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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION**  
(of UNESCO)

**Thirty-first Session of the IOC Executive Council**  
Paris, 17-27 November 1998

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**GIPME ACTIVITIES 1997-1998**

**Agenda Item 5.8.2**

The first meeting of a GIPME Group of Experts on Sediment Quality Guidelines met at IMO Headquarters, London, in May 1997, and discussed approaches to the establishment of sediment quality guidelines for marine environmental protection applications. The workshop report has been issued by IMO. A further workshop is planned for early 1999 to develop specific approaches for applications under the London Convention 1972, and for determining sediment regimes essentially reflecting natural conditions.

As a co-sponsoring agency, IOC continued to contribute, through GIPME, to the GESAMP activities in general and to the activities of the GESAMP Working Group on Marine Environmental Assessments, in particular. This group is charged with the preparation of: biennial statements on the conditions of the marine environment, the first one to be issued in 1998; a global assessment of the state of the marine environment from the perspective of land-based activities for the purposes of the GPA to be completed in 1999; and, a new major comprehensive assessment of the state of the marine environment to be completed in 2002. The first biennial review is in draft form and was considered during an editorial meeting 2-14 August, 1998. The Land-Based Sources Review is in various stages of drafting. It comprises 7 Chapters of which Chapters 4,5 and 6 already exist in draft form. Revisions of these chapters and first drafts of other chapters will be prepared in concert with the GEF Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), which is due to start in fall 1998, under a Core Team established in Kalmar, Sweden.

There is a plethora of other regional assessments underway, either for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities or other regional purposes. Although these are all relevant to the various global assessments being undertaken by GESAMP and GIWA, there is a need for increased knowledge and follow-up of these activities from the IOC perspective. GIPME has been paying increased attention to the conduct of these assessments and, will use them to develop future regional plans, especially for MARPOLMON.

The co-operation between IOC and SIDA in matters related to marine pollution has allowed GIPME to undertake regional assessments of various pollutants in the Caribbean, East Africa, WESTPAC and to a minor extent West Africa. A major assessment of the State of Pollution of the Caribbean was undertaken during 1997. The basis for this synthesis was the co-operation between IOC and UNEP regional activities in the Caribbean, through the CEPPOL Programme.

GIPME continues its involvement in the ICES-IOC-IMO Working Group on Ballast Water.

It was decided at the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly of IOC that GIPME is the appropriate IOC Programme to implement the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) pilot projects of the Health of the Oceans Module in full consultation with the GOOS Project Office, the GOOS Steering Committee and the relevant GOOS Panel (Resolution XIX-4). The first specific action taken by GIPME in response to this decision was the implementation of a HOTO Pilot Project in Brazil that is entitled "Rapid Assessment of Marine Pollution: a HOTO Pilot Project in South America". The project aims to test and provide easy-to-use, inexpensive, chemical and biological markers that can be used to assess and improve environmental management of developing

countries. The techniques being devised will provide cost-effective screening alternatives to more complex procedures currently used in Europe and the USA. As part of the project, newly validated techniques are being introduced into Brazil, together with all the necessary equipment and training. Outputs will include fully validated techniques and manuals. The monitoring approach holds significant promise for the future implementation of the HOTO Strategic Plan, and the rapid assessment methods are expected to provide simple and inexpensive approaches to global marine pollution monitoring. They will also enhance the level and scope of national/regional participation in GOOS. This HOTO Pilot Project will be carried out in close coordination with C-GOOS.

The Health of the Ocean Panel met in Singapore in 1997, to discuss follow-up to the Strategic Plan for HOTO and the development of regional pilot projects. Blueprints for several regional HOTO pilot projects were presented and discussed. Also during this meeting two HOTO intersessional activities were commissioned: (i) Capacity Building and Indicators for Sustainable Change and Modeling and (ii) the proposal for the NOWPAP-3 was reviewed by a sub-panel of HOTO for the purpose of evaluating its scientific content and applicability for assisting in reaching HOTO goals, particularly with regard to the implementation of pilot projects. It was determined that the proposal is a credible document, with few suggestions being made to strengthen it, and it indeed was well focused in providing the necessary framework within which to have a HOTO pilot project implemented in the NOWPAP region. Finally, both the GIPME and the HOTO Panels await developments concerning the IOC Black Sea Regional Committee so as to take further steps in implementing a pilot project in the region.

Pursuant to Resolution 4 of the 19<sup>th</sup> IOC Assembly, the *modus operandi* of GIPME will differ somewhat from previous practice. GIPME Programme activities will be steered by a GIPME Expert Scientific Advisory Group (GESAG), instead of the GIPME Officers and the original Groups of Experts GEMSI, GEEP and GESREM, which have now been disbanded. This new arrangement sanctioned by Resolution XIX-4, has yet to be put into operation. It will start in late 1998 when the GESAG meeting will be convened to review the entire programme and its activities. Specific attention will be paid to the needs of the Global Programme of Action and GIPME programmatic contributions particularly the clearing house mechanism.

GIPME contributed, through IOC co-sponsorship, to the Second International Conference on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology held in Hong Kong during 10-14 June 1998, and the international seminar and workshop on "Metocean Services for Marine Pollution Emergency Response Operations" held in Townsville, Australia, during 13-17 July 1998, both of which were dedicated to the 1998 International Year of the Ocean.

Support has been given to six scientists from developing countries and two experts to participate in the International Symposium on Marine Pollution (Monaco, 5-9 October 1998) which is a contribution to the 1998 International Year of the Ocean organized by IAEA and co-sponsored by IOC, UNEP and IMO.

IOC support for the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory at the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory, Monaco, is continued for the production of Methods Manuals and Reference Materials.

The MESL Laboratory is expected to continue to provide assistance primarily by generating information for marine pollution assessments and by building technical capacity of regional laboratories towards this goal. This assistance is therefore crucial to the regional activities carried under GIPME through MARPOLMON.

The co-operation of IOC with UNEP in the context of the MED POL Programme has been maintained. In addition to the co-ordination of nine MED POL research projects involving eutrophication, remote sensing and modeling of pollutant dispersion and water quality, IOC participated in the meetings of MED POL National Co-ordinators, MAP National Focal Points and the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development. Through GIPME, the standard reference material bank for organic contaminants and trace metals at IAEA/MEL in Monaco were developed and eight reference methods were prepared or revised in co-operation with IAEA/MEL. The standards are available cost-free to all institutes participating in MED POL Programme. On a case by case basis and depending on availability, these standard reference materials are also provided cost free to other GIPME related activities. Such was the case in March 1998, for an International Mussel Watch Training Workshop that was convened in Thailand at the Environmental Research and Training Center.

## ANNEX I

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **CEPPOL** “Joint IOC-UNEP Marine Pollution Assessment and Control Programme for the Wider Caribbean Region”;
- **GEEP** “Group of Experts on Effects of Pollutants”;
- **GEF** “Global Environment Facility”;
- **GEMSI** “Group of Experts on Methods, Standards and Intercalibration”;
- **GESAG** “Scientific Advisory Group of Experts”;
- **GESAMP** “Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection”;
- **GESREM** “Group of Experts on Effects of Pollutants”;
- **GIPME** “Global Investigation of Pollution in the Marine Environment”;
- **GIWA** “Global International Waters Assessment”;
- **GOOS** “Global Ocean Observing System”;
- **HOTO** “Health of the Oceans”;
- **IAEA-MEL** “International Atomic Energy Agency-Marine Environment Laboratory”;
- **ICES** “International Council for the Exploration of the Sea”;
- **IMO** “International Maritime Organization”;
- **MARPOLMON** “Marine Pollution Monitoring System”;
- **NOWPAP** “North-West Pacific Action Plan”;
- **SIDA** “Swedish International Development Authority”;
- **UNEP** “United Nations Environment Programme”;
- **WESTPAC** “IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific”;