

# Newsletter from NOWPAP MER/RAC

Northwest Pacific Action Plan  
Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Regional Activity Centre



## What is MER/RAC and who works there?

The Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MER/RAC) is one of four Regional Activity Centres of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). It is responsible for regional co-operation in the field of marine pollution preparedness and response in the Northwest Pacific region and is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The Centre was established on 22 March 2000 within the Korea Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering (KRISO) / Korea Ocean Research and Development Institute (KORDI) in Taejeon, Republic of Korea, following the decision of the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting on NOWPAP (April 1999). The Memorandum of Understanding relating to the establishment and operation of MER/RAC was duly signed between UNEP, IMO, and KRISO/KORDI in July 2000.

MER/RAC was established to co-ordinate the relevant activities on prevention and response to major pollution incidents occurring in the region which fall under one of the priority projects of NOWPAP entitled, "Development of Effective Measures for Regional Cooperation in Marine Pollution" or in short, "NOWPAP/4".

The Centre is currently functioning as secretariat for the NOWPAP MER/RAC Focal Points Meetings, Experts Meetings, and the NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, with assistance from UNEP and IMO. The Centre will also manage the NOWPAP MER/RAC Homepage which is at present being developed. This Homepage will include the results of the NOWPAP/4 activities as well as other relevant information.

The operation of MER/RAC is financially supported by the Government of the Republic of Korea. This support includes operational costs such as personal salaries, travel expenses and other miscellaneous costs, except in cases where these are budgeted for by specific projects, funded from the NOWPAP Trust Fund. The following four staff members are currently employed at MER/RAC:

Dr. Chang-Gu Kang, Director  
Mr. Tae-Byung Chun, Senior Consultant  
Dr. Seong-Gil Kang, Senior Consultant  
Ms. Hyun-Jin Lee, Secretary

### Greetings from the Director of MER/RAC, Chang-Gu Kang



As the Director of MER/RAC, with responsibility for developing effective measures for regional co-operation in marine pollution preparedness and response under the Northwest Pacific Action

Plan (NOWPAP) framework, I am very pleased to address you through this first Issue of the NOWPAP MER/RAC Newsletter. I believe that the Newsletter will serve as a contact between MER/RAC and all persons who are directly concerned with marine pollution preparedness and response in the NOWPAP region. We will disseminate relevant information periodically to the public via this newsletter and the NOWPAP MER/RAC homepage which is at present being developed.

The semi-closed Northwest Pacific region is frequently subjected to major marine pollution accidents, as was the case with the Sea Prince and the Nakhodka oil spills that resulted in serious environmental and economic damages. MER/RAC is coordinating various regional activities relevant to marine pollution preparedness and response, including the development of the NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the associated Memorandum of Understanding, in order to assist in ensuring fast and effective response to marine pollution accidents on regional level. I believe that these efforts will assist in making our NOWPAP Sea cleaner and more sustainable. I look forward to continuous support and suggestions from the NOWPAP member States, UNEP and IMO in implementing our activities. Thank you.

No. 1  
August 2001

## Who are the National Focal Points for NOWPAP MER/RAC?

To facilitate the implementation of MER/RAC's functions, a network of National Focal Points for MER/RAC was established in January 2001, which is composed of one person from each NOWPAP member State with responsibility for oil spill preparedness and response issues in their country. The National Focal Points for NOWPAP MER/RAC are as follows:

### Japan:

Mr. Takao Masui  
Director  
Ocean Division, Policy Bureau  
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Japan

### People's Republic of China:

Mr. E Hailiang

Programme Officer  
Department of Ship Safety and Pollution Prevention  
Maritime Safety Administration  
People's Republic of China

### Republic of Korea:

Mr. Wan-Sub Lee  
Director  
Maritime Pollution Division  
National Maritime Police Agency  
Republic of Korea

### Russian Federation:

Mr. Vladimir Karev  
Director  
State Marine Pollution Control Salvage & Rescue Administration (MPCSA), Ministry of Transport  
Russia Federation

## NOWPAP as one of UNEP's Regional Seas Programmes



*by Ellik Adler, Regional Seas Programme Coordinator, Division of Environmental Conventions, UNEP, Nairobi*

UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, launched in 1974, is an action-oriented programme, aiming at the sustainable management, on a regional level, of the marine and coastal environments. Coastal and marine environmental problems were for long treated as purely local or national issues. With the rise of environmental awareness in the last decades, it was clearly understood that new global and regional perspectives have to be adopted, as pollution and environmental problems do not recognize political borders. In 1975, the first Regional Seas Convention, the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean region was adopted. The Barcelona Convention brings together the 21 riparian countries, in a mutual commitment to protect their common asset - the Mediterranean Sea.

Since then, 14 regional Action Plans have been established under UNEP's auspice all around the world: the Black Sea, Caribbean, East Africa, West and Central Africa, the Kuwait region, North West Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Asia, South East Pacific, North East Pacific, South Pacific and three independent agreements in the Baltic, North East Atlantic and the Arctic. Altogether more than 140 countries participate in at least one regional Action Plan.

The Action Plans are adopted by member governments in order to establish a comprehensive strategy of sustainable management of resources through integrated management of the coastal and marine environments. They focus not only on the mitigation and elimination of the consequences, but also on the sources of environmental degradation. Each individual Action Plan is designed to link assessment of the quality of the marine environment and the causes of its degradation, with response actions for the management and the sustainable development of the marine and coastal environments. The regional Action Plan

promotes the parallel development of legally binding instruments such as conventions and specific protocols, addressing different environmental problems. Overall implementation of the Action Plan and its activities is carried out by a Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) and in some cases Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to ensure integrated and organized execution of the activities.

The structure of the Action Plans consist of 5 basic components:

- Environmental Assessment - as a tool to assist policy makers
- Sustainable Environmental Management
- Environmental Legislation - from regional or global to national level
- Institutional Arrangements - RCU, RACs, governing bodies
- Financial Arrangements - contributions, trust fund.

Within this framework of the Regional Seas programme, UNEP has assisted the States in the Northwest Pacific region (Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation), in establishing and implementing the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP).

NOWPAP, or, in full, "Action Plan for the Protection, Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region" was adopted at the First Intergovernmental Meeting in 1994, following a series of meetings of experts and National Focal Points that started as early as 1991. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not yet participated in NOWPAP activities but has been invited to join the Action Plan. The overall goal of the adopted Action Plan is 'the wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment so as to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region's, while regions sustainability for future generation'.

In order to achieve this important goal the NOWPAP member states have adopted seven areas of priority activities:

- NOWPAP 1** - establishment of a comprehensive database and information management;
- NOWPAP 2** - survey of national environmental legislation, objectives, strategies and policies;
- NOWPAP 3** - establishment of a collaborative, regional

monitoring programme;

**NOWPAP 4** - development of effective measures for regional co-operation in marine pollution preparedness and response;

**NOWPAP 5** - establishment of Regional Activity Centers and their network;

**NOWPAP 6** - public awareness raising on the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environment; and -

**NOWPAP 7** - assessment and management of land-based activities.

Activity NOWPAP 6 was almost completed by the establishment of the four Regional Activity Centers in the region:

**DIN/RAC**, Beijing - Data and Information Network Regional Activity Center, to support the implementation of NOWPAP 1;

**POM/RAC**, Vladivostok - Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center, to support the implementation of NOWPAP 3;

**CEA/RAC**, Toyama, Japan - Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center, to support the implementation of NOWPAP 3;

**MER/RAC**, Taejon, R. Korea - Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and R Response Regional Activity Center, to support the implementation of NOWPAP 4;

MER/RAC, based in Taejon Republic of Korea, is the most advanced and established RAC among NOWPAP Activity Centers. MER/RAC is based in KRISO/KORDI which is the Korean Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering/KORDI, an institute that provides excellent facilities and infra-structure for the development of regional activities related to Oil Spill Emergencies, Preparedness and Response. MER/RAC has successfully organized several regional activities in NOWPAP for several years, and I have no doubt that it will continue to do so with efficiency and reliability.

At present, IMO (International Maritime Organization), being the secretariat for the International Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response and Cooperation Convention (OPRC, 1990), and

UNEP, are cooperating in assisting NOWPAP member States, to develop the “**NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan**” as well as other activities which fall under the NOWPAP/4 activity.

NOWPAP is currently engaged in the process of establishing its Regional Coordinating Unit. Following the decision of the 6<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting (Tokyo, 5-6 December 2000), the RCU will be co-hosted by Japan and the Republic of Korea. The RCU will have two offices, with an equal status, in Toyama and Pusan. The position of the Coordinator of NOWPAP will rotate every four years between these offices, and the Deputy Coordinator will be posted in the other office respectively. For the first four years, the Coordinator will be posted in Toyama and the Deputy in Pusan.

UNEP has been requested by the member states to function as interim secretariat for NOWPAP until the establishment of a Regional Coordinating Unit, hopefully in 2002.

As the Coordinator of the Regional Seas programme in UNEP, Nairobi, I am pleased and honored to act as the interim coordinator for NOWPAP. I am extremely impressed by the professional, collegial and friendly atmosphere prevailing between all the people who are responsible for the implementation of NOWPAP in the four countries. I hope that, in a mutual effort of all member states, we shall be able to finalize the process of hiring the staff for the two offices and the negotiations regarding the establishment of the two RCU offices as soon as possible.

It is my pleasure and honor to send greetings to you through the first issue of the **NOWPAP MER/RAC Newsletter**. I hope that MER/RAC will be a dynamic, productive and efficient Regional Activity Centre (RAC) that will contribute much to NOWPAP success. I can promise that on our side, here in UNEP Nairobi, we shall do everything we can to assist in this very important mission.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of NOWPAP Forum on Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response, Qingdao, People's Republic of China, 15-18 May 2001

**T**he Fourth Meeting of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) Forum on Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response was held in Qingdao, the People's Republic of China from 15 to 18 May 2001. The Forum Meetings are held in order to implement the NOWPAP/4 project activities, more specifically to: (i) exchange information on marine pollution preparedness and response; (ii) develop a NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan; and (iii) develop a regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on preparedness and response.

The Forum Meetings have been held periodically from 1997, with participation from the following States in the Northwest Pacific region : Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MER/RAC) have jointly acted as secretariat for these Meetings.

The main achievements of the Fourth Forum Meeting were as follows:

(i) The meeting decided that a NOWPAP MER/RAC Focal Points Meeting should be periodically organized at MER/RAC (Taejon, Republic of Korea) each year in May. The Fifth Meeting will therefore be held at MER/RAC in May 2002.

(ii) The meeting agreed to hold an Experts Meeting in Japan (or alternatively at MER/RAC) later this year, in order to finalize the draft NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the related draft MOU.

(iii) The meeting also agreed on the modified MER/RAC workplan, activities, budget and timetable for the 2002/2003 biennium. These will now be put forward for approval to the Seventh NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting to be held late in 2001.

The meeting also reviewed the progress made to date and identified the need for on-going work, which includes the

gathering of information in the field of marine pollution preparedness, response and cooperation in the NOWPAP region, such as (1) Focal Points, (2) information systems on relevant equipment and expertise, (3) joint training and exercise, (4) identification of source of existing fate and effects of oil pollution, (5) environmental sensitivity maps, (6) oil spill prediction models, (7) oil dispersants, (8) bioremediation and other clean-up technologies, and (9) others.

Mr. Darko Domovic, Technical Expert of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), was invited to introduce the regional cooperation system which exists in the Mediterranean Sea region, as this could serve as a good example for MER/RAC.



Prior to the meeting, on 14 May 2001, a field demonstration on marine oil spill response equipment, crude oil terminals, among others was held near Jiaozhou Bay by the Shandong Maritime Safety Administration and Qingdao Port Authority, People's Republic of China.

The working atmosphere during the meeting was productive, professional and friendly and a spirit of co-operation and collaboration between the countries prevailed. All participants expressed their satisfaction regarding the achievements of the meeting, and viewed this as an important step towards establishing a mechanism for preparedness, response and co-operation in the NOWPAP region.

## Experts Meeting to be held this coming November in Japan

An Experts Meeting will be held in Japan in November of this year in order to finalize the draft NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the related draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This meeting will bring together two experts from each of the NOWPAP member States (one technical expert and another legal expert) along with relevant experts from non-governmental organizations. The main purpose of the Regional Plan is to establish operational procedures for facilitating cooperation between countries when faced with a major oil spill in the NOWPAP region. A MOU is needed for

formally establishing the regional co-operation between NOWPAP member States in accordance with the OPRC 90 Convention.

The Experts Meeting will finalize the draft of the Regional Plan taking into account the comments and proposed amendments received from the member States during and after the Fourth Forum Meeting.

The draft regional MOU is also expected to be finalized at the Experts Meeting based on a single draft MOU which takes into account the two existing draft documents submitted by Japan and

Korea and taking into account the comments made by the other NOWPAP member States.

The final draft Plan and draft MOU as modified by the Experts Meeting will be submitted to the next NOWPAP MER/RAC Focal Points Meeting (May 2002) for approval and the NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (in late 2002) for adoption.

## Announcement from MER/RAC

Welcome to the first issue of the NOWPAP MER/RAC Newsletter! This newsletter will be published twice a year, and is distributed free of charge. For additional copies of this Newsletter or if you would like to be placed on the mailing list for this Newsletter please contact MER/RAC at the following address: nowpap@kriso.re.kr. Alternatively, should you wish to have more information about our activities or have information that you would like to disseminate to the experts and relevant authorities of the NOWPAP countries, please contact MER/RAC. Suggestions are also welcome, simply e-mail us.

### NOWPAP MER/RAC

Northwest Pacific Action Plan  
Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Regional Activity Centre

established at  KRISO/KORDI

P.O. Box 23, Yusung, Taejeon, 305-600, Republic of Korea.  
Tel : +82 2 868 7260, Fax : +82 2 868 7738  
E-mail : nowpap@kriso.re.kr