility of the data products and services provided by NOWPAP. The meeting further recommended that the "NOWPAP policy on data sharing and guidelines" document, specified under activity 3 in the "Proposal for Phase II", will serve as a base for the present concept paper. This paper shall be circulated to all the Member States for their review two months before the next meeting of the Coordinating Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 7: OTHER MATTERS

39. The representative of UNEP invited the meeting to consider the time and venue of the next meeting of the Coordinating Working Group. The meeting had agreed in principle that the next meeting should be organised by the RAC around May 2002 in China, unless an invitation from another will be forwarded to the RAC.
40. In response to a question regarding the geographic names used under the NOWPAP, the UNEP representative agreed to check the official the United Nations position on this.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

41. The draft report of the meeting was prepared by the Rapporteur for consideration and adoption. The meeting adopted the report with minor modifications.

AGENDA ITEM 9: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

42. Following concluding statements by each of the delegations pointing out the hospitality of SEPA and the Government of China, the Chairperson closed the meeting at 17:30 p.m. on Thursday, 24 May 2001.