

d. Enhancing livelihood of fishermen and contributing to healthy marine ecosystems

Fishermen, all over the world lose or abandon their nets in the ocean. Not much is currently known on the magnitude and harmful effects of this phenomenon.

With a view to encourage a more concerted and comprehensive response from governments as well as relevant industries, UNEP and FAO jointly undertook a global review: "Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)" on the magnitude, impacts and composition of ALDFG, and assessed the feasibility of abating the ML problem through joint programmes and activities between Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs), capacity building activities including awareness, outreach, and education.



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e. Public awareness and outreach

UNEP continues to raise global public awareness on the problem of ML. In this respect UNEP's publication "Marine Litter: An analytical overview" as well as the brochure "Tightening the noose: The growing threat of marine litter" have proved to be popular with many people around the world; among them researchers, professionals, and students.

More resources can be found at:

<http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/>



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UNEP



Regional Seas Programme
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
P.O. Box 30552 Nairobi, 00100 Kenya
Tel: [+254] 20 762 4033
Fax: [+254] 20 762 4618
E-mail: regionalseas@unep.org
www.unep.org/regionalseas/

UNEP's Global Initiative on Marine Litter

Problems

- Marine Litter (ML) is found in all oceans and seas
- ML travels long distances from the sources of input – it is a transboundary issue
- ML originates from many sources, both land-based sources and marine sources – it is a multi-sectoral issue. It cannot be solved by addressing one sector only
- ML is closely linked to the wider problem of waste management, and cannot be resolved independently
- Quantities of ML that enter the oceans are growing every year
- ML is mostly composed of non-degradable or slowly degrading materials (mainly plastics), and quantities in the oceans and on coasts are increasing
- ML affects almost all marine ecosystems and habitats;
- ML causes serious economic, social, aesthetic and environmental damage
- The problem is compounded by lack of legal frameworks (global and national), weak compliance and enforcement measures, and lack of awareness
- Within the wider problem of ML is the specific issue of lost and abandoned fishing gear



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Benefits of resolving the problem

- Reducing damage to marine ecosystems and marine animals
- Reducing economic losses of various affected sectors (shipping, tourism, fisheries, coastal communities)
- Reducing social, cultural and aesthetic impacts of ML
- Improving livelihood and health of local coastal communities, especially in developing countries
- Contributing to finding more comprehensive solutions to waste management problems

The issue

- Global concern has increased about the amount and impacts of man-made materials lost or discarded at sea (marine litter).
- ML is a complex issue that spans geographic and political boundaries. It requires coordinated response by governments, industry and the public at large, with the assistance of the UN and other partners, to effectively address its sources, and reduce its social, economic and environmental impacts
- The global problem of ML was recognized by the UN General Assembly resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea which, "...notes the lack of information and data on marine debris and encourages relevant national and international organizations to undertake further studies on the extent and nature of the problem..."¹
- Moreover, another General Assembly resolution *calls upon the FAO, IMO, and UNEP, in particular its Regional Seas Programme, to take action to address the issue of lost or abandoned fishing gear and related marine debris*²
- UNEP's Global Initiative on Marine Litter is a significant contribution to the scientific and substantive understanding of ML and subsequently to the management of a global problem with devastating effects on ecosystems, economies and human well being



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Facing the challenge

- If not addressed urgently, impacts on ecosystems, marine life, social, cultural and economic resources may increase dramatically
- ML can be resolved only with multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approaches focusing on waste management
- There is need to enhance the understanding by Governments and other actors on the use of economic/market-based instruments and incentives in the management of marine litter, especially in identified sectors such as the fishing, tourism and shipping industries
- There is a need to address the lack of knowledge on the extent of the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear and its devastating effects on marine and coastal ecosystems
- Decision and policy makers' awareness of the scale and the trends of the problem is crucial in order to seek global, regional and national solutions for the ML problem

UNEP's Global Initiative on Marine Litter

a. Building knowledge and understanding the ML problem

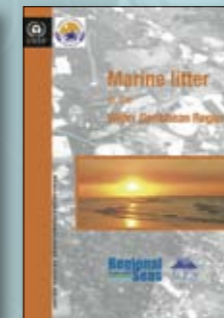
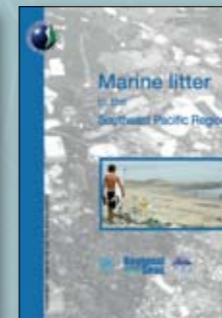
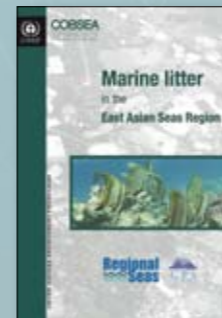
Twelve Regional Seas programmes developed well structured, regional initiatives that, amongst others;

- assessed the magnitude of the problem through collection and analysis of existing data and information, and
- published regional reports highlighting the status of ML, identifying priorities and strategies for response

The knowledge generated will be used to further develop global and regional activities and implement concrete actions in each of the 12 regions for improved management of ML.

Key results include:-

- concrete and systematic regional strategies on the management of marine litter (e.g – the *Mediterranean Action Plan on Marine Litter*). The strategies have been adopted by the governing bodies of seven Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, and concrete actions are being developed.
- UNEP has prepared a comprehensive synthesis report based on an analysis of the regional activities undertaken so far. The report is titled "*Marine Litter: A Global Challenge*".



b. Developing a common approach to Monitoring ML

UNEP's efforts respond to the call by the UN General Assembly to address the lack of data and information on ML as an obstacle to a better management.

Together with UNESCO/IOC, UNEP has developed a new global, operational methodology for the scientific monitoring of ML. Guidelines for the use of the methodology are contained in the publication "*UNEP/IOC Guidelines on Survey and Monitoring of Marine Litter*".

These guidelines will enormously contribute to a common approach in the survey and monitoring of ML, and to the development of science-based strategies and policies to abate marine litter worldwide.

c. Reducing ML through the use of Economic Instruments

UNEP has developed guidelines on the use of economic instruments in the management of ML. The guidelines will provide decision makers with practical and operational options for the selection and implementation of economic/market-based instruments to address the problem of marine litter. It is expected that the guidelines "*Guidelines on the Use of Market-based Instruments to Address the Problem of Marine Litter*" will be utilized in the Regional Seas to enhance the management of ML.

