



SOME NOTES ON REGIONAL ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Elisabeth Mann Borgese

1. The Regional Seas Programme provides the most comprehensive institutional framework for regional cooperation in the seas and oceans. Initiated by UNEP following the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, it was one of the success stories of the United Nations system.
2. However, it necessarily reflected the sectoral approach which still prevailed in the early 'seventies. Stockholm generated the establishment of sectoral Ministries of the Environment at the national level, the Regional Seas Programme for the Protection of the Environment at the regional level, and UNEP, as a sectoral programme, at the global level.
3. Between 1972 (Stockholm) and 1992 (Rio) global awareness moved from a sectoral to a comprehensive approach, from the protection of the environment to sustainable development.
4. This change has a number of institutional implications which the parties to Regional Seas Conventions, Protocols, and Action Plans have now to face. A most promising beginning has already been made with the revision of the Barcelona Convention and Action Plan in 1995.
5. The major institutional implications are seven, and they are interconnected: They affect: (i) The mandate of the Conventions; (ii) the geographical scope of the Conventions; (iii) integrated coastal management including water management; megacities and coastal villages; (iv) the basis of representation at the Convention organs; (v) the executive bodies of the Convention regimes; (vi) the establishment of regional commissions for sustainable development; (vii) linkages (local-national-regional-global).
6. The change from a sectoral to a comprehensive approach, the new tasks arising from the implementation of Chapter 17 (and others) of Agenda 21, as well as the new emphasis on integrated coastal management, clearly broadens the

mandate of the Conventions. This mandate now must cover all peaceful uses of the regional sea, including fisheries management, surveillance and enforcement; shipping, minerals and offshore oil, as well as coastal management, tourism, port management, etc.

7. The bi-annual meeting of parties of the Convention must be restructured so as to reflect this changed mandate and represent all these sectors, both intranationally (all ministries or departments concerned) and internationally/regionally (e.g., regional offices of FAO, IOC, etc.) The UN Regional Commissions and regional banks, as well as the nongovernmental sector, should also be included. The Parties to the Barcelona Convention have already initiated this development.

8. Integrated coastal management covers an eco-system including the EEZ on the seaward side and the watershed on the landward side. It necessarily includes the management of rivers which may originate in land-locked countries. It will therefore become necessary to include land-locked countries of the hinterland in the membership of regional seas programmes.

9. Integrated coastal management necessarily includes integrated water management. Fresh-water and sea-water systems in the coastal zone interact. The recent reorganisation of these systems within UNEP is a promising first step in this direction.

10. Coastal management must be people oriented. Most people in the coastal areas live in megacities; a shrinking number lives in poor coastal villages, mostly fishing villages. The problems of urban sprawl and megacities and the problem of poverty in coastal villages must be tackled together. One cannot be solved without the other.

11. The problems of megacities are threefold: (a) the environmental impact of the cities on the marine environment; (b) the impact of possible sea-level rise on coastal megacities, especially on the poor living in shanty towns; (c) ways and means of including the megacity people in planning and decision making for sustainable development in the coastal area.

12. The problems of poor coastal villages are development of human resources and access to technologies that must be environmentally, socially, and culturally sustainable. The so-called ecotechnologies introduced in the so called biovillages are a good example.

13. Integrated coastal management requires, as a complement, integrated regional management. A comprehensive, integrated system at the national level and a sectoral system at the regional level cannot interact effectively.

14. The broadened mandate of regional seas conventions must include the establishment of regional systems for technology cooperation, in line with the mandates of the Law of the Sea Convention, the Biodiversity Convention, the Climate Convention and other recent Conventions and Agreements.

15. The identification of "new sources of funding" is a requirement for effective regional development; the establishment of a small tax on tourists, and the possibilities of generating synergisms between public and private funding at the regional level should be seriously investigated.

16. The broadened mandate of the Regional Seas Conventions requires the establishment of stronger Executive bodies. "Bureaus" with a membership *elected* on the basis of fair geographic representation by the meetings of States Parties -- as already provided for by the revised Barcelona Convention -- could be one solution. An elected *Regional Commission for Sustainable Development* might be another approach. The approach taken by the parties to the Barcelona Convention, an elected Bureau as executive body plus the establishment of a Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development raises the risk of duplication of efforts. A Regional Commission for Sustainable Development would seem to be a most suitable Executive Body for a broadened Regional Seas Programme.

17. Compatibility between national and regional laws, regulations, and management plans are essential for the functioning of the whole systems. This has been stressed in the case of straddling stocks and highly migratory stocks in the high seas; it applies to the making of an integrated policy as a whole. This requires *appropriate linkages between national and regional decision-making*.

Such linkages are equally required between the regional level and the global level of the United Nations (UN Commission for Sustainable Development, General Assembly), as recently stressed by Dr. Nitin Desai.

18. Regional development from a sectoral to a comprehensive approach is a necessity for the implementation of all the decisions taken at the Rio Conference. It is essential for the implementation of Agenda 21; for the implementation of the decisions taken at the Barbados Conference on Small Island Development States (SIDS); for the implementation of the Agreement on Straddling Stocks and Highly Migratory Stocks in the High Seas; for the implementation of the Global Action Plan of the Washington Conference on land-based sources of pollution; it is equally essential for the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace.

19. Regional Seas differ greatly among them, with regard to resource bases, social and economic development, cultures, and institutional infrastructures. Different regions therefore will adopt different development strategies and institutional arrangements. The seven points raised at the beginning of these notes, however, may be globally applicable.

20. Given this central importance of regional development, the Independent World Commission on the Ocean might include in its recommendations the calling of a series of regional meetings on the question of moving regional seas programmes from a sectoral to a comprehensive approach -- culminating in a global conference on regional cooperation and development.