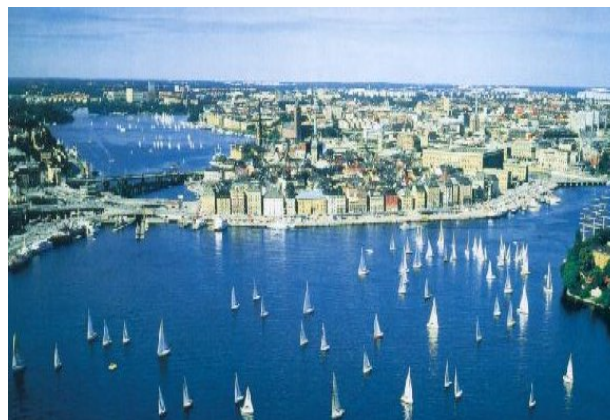


THE STOCKHOLM STATEMENT

ON INTERACTION OF LAND ACTIVITIES, FRESHWATER AND ENCLOSED COASTAL SEAS

BACKGROUND

The ongoing degradation of coastal seas and large inland lakes and rivers constitutes a major threat to global quality of life and to coastal and marine ecosystems. Nearly three-fourths of the world's population live within 100 km of the sea-coast where their physical as well as economic well-being depends on such activities as fishing, shipping, tourism, recreation, farming and industries. Some 80 percent of the pollutants responsible for this degradation are carried with rivers and groundwater flows to the sea and originate from



land-based human activities in the drainage basins of rivers that discharge into coastal waters. Also pollution caused by shipping, mining and drilling, as for oil exploitation, are causing concern.

Past Conferences on the Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas (EMECS) have resulted in a network linking many scientists and others studying enclosed coastal seas. A similar network has been created through previous Stockholm Water Symposia. The Joint 7th Stockholm Water Symposium/3rd EMECS Conference 10 - 15 August 1997 in Stockholm brought together over one thousand participants from these two networks of respectively marine and freshwater specialists.

The Joint Conference participants, representing over eighty countries and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, expressed deep concern about the difficulties experienced around the world as nations attempt to cope with this threat to our planetary life support system. The Conference reviewed the experience and provided a forum for the dissemination of lessons learned. The application of these lessons and the development of management innovations is vital.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Stockholm Water Symposium/EMECS Conference recommends that all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other policy and decision making bodies take action aimed at reducing the pollution loads to safe levels, to enclosed coastal seas, based on the following four principles:

Principle no 1. Pursue an holistic approach

We must see the drainage basin and corresponding coastal sea as a dynamic whole, treating them as

one complex system. The physical linkage between drainage area and coastal sea through the mobility of water - a unique solvent that moves continuously from land to sea - demands an integrated approach to land use and water management. A systematic approach to the land-sea complex will facilitate diagnosis of physical and chemical problems, and hasten identification and implementation of remedies through holistic and proactive management.

Principle no 2. Improve understanding

We must base the long-term sustainable management of coastal resources on the access to synthesized information about their inherent ecological, social, economic, and political importance. Finding effective solutions to prevent further pollution and restore ecosystems will depend on identifying the causal chain between destructive and polluting human activities in the drainage basin - and the driving forces behind them - and the degradation of coastal ecosystems. Only then can we reverse the unfortunate social and economic impacts that result from misuse of our resources.

Principle no 3. Develop an active dialogue

We must base our decisions and actions on specific regional targets, and on realistic assessment of social, economic, technical, and professional resources in individual countries. International cooperation among concerned countries, and administrative responsibilities for the enclosed coastal seas should be considered as important factors to prevent continued degradation. Decisions will thus demand careful priority-setting, a process that in turn requires constructive dialogue and exchange of information between major stakeholder groups: citizens, industry leaders, farmers, fisheries, resource managers and decision-makers. Non-governmental organizations could function as active bridgebuilders facilitating regional cooperation among stakeholders, municipalities and countries surrounding the world's coastal seas.

Principle no 4. Act locally - Think regionally

We must pursue the implementation of needed technical and legal measures on the local level. By targeting activities at the level of sub-basins, while maintaining a focus on ecosystem-wide goals based on an integrated land-sea approach, we can substantially improve efficiency and success. Building awareness among politicians, administrators, and the general public will be a crucial component in these efforts. Educational measures play an important role to achieve these goals.

FINAL COMMENTS

The participants of the Joint Conference have finally taken note, with satisfaction, of an opportunity for further dialogue between freshwater and marine specialists at the Fourth EMECS Conference to be held in Antalya, Turkey, in November 1999, jointly with the Fourth International Conference on the Mediterranean Coastal Environment (MEDCOAST 99).