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The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment  
of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

The Action Plan  
for the Conservation of the Marine  
Environment and Coastal Areas in  
the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

1982



The definitive legal document is written in Arabic. This translation should only be seen as a guide to the text in the original document

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# The Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (1982)

## Introduction

1. The conservation of the marine environment and coastal areas of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden for the benefit of the present and future generations will be the main objective of the Action Plan which sets forth a framework for an environmentally sound and comprehensive approach to coastal area development.

2. Recognizing the variety of problems and the numerous ongoing activities, the Action Plan has been based upon:

- 2.1 The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme initiated by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) following the preparatory meeting organised by UNESCO at the request of ALECSO and held at Bremerhaven, FRG, 22-23rd October 1974 which included besides UNESCO, experts from specialised institutes in FRG, U.S.A, U.K, France, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
  - 2.2 Working papers and resolutions of the Jeddah First Expert Meeting, 25 Nov - 1 Dec. 1974, organized by ALECSO .
  - 2.3 The Plan of Action for 1975 resulting from the Jeddah First Expert Meeting, and the contributions and assistance from ALECSO, UNEP, IUCN, UNESCO (Marine Science Division) and IMCO.
  - 2.4 Working papers, reports, resolutions and recommendations of the Jeddah II Conference held by ALECSO in Jeddah, 12-18 January 1978.
  - 2.5 The Jeddah 1976 Declaration.
  - 2.6 Final Act of the Kuwait Regional Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Areas, Kuwait 15-23 April, 1978.
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- 2.7 Working papers and recommendations of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Coordination Board and Directing Board (formed by ALECSO) at their successive meetings in Cairo (5-11 Nov.1975), Amman (30 Aug.- 5 Sep.1976), Sanaa (12-17 Feb.1977), Mogadishu (24-29 Sept.1977) and Khartoum (23-28 Dec.1978).
  - 2.8 The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Expert Meeting organized by ALECSO Tunis (10-13 Feb.1980) to review the Programme policy.
  - 2.9 The Draft Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment and the Draft Protocol Concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, as prepared by the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Legal and Environmental Expert Meeting held in Jeddah (10-14 Jan.1981).
3. The Action Plan aims to achieve the following:
- 3.1 Assessment of the state of the environment including socio-economic development activities related to environmental quality and of the needs of the Region in order to assist Governments to cope properly with environmental problems particularly those concerning the marine environment.
  - 3.2 Development of guidelines for the management of those activities which have an impact on environmental quality or on the protection and use of renewable marine resources on a sustainable basis.
  - 3.3 Development of legal instruments providing the legal basis for co-operative efforts to protect and develop the Region on a sustainable basis.
  - 3.4 Supporting measures including national and regional institutional mechanisms and structures needed for the successful implementation of the Action Plan.
4. For this document the Region includes the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Gulf of Suez, the Suez Canal to its connection with the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Aden as bounded by the following rhumb-lines:
- 4.1 From Ras Dharbat Ali“(Lat.16° 39’ N, Long.53° 03’ E).  
thence to a point (Lat.16° 00’ N, Long.53° 25’ E).  
thence to a point (Lat.12° 40’ N, Long.55° 00’ E) lying E.N.E.  
of Socotra Island, thence to Ras Hafun (Lat. 10° 26’ N, Long. 51° 25’ E).
  - 4.2 Other areas, adjacent to those described in item (1) above and lying within the national jurisdiction of a Contracting Party may upon request made to the Organization established pursuant to Article XVI of the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment be subjected to the application of the Convention or activities resulting therefrom.
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- 4.3 The Region does not include internal waters of the Contracting Parties unless otherwise stated in the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment or any of its protocols.
- 4.4 The coastal area to be covered by the Action Plan will be identified by the relevant Governments of the Region on an adhoc basis depending on the type of activities to be carried out within the framework of the Action Plan. Nevertheless,coastal areas belonging to the Contracting Parties which are not covered by the Action Plan should not be a source of pollution.
5. All components of the Action Plan are interdependant and provide a framework for comprehensive action to contribute to both the protection and the continued development of the eco-region. No component will be an end in itself.

Each activity is intended to assist the Governments of the Region to improve the quality of the information on which environmental management policies are based.

6. The conservation of the marine environment and coastal areas is considered as the axis of the Action Plan; and it is intended that measures for marine and coastal environmental protection and development should lead to the promotion of human health and well-being as the ultimate goal of the Action Plan.

7. The Action Plan is intended to meet the environmental needs and to enhance the environmental capabilities of the Region and is aimed primarily toward implementation through coordinated national and regional activities. To achieve this goal, an intensive training programme should be formulated in the early phases of the implementation of the Action Plan.

8. A general description of the various components of the Action Plan is given in the following paragraphs.

## I - Environmental Assessment

9. Environmental assessment is one of the basic activities which will underlie and facilitate the implementation of the other componenets of the Action plan.

10. The identification of the present quality of the marine environment and the factors currently influencing its quality and having an impact on human health will be given priority together with an assessment of expected developments.

11. Although some basic data on the marine environment has been collected by some institutions in the Region, much remains to be done in the Region as a whole. Therefore, a coordinated basic and applied regional marine sciences programme including a marine meteorological programme will be formulated as basis for the protection of the marine environment of the Region. In formulating the operational details of these programmes,planned and ongoing national and regional programmes will be taken into account.

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12. The following programmes are recognized as components of the co-ordinated regional environmental assessment programme:

12.1 Survey of national capabilities of the Region in the field of marine sciences including marine meteorology covering:

- (a) Scientific and administrative institutions.
- (b) Information centres and data sources.
- (c) Research facilities and equipment.
- (d) Manpower.
- (e) Existing environmental laws and regulations.
- (f) Ongoing and planned activities.
- (g) Publications.

12.2 Assessment of geological and geophysical processes such as sedimentation contributing to, or modifying, the fate of pollutants in the Region, and their impact on human health, marine ecosystems and human activities, as well as effects of coastal and deep sea engineering and mining .

12.3 Assessment of the origin and magnitude of oil pollution in the Region comprising base-line studies on the sources of oil pollution and the transport and distribution of oil and petroleum hydrocarbon pollution.

12.4 Assessment of the magnitude of pollutants affecting human health and marine ecosystems of the Region consisting of:

- (a) survey of land-based sources of industrial and municipal wastes discharged directly or indirectly into the sea or reaching it through the atmosphere.
- (b) studies on the impact of industrial and municipal wastes on human health including micro-organisms.
- (c) research on effects of pollutants and other human activities, such as dredging and land reclamation on important marine species, communities and ecosystems.
- (d) base-line studies and monitoring of the levels of selected pollutants, in particular heavy metals, in marine organisms.

12.5 Assessment of factors relevant to the ecology of the Region and to the exploitation of its living resources including:

- (a) survey of environmental parameters of the coasts of the Region, including floral cover, faunal distribution, weather conditions and community habitations and dissemination of data collected.
  - (b) biology of coral reefs and marine species especially those of commercial importance such as fisheries including crustaceans, molluscs and their stock assessment and the biology of other marine organisms threatened by extinction
  - (c) plankton productivity and distribution.
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13. The programmes listed in paragraph 12 are interdisciplinary and interrelated in nature. Therefore, while preparing the operational details of each programme, due attention should be paid to their close coordination in order to avoid duplication.

14. The priorities to be assigned to the activities listed in paragraph 12 will be determined by the Governments of the Region taking into account the present level of development in the Region and the pressing need to provide reliable and comparable data on which sound management decisions can rest.

15. The agreed programmes will be executed, primarily, through existing national institutions within the framework of regional cooperation keeping in mind that for some projects a training programme should be formulated. The assistance of experts from outside the Region might be required in the initial phases of some projects but giving priority to local experts.

16. Operational details of each programme will be developed primarily by experts nominated by the Governments of the Region. The execution of approved programme shall not begin except after due adoption by Governments of documents containing operational details and nomination of national institutions participating in implementation.

## 11 - Environmental Management

17. Continuous socio-economic development can be achieved on a sustainable basis if environmental considerations are taken into account. To assist the Governments of the Region in the development of appropriate policies and strategies for conservation of the marine environment of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the Action Plan should aim to carry out the following preparatory activities:

- 17.1 Preparation and updating of a directory of Government-designated institutions available in the Region and active in fields related to the environmental management components of the Action Plan.
- 17.2 Assessment of present and future development activities and their major environmental impact in order to evaluate the degree of their influence on the environment and to find appropriate measures to either eliminate or reduce any damaging effects which they may have.
- 17.3 Identification of the most relevant ongoing national, regional or internationally supported development projects which have beneficial environmental effects such as various FAO projects for fisheries development or environmental health activities and projects sponsored by WHO or by UNIDO assistance programmes on the treatment of industrial wastes. The most significant of these projects should be strengthened and expanded to serve as demonstration and training sites on a regional basis.

18. Furthermore in view of the priorities and needs of the Region, the following cooperative programmes relevant to the management of regional environmental problems stemming from

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national development activities will be undertaken:

- 18.1.a. Rational exploitation and management of marine living resources on a sustainable basis.
- 18.1.b. The establishment of aquatic and land protected areas such as marine protected areas e.g., coral reef protected areas, wetlands, marine parks and other protected areas
- 18.2 Assistance in development and inter-coordination of national capabilities in science and engineering knowledge needed for regional environmental protection
- 18.3 Strengthening the national public health services and their coordinations wherever trans-boundary interests require it
- 18.4 Coordination of national water management policies including community water supply and water quality control, whenever they may have impact on the marine environment of the Region
- 18.5 Development of principles and guidelines for coastal area development and management through workshops and seminars including those on environmental impact assessment
- 18.6 Formulation of national contingency plans for combating oil pollution.
- 18.7 Upkeep of records of pollution incidents by oil or other harmful substances in the Region including information on the impact of such pollution on the marine environment.

19. As part of the activities and programmes for regional cooperation mentioned in paragraphs 17 and 18, an extensive training programme should be developed for personnel from the Region. Such a programme may be executed through training at existing national, regional or international institutions ready to offer their facilities.

20. All concerned parties should cooperate in lending complete support by devoting adequate resources to systematic and regular campaigns for public awareness of environmental issues in the Region. Thus conservation and enhancement of marine and coastal environment can be achieved.

### III- Institutional And Financial Arrangements

21. In establishing institutional arrangements for carrying out the Action Plan, a mechanism should be formed which utilizes, to the greatest possible extent, the national capabilities available in the Region and the capabilities of existing regional and international organisations and coordination bodies which would deal with national institutions through the appropriate national authorities of the States concerned. Where necessary, national institutions should be strengthened so that they may participate actively and effectively in the various programmes.

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22. ALECSO will be responsible for such interim arrangements as may be required for the achievement of the objectives of the Action Plan. Such interim arrangements include the continuation of the existence of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Interim Administration, for the purpose of the implementation and supervision of the Action Plan until the permanent Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment is established. In order to fulfill this task the Interim Administration should have adequate professional and supporting staff.

23. The Interim Administration shall be responsible for the overall co-ordination of the Action Plan and other matters arising from the Convention and its protocols. The Interim Administration should convene annual meetings of the Interim Council for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment to adopt operational details of the Action Plan, to set project priorities and to supervise implementation. The Interim Council shall be formed of representatives of the Contracting Parties nominated by their national authorities.

The Director General of ALECSO shall inform the Contracting Parties of the formation of said Interim Council.

24. The Executive Director of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme will invite governmental expert Groups nominated by the Contracting Parties, to meet from time to time, to review progress achieved pursuant to the recommendations set forth in the Action Plan and to the resolutions of the Interim Council for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, and for the purpose of advising the development of additional activities.

25. The Governments of the Region agree to the necessity of establishing a Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre. The Centre should have primarily a coordinating role in exchange of information, training programmes and monitoring. The possibility of the Centre initiating operations to combat pollution by oil and other harmful substances may be considered at a later stage in accordance with article III of the Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency.

26. Responsibilities should be transferred from the Interim Administration to the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment as soon as this Organization is established.

27. It is proposed that the programme be financed by contributions by the Governments to be estimated on the basis of mutual agreement and supplemented, especially in the initial stages, by assistance that could be made available from regional and international bodies. The ultimate aim should be to make the programme self-supporting within the regional context, not only by developing institutional capabilities to perform the required tasks, but also by supporting training, provision of equipment and other forms of assistance from within the Region.

#### IV - Legal Component

28. Regional legal agreements provide a fundamental basis for regional cooperation to protect the marine environment in the Region. Recognizing the importance of sound environmental development of

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the Region, the Governments agree to the need for early ratification of the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment.

29. It is recommended that ALECSO should, in cooperation with the Governments concerned, convene inter-governmental groups to prepare additional protocols which will include:

- 29.1 Pollution from land based sources.
- 29.2 Pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the sea bed, the continental shelf and the sub soil.
- 29.3 Scientific and technical cooperation in the field of marine environment and coastal areas conservation.
- 29.4 Development, conservation, protection and harmonious utilization of the marine living resources of the Region.
- 29.5 Liability and compensation for damage resulting from pollution of the marine environment.
- 29.6 Any protocol on other subjects found important to the Region during the execution of the Action Plan.

30. Aware of the need to give special protection to the Region against pollution from ships through normal operations or dumping activities, an appeal is made to Governments of the Region to strengthen measures for implementation of the relevant international conventions.

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*In witness whereof*, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed the present Action Plan.

***For the Government of:***

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

The Republic of the Sudan,

The Democratic Republic of Somalia

Palestine

The Republic of Yemen

***Done at*** the city of Jeddah on Saturday 20 Rabi'è Althani 1426 (H) corresponding to 14 February 2005

**Date of ratification of the Action Plan by Member States**

State	Date of Application	Focal Point
Djibouti	2-3-1998	Ministere de L'Environnement du Tourisme et de L'Artisanat
Egypt	31-5-1990	Council of Ministers, Environmental Affairs Agency, Cairo
Jordan	7-9-1988	Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs, Division of Environment
Saudi Arabia	22-5-1985	Meteorology and Environmental Protection Administration, Jeddah
Somalia	1-3-1988	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Transportation, Mogadishu
Sudan	5-6-1984	National Council for Research, Khartoum
Yemen	29-5-1982	University of Sana'a, Sana'a

Entry into force: 20 August 1985. ■

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