



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

PERSGA

# PERSGA Gaining fresh momentum

Regional Shared Vision  
and Confidence Building Programme

RETREAT

22,23 and 24 May 2005  
Aqaba, Jordan

Summery Report





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PERSGA "The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden" is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of the coastal and marine environments in the region.

The Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment (Jeddah Convention), 1982 provides the legal foundation for PERSGA. The Secretariat of the Organization was formally established in Jeddah following the Cairo Declaration of September 1995. The PERSGA member states are: Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.

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This document is a product of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Component of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden - a GEF funded project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, and executed by PERSGA. The Component was lead jointly by Ms. Khulood Tubaishat and Mr. Osama Qurban.

## The retreat was facilitated by LEAD

In order to foster good communication and positive dialogue amongst participants, PERSGA asked LEAD International, in association with Dialogue Matters, to provide impartial:

- Process design and event preparation
- Facilitation of the three-day retreat
- Production of reports.

LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) is an international non-profit organization with a fast growing network of 1600 leaders in more than 80 countries. Our shared mission is to inspire leadership for a sustainable world. LEAD carries out its mission through capacity development and strategic, outcome orientated activities designed to achieve tangible results in sustainable development. These activities are almost always undertaken with trainers and partner organisations. For this Retreat, LEAD worked with Dialogue Matters who design and facilitate stakeholder dialogue in ecological and environmental discussions. To complete the team LEAD and Dialogue Matters worked with local providers of facilitation skills. The team comprised: Lead Facilitator: Diana Pound, Dialogue Matters; Support Facilitator: Gitanjali Bedi, LEAD International; Assistant Facilitators: Ramez Habash, Tulien Zalatimo, Rawan Abaneh, Yara Al-Sharief; and Typist: Tala Qarraien, Insight Design and Solutions.

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# FORWARD

22, 23 and 24 May 2005  
Aqaba, Jordan

Presentation by:

Prof. Ziad Abu-Ghararah  
PERSGA Secretary General



As I mentioned earlier, this retreat's mission is to engage each and every one of you on the institutional level as well as on the individual level in visioning, goal settings and strategic planning for the next era of PERSGA.

This retreat represents the first activity of our initiative, "The Regional Shared Vision and Confidence Building Programme" that was launched during the Sea to Sea Forum which was held in Cairo in February 2005 and endorsed by the implementing agencies of SAP.

It also aims at bringing together national and regional efforts for better environmental governance that develops confidence in regional cooperation under PERSGA and ensures full participation and stakeholder involvement in PERSGA activities.

This Programme is an 'initiative for change' initiated in light of our dedication to reach conclusions and general agreement through a highly participatory process on the architecture of a transformed PERSGA, and move on to set in place the building blocks that will combine towards that transformation

Through this programme we are aiming at building a vision for the future. Our vision for PERSGA is much more than being a secretariat and one national focal point; we regard it as a regional community of institutions and people. It is a system both collaborative and competitive, whose impact is local, regional and global.

We believe that if PERSGA is to be more than just another layer of intergovernmental bureaucracy then it will have to confront other political actors and inter-related issues such as economic development, and engage other stakeholders to formulate a creative dialogue which recognizes the difficulties in balancing national interests with regional ones.

The exit process from the SAP provides recognition that the closure of the programme is not an end, but the beginning of a long-term process to develop regional capacity to proactively engage in issues as they appear, in order to ensure sustainable development of the region's resources.

## A Framework of Action 2005 – 2010

The PERSGA business plan along with the organizational structure of PERSGA were presented and adopted by the Task Force and the PERSGA Council. However, as they are living documents we are aiming at discussing them and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses.

Both of these documents are aligned with the goal of Capacity 2015 to support local governments of the member states in localizing sustainable development planning and management by 2015, and thus operate over a 10-year period.

Therefore, a five year Framework of Action (2006-2010) will be prepared. This framework of action will translate the strategy into on-ground-actions.

We are looking for a comprehensive Framework of Action rather than a sector-specific one that addresses a broad range of land and water use issues; provides a common framework for regional cooperation in addressing the WSSD targets for sustainable coastal and ocean development, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals; provides a regional, national and local platform for multi-sector and interagency cooperation that addresses concrete targets in terms of desired institutional and operational changes as well as social, economic and environmental changes.

The purpose of this retreat is to engage the PERSGA Focal points, task force, experts and professions in interactive dialogue to:

- Build a long-term vision
- Conduct detailed assessment of PERSGA's role, strengths and weaknesses
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the business plan
- Consider how to restructure the organisation to deliver real change
- Agree to the action needed to achieve this 'new architecture'
- Identify land and water based issues
- Agree to a framework for action and the key contents for a five-year plan
- Identify ways of building and maintaining strong stakeholder involvement in PERSGA
- Identify ways of communicating better
- Identify sources of funding

Our desired outcome is

- Better environmental governance
- Greater co-operation, participation and involvement
- Confidence in PERSGA
- Increased ownership of the goals
- Increased commitment to funding and implementation
- Sustainable management of the Red Sea

I also would like to confirm that decisions in the following areas are an indispensable minimum, now, if we are to guarantee and enhance the future relevance and impact and viability of PERSGA:

- Strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms for the implementation of the PERSGA integrated Strategy.
- Adapt the outlines of the PERSGA Framework of Action for 2005- 2010.
- Availability of financial resources and funding mechanisms and opportunities.

To foster good communication and dialogue amongst participants, PERSGA has asked LEAD International to provide impartial facilitation for the three-day retreat.

PERSGA alone cannot achieve the goals sets; it requires the support and encouragement of the countries and all stakeholders. We hope that participants of this retreat when they return to their respective countries encourage the PERSGA focal point to participate more actively in implementing what has been agreed upon.

I thank you in advance for your effective participation and looking forward for a successful results of this event ■

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# PERSGA Retreat 2005

## Summery Report

### Background

The Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) is undergoing a process of change with the existing Strategic Action Programme (SAP) drawing to a close in June 2005. To start the process of participatory strategic planning for the Framework of Action for 2005 – 2010, the Regional Shared Vision and Confidence Building Programme Retreat was held in Aqaba, Jordan on the 22, 23 and 24 May 2005.

The Retreat brought together the PERSGA Secretariat, Task Force members, and other experts and professionals, in an interactive and informal way to build understanding, identify ways to work more effectively together, and propose action. The retreat also included presentations about the work that has been done in other regional seas.

Representatives attended from Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. Members from Somalia were unable to attend due to last minute visa complications. Special guests attended from UNEP-GEF, UNEP RSP & GPA, the Director of PEMSEA and the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO). In total 23 people attended

#### The main purpose of the workshop was to:

- Build a long-term vision
- Assess PERSGA's role, strengths and challenges
- Consider how to restructure the organisation
- Identify sources of funding
- Identify ways of communicating better and of building and maintaining strong stakeholder involvement
- Propose action and the key contents for a five-year plan

The Retreat was professionally designed and impartially facilitated using an approach called 'Stakeholder Dialogue'. Participants were asked to take part in a range of activities that drew out their knowledge, insights, and ideas, and encouraged everyone to have their say. The essence of what was said was recorded and used as the basis of resulting reports.

### The Long-term Vision

At the start of the Retreat people were asked to help form long-term visions for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and for PERSGA itself.

The following two boxes summarise their responses:

It is 2030 and you are standing at the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden delighted with what you see. What do you see?

- Beauty
- The World's Best
- Rich Biodiversity and Healthy Ecosystems
- Protected Areas
- Sustainable Use
- Sustainable Fishing
- Food/Ocean Security and Growth
- Pollution Control
- Management of Navigation
- Integrated and co-operative management
- Implemented regulations and policy
- PERSGA – Well known and Active

It is 2010 and PERSGA as an organization

- is achieving results
- is flexible, efficient, and dynamic
- has a talented and skilled team
- communicates effectively with member countries and stakeholders
- has strong ownership by member countries
- has a good profile internationally, regionally and at the highest level in member states
- is financially sustainable
- promotes good coastal governance and leadership
- is expanding
- is learning

## Persga's Role, Strengths and Challenges

The way that PERSGA and member countries benefit each other is not always clearly perceived so during the Retreat people were asked to explore what these benefits are alongside PERSGA's strengths and challenges.

Participants identified the benefits PERSGA provides member countries as; capacity building, disseminating up to date research and technologies, serving as a hub for the exchange of experience, assisting in mobilising funding, and providing projects. PERSGA also carries out strategic planning for the region and facilitates the implementation of other relevant conventions and protocols. PERSGA plays a key role in linking with other agencies, regional seas and international initiatives, and acts as an advocate on national, regional and international matters.

Member Countries can reciprocate by sharing and owning the vision and supporting PERSGA with political and financial support, information for a regional database, and by investing in regional experts. Member Countries can also seek to facilitate the work of PERSGA within their own countries by promoting and advocating PERSGA at the highest level, strengthening co-operation between ministries, and creating the policy context for investment in the environment.

PERSGA's main strengths are that it has a clear mandate rooted in the Jeddah Convention and has achieved a great deal and accumulated considerable experience. Challenges include the socio-economic, political and environmental diversity in member countries and insufficient capacity in environmental management and understanding across the region. For PERSGA itself, the main challenges were developing an effective organisational structure, sustainable funding and improved communication. All three subjects were explored in more detail within the workshop and are summarised below.

## A New Structure

During the workshop participants developed 3 proposals for a new structure and identified the strengths and weaknesses of each. One was then selected for more detailed discussion and improvements, and presented to the wider group for comment. Following clarification of the roles of a Stakeholder Group and Science Advisory Group, the level of support for the proposed new structure was high. It provides a strong basis for further minor refinements and implementation.

Work groups also proposed ways of improving administrative procedures particularly procurement and human resources.

## Sustainable Funding

Securing long term sustainable funding for PERSGA is of crucial importance. Participants identified the need for a pro-active approach to raise the contribution of member countries and secure ongoing commitment. Time was spent identifying funding organisations but it is recognised that information alone is not enough and a staff member skilled in drafting project proposals and approaching funders is required. The idea of setting up a trust fund or levy was proposed. People also agreed that PERSGA has to demonstrate results and promote success stories so that funders and donors can see value for money, a quality service and the difference PERSGA makes. ■

## Improved Communication

Part of the long-term vision is that there is effective communication in broadly three areas:

- Within PERSGA itself
- By building and maintaining strong stakeholder involvement
- By working together to help focal points build ownership of the PERSGA mission within their own countries

This will take a good database of stakeholders, increased skills within PERSGA, and public relations materials and literature.

## Maintaining Momentum

Throughout the retreat participants were asked to identify key action arising from their discussions and place them on a 5 year plan. Actions fell into three categories:

- Actions that focus on organisational change and improvement
- Actions that focus outwards to member countries and other stakeholders
- Actions that focus on the coastal and marine environment

As the retreat drew to a close people were asked to look at the plan and indicate their level of support for what they saw. Most people supported the content of the plan but with reduction in staff capacity as the current SAP draws to a close, the timeframes over which action was planned require further refinement to ensure that work is prioritised and sensibly planned.

The plan clearly demonstrated that those who took part in the Retreat want to see real and positive change that gives fresh momentum to PERSGA and sets the organisation on course for future success.

## Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form. The feedback was very positive and the majority of people gave the Retreat high scores of 9 out of 10 or 10 out of 10 in response to a range of evaluation questions.

The evening activities laid on by the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) were also very much appreciated. ■

# I. Introduction and Background

## I.1. Background to the Report

This report is based on the views and opinions of participants who attended the PERSGA Regional Shared Vision and Confidence Building Programme Workshop held in Aqaba, Jordan on the 22, 23 and 24 May 2005.

PERSGA, (Program for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden) was set up in 1995 for the conservation of the coastal and marine environments of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Since then much has been achieved - but there is also considerable work to be done to address current issues and move towards the sustainable use and integrated management of the region's natural coastal and marine resources.

PERSGA is now undergoing a process of change with the existing Strategic Action Programme (SAP) drawing to a close in June 2005. This provides a vital opportunity for the work of PERSGA to gain fresh momentum and support. The Retreat was convened to start the process of participatory strategic planning for the Framework of Action for 2005 – 2010.

The retreat brought together the PERSGA Task Force and other experts and professionals in an interactive and informal way to build understanding, identify ways to work more effectively together, and identify key action. The retreat also included presentations about the work that has been done in other regional seas.

Representatives attended from Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. Members from Somalia were unable to attend due to last minute visa complications. Special guests attended from UNEP-

GEF, UNEP RSP & GPA, the Director of PEMSEA and the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO). In total 23 people attended

The main purpose of the workshop was to:

- Build a long-term vision
- Assess PERSGA's role, strengths and challenges
- Consider how to restructure the organisation
- Identify sources of funding
- Identify ways of communicating better and of building and maintaining strong stakeholder involvement
- Propose action and the key contents for a five-year plan

## I.2. Result

During the Retreat clear information and ideas emerged that will help PERSGA Secretariat, Focal Points, and expert advisors energise and push forward their work in a concerted way to the benefit of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Events like this Retreat provide an opportunity for people to think creatively but it is unrealistic to think everything on everyone's wish list can be implemented. During the Retreat some ideas were aspirational or longer term – but participants also identified clear action that can start making a difference immediately.

The retreat provided a strong foundation for future work but it is just the start of participatory strategic planning for the Framework of Action for 2005 – 2010. It will be necessary for there to be some ongoing refinement and clarification of actions and ideas in particular in relationship to timetabling and the staff resource.

### 1.3. The way the Retreat was run

The Retreat was professionally designed and impartially facilitated using an approach called 'stakeholder dialogue'. This encourages full participation. The Retreat involved times when everyone was together in one large group but most often people were working in mixed groups of about 8 –10 people. Both ways of working were fully facilitated using a range of facilitation tools and techniques appropriate to each task.

During the Retreat participants were asked to take part in a range of activities that drew out their knowledge, insights and ideas and encouraged everyone to have their say. The essence of what was said was recorded on flipchart paper or post-it notes so that everyone could see what was written. This helped to build understanding and openness.

Events run this way feel informal but everything is carefully planned and actively managed so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. It is recognised as an effective and productive way of discussing complex subjects.

### 1.4. Feedback

At the end of the retreat people were asked to fill in feedback forms. All comments were collated together and can be seen in the Annex. The comments were very positive. Average scores in response to each question can be seen in the table below (Scores of 7 and above are considered a good event).

Question on feedback form	Average Mark out of 10
Overall how would you rate the workshop	8.8
The workshop was well organised	8.7
I liked working this way	9.2
This is an effective way of sharing and capturing Knowledge and bulding understanding	8.9
I felt my input was heard	8.9

### 1.5. The way this report was produced

This report seeks to capture the main points raised during the Regional Shared Vision and Confidence Building Retreat. In writing it the intention has been to remain impartial and express what was discussed. During the retreat the facilitators recorded the essence of what was said on flipchart sheets. These were then typed up and sorted to put similar ideas together. The process for sorting is called 'emergent analysis' because it allows themes and subject areas to emerge rather than conforming the text to a pre-judged set of titles or expectations. Once sorted the resulting 'Word for Word Report' stands as a record of what was said but crucially not who said it. It can then be used as the basis for other documents such as strategies or action plans, and should also be referred to when actions are progressed so that the detail of what was discussed is not lost. The Word for Word report is not however suitable for dissemination to a wider audience because comments are in lists, and often quite cryptic. This report has been written for that purpose.

## 2. Considering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden

### 2.1. Introduction

The main focus of the Retreat was to give fresh momentum to PERSGA as an organisation, however whilst focusing on organisational change it can be all too easy to lose sight of why an organisation is set up and what it hopes to achieve. PERSGA was set up for the conservation of the coastal and marine environments of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. To help people think about this purpose and put the subsequent discussions in context, they were asked to consider several key questions as described below.

### 2.2. The Long-Term Vision for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden

At the start of the Retreat, to help set the work in the context of a positive long-term vision, people were asked to respond to the following question:

**It is 2030 and you are standing at the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden delighted with what you see. What do you see?**

The responses were varied and visionary. A handful of answers are copied below to give a flavour of the responses:

What do you see?

- A beautiful marine area
- Blue and clear
- The best marine environment in the world
- Plenty of sea birds flying around
- Space and resources are used wisely
- Fishing vessels approaching the port entrance

*The list of responses can be found in the Annex.*

### 2.3. What is valued, issues and achieving the vision.

#### - What people value most

When change is proposed it is important to remember what is valued and what needs to be held on to and carried forward through the change. To this end, people were asked to identify what people value about the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Given the participants' background and interests it is unsurprising that many of the responses were about the natural environment including clear and clean water; rich and unique biodiversity and a beautiful coral reef. However other important aspects of the region were also identified such as: the rich and diverse culture; the long geological and historic interest of the area; business development opportunities around eco-tourism and sustainable use of marine resources; and the importance of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as one of the worlds major trade routes.

#### - Issues of Concern

Whilst the beauty and quality of the natural environment may be valued participants recognise there is also the threat of deterioration and loss of biodiversity and ecosystem function as well as the loss of associated livelihoods. Current threats include unsustainable use arising from lack of awareness amongst the wider population together with lack of specialists in marine issues who could give advice on sustainable resource use and environmental impacts. The economic benefit from using the resources is less than it could be because there are inadequate marketing tools for marine products and the quality of products are not of international standard.

Potential threats include man made disasters such as industrial pollution, oil spills or conflict affecting both the marine resources and business such as tourism. The risk of unexpected natural disasters was also noted.

At a more strategic level, lack of integrated management and inefficient coastal governance and leadership were identified as issues of concern. This has meant that existing marine laws protocols and conventions are not being implemented and there is a lack of ownership of PERSGA's aims.

### **- Achieving the 2030 vision for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden**

The solution to these problems is to address the social, economic and environmental factors in an integrated way including through ICZM Plans. Work needs to be done to understand socioeconomic factors related to environmental conservation of coastal areas. There is also the need to change perceptions so that people realise that conserving the environment is not against development but that a healthy ecosystem underpins sustainable use. To achieve all this will require capacity building in coastal governance and leadership, fostering cooperation between sectors and states, and the implementation of existing regional and local plans. It will also require that PERSGA is strong and effective and this is the subject of the next section.

## 3. Considering PERSGA

### 3.1. Introduction

Having considered Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the workshop moved on to consider the goals benefits and strengths of the PERSGA itself.

The discussion started with a broad overview and exploration of the long-term vision. This was followed by consideration of the draft structure for the organisation as well as key issues such as procurement, funding and communication. Each of these is considered in turn below.

### 3.2. The Goal

People came to the Retreat to discuss how PERSGA can gain fresh momentum in this time of change with the current SAP coming to an end in June 2005. However when making organisational change it is important to consider where the organisation wants to be in the future so that it can plan how to get there and ensure that changes are taking it in the right direction.

Participants were again asked to think themselves in the future. This time in just 5 years time which will be when the next SAP comes to a close. The responses were rich in detail and have been summarised below:

#### It is 2010 and PERSGA as an organisation

- is achieving results
- is flexible, efficient, and dynamic
- has a talented and skilled team
- communicates effectively with member countries and stakeholders
- has strong ownership by member countries
- has a good profile internationally, regionally and at the highest level in member states
- is financially sustainable
- promotes good coastal governance and leadership
- is expanding
- is learning

### 3.3. Mutual Benefits

PERSGA's relationship with member countries is one of mutual benefit however the ways that each can benefit the other has not always been appreciated or clear. Time was given during the Retreat to explore how PERSGA can benefit member countries and how member countries can reciprocate.

The core of what PERSGA does is to assist member countries in better management of the marine environment. It achieves this through providing projects, capacity building, disseminating up to date research and technologies, serving as a hub for the exchange of experience and assisting in mobilising funding. At a regional level PERSGA can carry out strategic planning for the region and facilitate the implementation of other relevant conventions and protocols. PERSGA also has a key role to play in linking with other agencies, regional seas and international initiatives, and can act as an advocate on national, regional and international matters.

Member Countries can reciprocate by sharing and owning the vision and supporting PERSGA with political and financial support, information for a regional database, and by investing in regional experts. Member Countries can also seek to facilitate the work of PERSGA within their own countries. This includes through promoting and advocating PERSGA at the highest level, strengthening co-operation between ministries, and creating the policy context for investment in the environment. To ensure this all makes a real difference to the marine environment there is the need to develop local capacity building programs and follow up on existing projects. Allowing PERSGA to work without restrictions with other national institutions was also thought to be beneficial. There were different views about whether or not forming alliances

with other countries would be a benefit by bringing in other regional experience or could threaten PERSGA's existence.

The need for greater clarity about PERSGA role and mandate was discussed with the need for acknowledgement that it is not a funding organisation nor a national agency for environmental protection.

### 3.4. Strengths and Challenges

#### - Strengths

Since its creation, PERSGA has built up and accumulated considerable experience and achieved a great deal. Before exploring challenges people were asked to consider what those strengths were.

PERSGA's roots are in the Jeddah Convention and therefore it has a strong, clear mandate. The organisation's ability to act regionally and have strong representation at international events was also valued. Importantly PERSGA fosters co-operation between member countries and can make a real difference including:

- Establishing a regional database for use by all member countries.
- Introducing marine traffic control measures for use by international shipping.
- Developing Regional Action Plans for key species and key habitats.
- Establishing a regional strategy for ICZM.
- Developing a SSM (Standard Survey Methodology) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
- Establishing a network of MPA's; and
- Developing a regional masterplan for MPA's.

Other strengths included that PERSGA has the commitment and support of donor agencies and member countries (including financially), however throughout the workshop, these were also mentioned as areas where PERSGA has more work to do.

#### - Challenges

Of all the discussions that took place during the Retreat the question 'What are PERSGA challenges?' generated the longest list. This demonstrates both the size of the task but also a high level of awareness of amongst people at the Retreat and it is only by being fully aware of challenges that appropriate action can be taken to address them.

One of the core challenges is that PERSGA is operating within considerable diversity with a North/South division economically and diverse social and political situations. Different countries have different interests and different environmental issues. This is coupled with a lack of public awareness of environmental issues and insufficient technical knowledge and expertise in environmental management. Principles of sustainable development are not properly understood or adopted in member countries. In addition there is a lack of capacity to implement existing conventions and protocols.

The commitment and support of member countries was noted when considering PERSGA's strengths, but gaining the practical involvement, ownership and commitment from member countries was also identified as a challenge. The need to incorporate other PERSGA countries including Eritrea and Palestine was also noted.

Lack of effective stakeholder participation and PR within the region was identified along with the need to improve PERSGA's image and the way it presents itself. This included the need to improve recognition of PERSGA by global organisations - although being an international organisation was itself noted as a challenge.

For the Secretariat concerns were raised about areas that were then considered in detail later in the Retreat: financial sustainability, recruitment and human resource policy, and the need for an effective organisational structure.

Anxiety was expressed about the ability of PERSGA, or member countries, to cope with major environmental disasters resulting from either natural or man-made causes such as oil spills. Even without disasters a challenge includes avoiding dumping of nuclear waste and achieving a clean environment across the region.

Listing challenges in this way can be daunting but it is only when challenges are clearly recognised that effective action can be taken to address them. Following this discussion everyone was asked to consider what could be done in the next five years to overcome the challenges and achieve the long-term vision. The results of that discussion are considered under section 4.0 'Maintaining Momentum'.

### 3.5. Learning from others

**The second day of the workshop started with presentations.**

The first speaker was Dr Chua Thai Eng, Director of PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia) who gave a full and inspiring description of the work that PEMSEA does. The Partnership operates in a very complex situation involving 12 Governments and 5 large marine ecosystems (comprising the East China, Yellow, South China, Sulu Celebes and Indonesian Seas). He emphasised the need to move from reactive and sectoral approaches to being proactive and holistic and advocated the need for Integrated Coastal Management (ICM). He also argued that there is a need to move from environmental protection focused on particular habitats and species towards ecosystems based management that would be dynamic and adaptive. It is also necessary to work at all levels from international right down to local community level where real change in the use of the environment takes place.

The next presentation was from Ms Annie Muchai of the UN Regional Seas Programme (RSP) of UNEP who made a comparison between various regional seas programmes to illustrate approaches common

to achieving the same mandate. She presented examples of operating organisational structures from the Mediterranean, Baltic and East Africa programmes that could be useful for PERSGA. The latter part of her presentation was focused on providing short, medium and long term strategies for sustainable financing of these programmes.

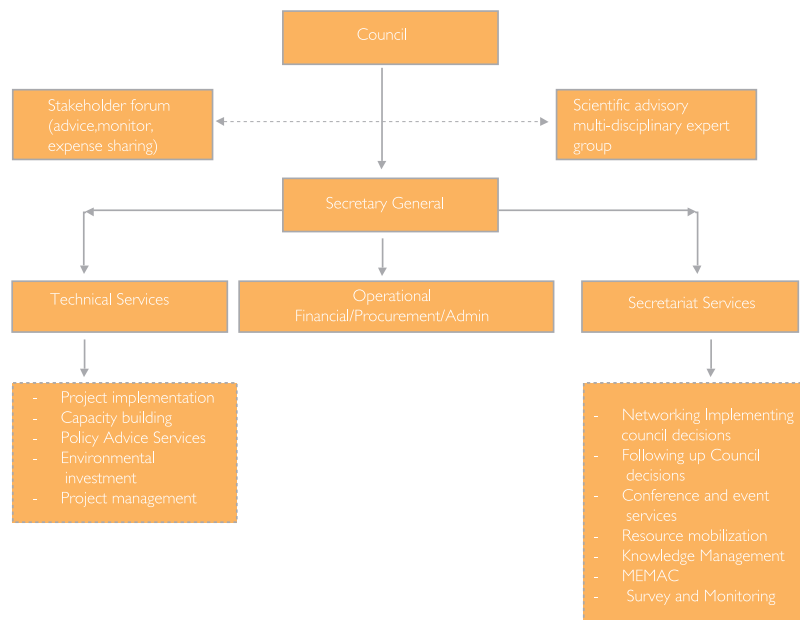
A final presentation was given by Dr Amr A Zidan from the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO). This presentation focused on the role of ARADO in supporting PERSGA transition through this time of change and in advising on institutional development and effective organisational structure. Dr Zidan assured the participants that the workshop would provide crucial input into ARADO's recommendations.

### 3.6. Considering an effective structure

Following the presentations the rest of the second day was given to deliberating over the possible future structure of the organisation.

Three working groups were convened with PERSGA secretariat distributed between them to provide advice and input. Each group developed an Organogram illustrating how they thought PERSGA could be structured. Participants were then asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each idea and then nominate the one/s that they most supported. One proposal was short listed for further deliberation and refinement which resulted in the Organogram below:

## Proposed Organizational Structure



The positioning of the Stakeholder Forum and the Scientific Advisory Group in the above diagram caused some confusion.

It is our understanding that this was not intended as an extra tier in decision-making above the Secretary General but as a source of advice and information to PERSGA as an organization. The relationship could be represented as follows with the two-way arrows representing dialogue between PERSGA, stakeholders, and science experts:



Following presentation of the draft proposed structure, people were asked to express the extent to which they supported the proposed draft structure with the following result:

How much do you support what you see?				
I don't	I agree in part	I can live with it	I can support it	I am very supportive
●			●●	●●●●●●●●●●

People were also asked what would need to change to improve the level of their support.

Comments were:

- Clarification about the role of the science advisory group.
- Adding Public Relations to the work of the Operational section.
- The need to include legal advice and services to ensure compliance and enforcement of legal obligations of conventions and protocols.
- Involving financial ministers in the Executive Committee.
- Adding early warning of environmental catastrophe under Technical Services.

It was also suggested that there should be a re-organisation study. In fact this is part of the work of ARADO (who gave a presentation the next day) and so it is already in hand.

Of those who chose to take part in this activity (14 out of 23), the level of support for the proposed structure is high and it provides a strong basis for further refinement.

### 3.7. Efficient Administrative Procedures

The structure of the organisation is obviously crucial to efficient working but so are the administration, personnel and procurement procedures.

Current procedures are written, specific and familiar to the Secretariat who have experience of using them over the last five years. However there are some recognised weaknesses including:

- Procedures are complicated
- The budget does not clearly show where money is being used and for what activities
- There are different rules and scales for PERSGA and the SAP
- There can be delays in transfer of funds and procurement procedures

Other concerns included that some countries do not have representation in the Secretariat although there are tensions between recruiting the best candidate for the post on merit, and a balanced representation. Currently new posts are being advertised in all countries.

An additional problem was that the working language for PERSGA is English however in Djibouti they speak French and so find accessing information difficult. A member of PERSGA staff clarified that they would like to translate written material but funders do not allow for money for translation and so PERSGA did not have the resources to do so.

The groups went on to discuss how some of these difficulties could be overcome. In summary this was to revise and update the procedures to make them fair, transparent and coherent. Spending ceilings should be set for technical specialists, financial management and project managers to enable people to get on with their work and only refer things up the line where appropriate. The point was made that member countries want to be involved when contracts are let which involve their country. Also there needs to be alternative arrangements for the transfer of funds to avoid unnecessary taxes.

### 3.8. Sustainable Funding

The issue of funding was raised as a matter of concern throughout the Retreat. Clearly without sustainable funding PERSGA will struggle with long-term planning. It will also be more dependant on funding streams which lock the organisation into particular outputs or areas of work whether or not these are agreed priorities. Project based funding also means staff are on contract which leads to loss of knowledge when they leave and staff turnover and retention problems.

With funding being so crucial to the future of PERSGA the issue of sustainable funding was given focused attention during the workshop. Two presentations were given followed by the discussions summarised later in this section.

The first presentation was from Dr Abdel-Majeid Haddad, Task Manager, GEF / UNEP. Dr Haddad discussed strategies for PERSGA to mobilise resources, specifically looking at the GEF programme, its processes and funding criteria. He also spoke on the role of regional organisations such as PERSGA in relation to MEAs.

The second presentation was from Dr Mohamed Eissa, from UNIDO who was unable to attend in person but gave his presentation via teleconferencing. His presentation updated participants on the status of a UNIDO supported project on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) that PERSGA seek to collaborate with UNIDO on.

### - Sources of Funding

It was proposed that a proactive approach was needed in working with member countries to raise contributions and secure ongoing commitment.

In addition a long list of other sources of funding was identified. It is recognised that a list alone is not enough. Information on the profiles of these organisations and agencies together with the kind of initiative that they fund and their funding cycles is also needed. Drafting project proposals and knowing effective ways of approaching funders is a skill in its own right and a proposed action was to prepare a job description and recruit a new staff member to specialise in fund raising and to advise other staff members on funding opportunities. Another action was to harness regional or international expertise to assist in developing funding proposals.

The possibility of environmental levies was explored. Sectors that could be levied included: industry, transit ships and oil companies, and small levies on tourism. A proposed action is to develop a strategy that included who could be charged and the justification for the levy. It was also proposed that consultant should be hired to specifically investigate and report on the feasibility of imposing a levy on ships using the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Other potential sources of funding included penalties and fines, asking for contributions from petroleum countries and shipping companies, and investing in profit making projects.

A key action that would secure sustainable funding is the setting up of a trust fund or endowment fund that would provide a source of income over the long-term.

### - Quality of Work

All the discussions about funding identified the need for PERSGA to provide a quality service including:

- Enhanced capacity to provide technical services
- Sound and effective procurement and administrative procedures that were accurate and resulted in fast procurement and disbursement
- Good planning
- Transparency and clear reporting to donors to sustain confidence

It was suggested that PERSGA should develop a portfolio of forward-looking project proposals to present to funders. To be attractive projects should meet known needs and address known issues and threats in innovative ways.

Greater stakeholder involvement and creating new and stronger partnerships was also seen as important as it creates buy in to PERSGA's mission and therefore increased commitment. Demonstrating results and promoting success stories is necessary so that funders and donors can see value for money and the difference that PERSGA is making. This could also involve conferences and invitations to site/project visits. These ideas were taken forward and considered in the discussion about communication below.

### 3.9. Improved Communication

Part of the long-term vision is that PERSGA communicates effectively. There are broadly three areas of communication and each of these was discussed during the Retreat and is summarised below.

#### - Communication within PERSGA

For outwards communication to be coherent and consistent, effective communication needs to take place within PERSGA. This will build trust and team work. A return to regular in-house staff meetings was proposed and it was suggested that this should be at least twice a month. A clear and effective internal communication structure is needed. Guidelines for working together effectively should include principles such as:

- Keep each other informed of relevant information on a continuous informal basis
- Respect other peoples opinions
- Build trust both ways
- Transparency
- Team work

All this can be achieved by attracting and keeping qualified and competent personnel (regardless of nationality), who have good interpersonal skills. On going training and skills development is also needed.

It was suggested that developing an effective PR strategy should start with staff so they have buy in and are aware of PERSGA's main PR messages and themes. Having a strongly articulated mission or goal will be key to this. The comment was made that PERSGA must be clear that it is established to help member countries implement the Jeddah Convention and obligations. Promoting success stories will also assist in building trust and commitment.

#### - Building and maintaining strong stakeholder involvement.

To build and maintain strong stakeholder involvement it is first necessary to know who the stakeholders are. Types of organisations were listed from the following sectors:

- Environmental NGO
- Academic/Education/Research
- Business
- Government
- Regional and International
- Media

This listing quickly demonstrated the need for a database of stakeholders – not just organisations but named individuals. Once created such a list would need to be kept up to date and so this responsibility will need to be written into someone's job description. It will also be important to establish the correct method of communication e.g. via the Focal Point or directly, and keep this information on the date base.

Having a good list of stakeholders is of course just the start and it was suggested that to improve stakeholder involvement there will be a need for increased skills in relating to stakeholders amongst PERSGA staff and in member countries. Part of this will include clarity about the purpose of any stakeholder involvement and whether it is to raise stakeholder awareness, consult them over options, or so they can share in decision-making and implementation.

For the first of these, raising stakeholder awareness, actions include:

- Establishing a program of meetings and seminars on relevant topics eg to raise capacity on marine protection issues

- Preparing materials for distribution to stakeholders. Such material should be tailored to the stakeholders and could be:
  - General material about the value and management of the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden
  - Information specific to particular sectors, interests or issues
  - Case examples demonstrating good practice eg a booklet outlining good practice in eco-tourism with case examples to illustrate points made.

**- Working together to build, develop and support ownership of the PERSGA mission at national level.**

For PERSGA activities to result in the conservation of marine and coastal habitats, actions have to be owned at a strategic and policy level within member countries and then filter down to make a difference at a local community level. This requires concerted action within member countries. The focal points cannot make a difference by themselves. To be effective the following was suggested:

- Communication between focal points to learn from and support each other.
- Establishing a competent marine environment unit under the focal point to co-ordinate
- PERSGA activities and involve all key stakeholders.
- Setting up National Committees or working groups to implement action. (It was suggested that such committees should include representatives of financial and foreign affairs ministries so they do not block funding or action).
- Developing pilot demonstration projects.
- Developing public awareness.
- Encouraging local involvement.

## 4. Maintaining Momentum

Facilitated workshops generate increased understanding and enthusiasm amongst people who take part -but this is meaningless unless it results in clear actions and real and positive change.

During workshops people have the opportunity to think openly and creatively and a great number of ideas and suggestions get listed. But not everything on everyone's wish list can be done so during the Retreat, groups were asked to identify key action from their discussions that they would like to see placed on a 5 year timeline.

Within the timescales of the workshop it is inevitable that there was some duplication in the actions. Also some actions detailed the steps needed to achieve a goal whilst others simply stated the goal. The time constraints meant it was not possible to sort all this out or categorise actions which were in the mandate and gift of people in the room to carry forward, and which required the support and endorsement of Council. The action plan therefore requires further work to clarify and refine proposed action. It will also be necessary to refer to the Word for Word Report, which records the detail behind some of the proposals. The draft 5 year plan and other actions are copied word for word in Annex 4, in summary the action includes what is shown in the table on the right:

### Actions that focus on the organisation

- Develop a clear mission and vision
- Create a niche and menu of services
- Develop SAP 2
- Establish an effective organisational structure
- Recruit staff
- Secure sustainable funding

### Actions that focus outwards to Member countries and other stakeholders

- Implement and review existing agreements and conventions and help member countries fulfil their obligations
- Strengthen member countries ownership and commitment to PERSGA
- Develop links with other agencies, regional sea programs and other schemes
- Facilitate training and capacity building
- Establish stakeholder participation
- Promote PERSGA at all levels
- Promote and publicise success stories

### Actions that focus on the coastal and marine environment

- Establish technical information, databases and monitoring
- Establish a regional MEMAC network
- Develop national and regional action plans for key species and habitats
- Implement ICZM plans
- Declare the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as special areas
- Carry out demonstration projects and publicise learning and good practice

As the Retreat drew to a close people were asked to look at the plan and indicate their level of support for what they saw with the following result:

How much do you support what you see?					
	I don't	I agree in part	I can live with it	I can support it	I am very supportive
Listed Actions			● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Timing		● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
What would need to happen to increase the level of your support?					
Need careful time allocations also there is the need to relocate July and August's activities					

The table demonstrates that whilst most people supported the plan there were serious concerns about the timescales. Staff capacity will reduce significantly with: loss of staff as the current SAP draws to a close; remaining staff giving time to recruiting and training up new staff; and the new staff taking time to get up to speed.

The timeframes clearly require further consideration and deliberation to ensure that work is prioritised and planned sensibly across the 5 years and that it can be achieved without causing undue stress and overload on staff.

However on a positive note the draft Action Plan demonstrates that the people at the Retreat want to see real and positive change that gives fresh momentum to PERSGA and that sets PERSGA on course for future success.

Following discussions participants were asked to select key actions from all the ideas they had generated. Most suggestions were transferred onto the draft 5-year plan. For the draft 5-year plan and other key actions see the Word for Word Report. ■

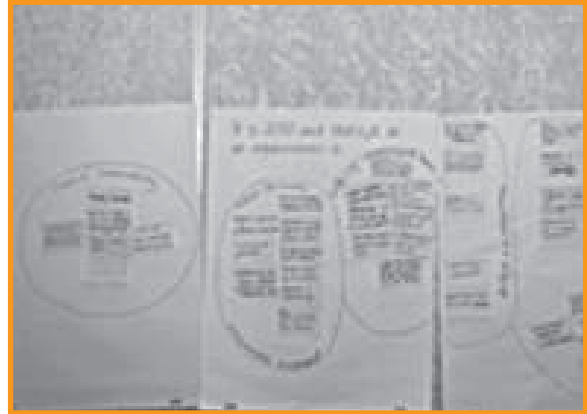
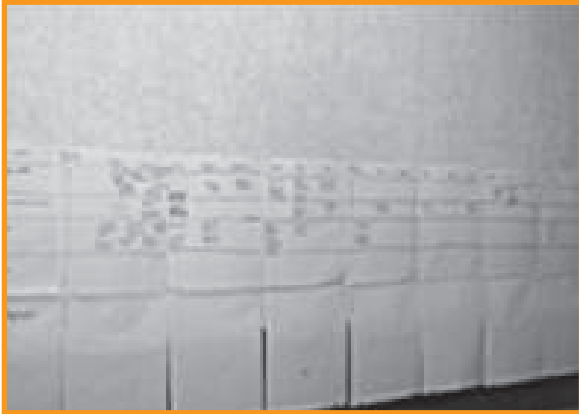
## Opening Session



## Informal Atmosphere



# Participation



## Working Groups



## Participants

(List in alphabetical order)

Name	Organization	Title
Abdullah Abo Alfotooh	EPA Yemen	Director general
Abdullah Abu Awali	ASEZA	Aqaba Marine Park Manager
Abdullah Alsuhaibany	PERSGA	National resources and Protected Area Unit
Aden Hassan Elmi	Ministry of Environment (Djibouti)	Ministry Consultant for Arab Affairs
Adul- Majeid Haddad	UNEP-GEF	Task Manager NCSA Division
Amr A. Zidan	(ARADO)	Representative of Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO)
Annie Muchai	UNEP RSP & GPA	Liaison Officer UNEP GPA The Hague
Bilal Al Bashir	ASEZA	Commissioner of Env. & Health Regulation & Enforcement
Chua Thia-Eng	PEMSEA	Regional Programme Director
Dirar H. Nasr	PERSGA	Senior Technical Director
Ja'afar Shotah	EPA Yemen	
Khulood Tubaishat	PERSGA	Advisor- Regional Shared Vision Programme
Mahgoub Hassan	MEPA Sudan	Head of Marine Env. Protection Administration Port- Sudan
Mahmoud Shidawah	Env. Protection Authority (EPA)	Chairman of EPA
Mohamad Satti	PERSGA	Financial & Admin. Manager
Mohamed Abdallah	Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries UAE	Consultant – Somalia Activity
Mohammad Borhan	EEAA- Egypt	Director of ICZM Dept. Egypt
Nagmeldin Awad	PERSGA	Procurement Specialist
Noha Z. El-Maraghi	PERSGA	Admin & PR Officer
Osama Qurban	Presidency of Meteorology and Environment	Director of ICZM Dept. KSA
Roy Alan Facey	PERSGA	Navigation Risk & Maritime Pollution Lead Specialist
Ziad Abu Gararah	PERSGA	Secretary General

### Facilitators

Diana Pound	Dialogue Matters	Director
Gitanjali Bedi	LEAD	Programme Officer, Capacity

\* Further contact information regarding participants' is available on Word for Word Retreat



PERSGA Gaining fresh momentum  
Regional Shared Vision and Confidence Building Programme

RETREAT  
Summery Report

22,23 and 24 May 2005  
Aqaba, Jordan



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