

ROPME SEA KAPS



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ROPME/WHO-EMRO WORKSHOP ON TECHNICAL GUIDELINES TO ASSESS MARINE POLLUTION AND TO CONTROL ASSOCIATED HEALTH RISKS



(Tehran, I.R. Iran, 16 - 18 June 1998)

INTRODUCTION

Our marine environment is under continuous stress from many sources of pollution which present a growing threat to marine life, human health, fisheries, recreational uses of beaches and other amenities. To this effect, the Kuwait Regional Convention has given priority to environmental assessment particularly to the identification of the quality of the marine environment and the factors influencing the quality and having an impact on human health. Accordingly, baseline studies and monitoring of the levels of selected pollutants, research on effects of pollutants, survey of land-based sources of pollution and studies on the impact of industrial and municipal wastes particularly on human health are emphasized in the Kuwait Action Plan. Furthermore, health-related aspects of marine pollution prevention and control are addressed by ROPME Protocols on land-based sources as well as hazardous wastes, extensively.

Given the great importance attached to monitoring of health related parameters in the ROPME Programme, and in accordance with Decision CM9/4 of the Ninth Meeting of the Council (June 1996), the Workshop on Technical Guidelines was organized jointly with WHO-EMRO in Tehran, at the kind invitation of NFP-I.R.Iran during 16-18 June 1998. The principal objective of the Workshop was the development of guidelines for the assessment of marine pollution and control of associated health risks in the ROPME Region. The Workshop was attended by national experts from ROPME Member States, WHO resource persons as well as the Professional staff of ROPME.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Workshop was opened by the welcome address of H.E. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Director, Department of the Environment. Her Excellency underlined the importance of the Workshop in addressing environmental health objectives of the Region and expressed hope that the results of the Workshop would be an attempt in the direction of reducing health risks through the provision of useful guidelines for policy development and management. She further emphasized the importance of environmental awareness for better protection of the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

The statement of H.E. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi, Executive Secretary of ROPME, was delivered on his behalf by Dr. Hassan Mohammadi, Protocol Implementation Officer of ROPME. He outlined the main objective for convening the Workshop and highlighted the salient provisions of the Kuwait Regional Convention and the Kuwait Action Plan on environmental health assessment and management. Accordingly, the development of technical guidelines for the assessment of marine pollution and control of health risks was considered of high priority for the Region. ROPME has further developed a Regional Programme of Action consistent with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities to support and reinforce the National Programmes of Contracting States for the implementation of the Land-Based Protocol.

The message of H.E. Dr. Hussein A. Gezairy, Regional Director, WHO, was delivered on his behalf by Dr. Houssain Abouzaid, Regional Adviser of WHO-EMRO. He stated that the international efforts to assess and control marine pollution and its effects on human health, particularly those related to seafood contamination and polluted recreational waters, have been actively supported by the World Health Organization through its environmental health

programme for many decades. Also, the specific clearing-house task regarding information on sewage, in the framework of the Global Programme of Action on LBA, has been delegated to WHO by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/189 (December 1996) in the light of WHO's substantive programme on community water supply and sanitation as well as water pollution control. At present, however, WHO is in the process of developing new guidelines for safe recreational water environments addressing both risk assessment and risk management. He expressed hope that the Workshop would pave the way for the development of technical guidelines for the ROPME Region in order to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources.

DELIBERATIONS OF THE MEETING

The following presentations were made for deliberation of the Workshop:

Global WHO-EURO Guidelines for Recreational Waters

Guidelines for Submarine Outfall Structures for Mediterranean Small and Medium-Sized Coastal Communities

Guidelines on Treatment of Effluents prior to their discharge into the Mediterranean Sea

Guidelines on Authorization for Discharge of Liquid Wastes into the Mediterranean Sea

ROPME Protocol for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources - The Principles and Requirements.

Country Presentations:

- I.R.Iran
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- U.A.E.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Workshop made the following general recommendations:

- a) ROPME Member States are urged to update their surveys of land-based source categories and provide ROPME Secretariat with the result at an early date.
- b) Member States are requested to study the guidelines reviewed at the present Workshop and provide their comments to ROPME Secretariat, by mid September 1998.
- c) Member States are requested to inform ROPME of the submarine outfall structures of their countries, if any, by end of September 1998.
- d) ROPME is to incorporate the comments received from Member States as well as the recommendations of the present Workshop into the Guidelines and may consider to organize another Workshop to review the revised Guidelines.

The Workshop also made specific recommendations on the Guidelines as follows:

1) Guidelines for Recreational Waters

ROPME Member States may wish to take into account, in the development of their specific guidelines on coastal recreational water, the new WHO guidelines, as soon as they are finalized. Meantime, the following activities may be undertaken:

- a) To assess the situation with respect to recreational uses of water environment in the ROPME Sea Area.
- b) To prepare a compendium of existing standards and guidance documents of Member States on coastal recreational water.
- c) To collect existing information on health outcome associated with the recreational use of coastal waters.
- d) To consider carrying out epidemiological studies, focusing on establishing the relation between concentration of faecal streptococci in bathing coastal recreational water and the occurrence of diarrhoeal episodes among users.

2) Guidelines on Treatment of Effluents prior to their Discharge into the Sea

In line with the provisions of ROPME Protocol on Land-Based Sources and in order to avoid duplication of efforts, the following arrangements are recommended:

- a) The guidelines should include a preface or an introductory chapter where the approach adopted in the ROPME Protocol, i.e. pollution abatement through source control, is analyzed. In the same chapter, the industries related to

each activity and the substances contained in their effluents are to be identified.

- b) The rest of the document is to be rearranged to follow the alphabetical order, taking into account the priorities assigned in the Regional Programme of Action on LBA.
- c) References to the sources of pollution should be formulated according to the Regional conditions.
- d) Methods of treatment and disposal as well as alternative methods introduced in the guidelines could be used since they are based on scientific evidence and adopted worldwide.
- e) The combined effluent treatment is to be used in line with the provisions of ROPME Protocol on Land-Based Sources.

3) Guidelines for Submarine Outfall Structures for Small and Medium-Sized Coastal Communities

- a) The submarine outfall structures for small and medium-sized coastal communities are not recommended in the environmentally sensitive areas and in areas adjacent to water intakes (e.g. desalination plants) in the ROPME Sea Area. The guidelines on submarine outfall structures could be applicable in other parts of the ROPME Sea Area. However, due to the shortage of freshwater resources in the Region, the recycling of wastewater and the reuse and multiple uses of water are strongly recommended.
- b) In certain localities, however, prior to in-depth studies and adjustment to the local conditions, submarine outfalls can be used, as for example, when servicing discharge bypass structures and/or for avoiding direct discharge into sensitive water bodies (e.g. rivers).
- c) Particular attention should be given to the river mouths as they are usually the recipient bodies of domestic discharges. River basin management is recommended for the assessment of river discharges.
- d) Assessment of the discharge of coastal cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants would indicate the actual situation and is recommended.

4) Guidelines on Authorization for Discharge of Liquid Wastes into the Sea

- a) The guidelines for the Mediterranean Sea could be useful to the ROPME Member States and is recommended in the interim period prior to the development of the Regional Guidelines.
- b) The document should be revised so as to reflect the provisions of the ROPME Convention and its Protocols as well as the Regional Programme of Action on LBA.

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