



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/1
26 January 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Sixth meeting

Montreal, 12-16 March 2001

Item 3.3 of the provisional agenda*

MARINE AND COASTAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Progress report on the implementation of the programme of work

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present note has been prepared to report on progress in the implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity since the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and to highlight the issues raised in decision V/3, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting, calling for the attention of the Executive Secretary and SBSTTA.

2. Section II of the note describes recent activities relevant to decision V/3 to promote the implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity in each of the six programme elements approved by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting. Section III reports on new initiatives of institutional cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant organizations with a view to furthering implementation of the programme of work.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON MARINE AND COASTAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

A. Programme element 1 - Integrated marine and coastal area management (IMCAM)

3. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties endorsed further work on developing guidelines for coastal areas taking into account the ecosystem approach; and encouraged SBSTTA, with the assistance of the Executive Secretary, to continue work on ecosystem evaluation and assessment

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/1.

/...

through, *inter alia*, guidelines on evaluation and indicators. In accordance with guidance from the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, these activities have been carried out as part of the work programme on indicators, monitoring and assessment.

4. At its sixth meeting, SBSTTA will have before it two notes relating to scientific assessments. The first (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/3) is a progress report on ongoing assessment processes and includes a discussion of two assessment processes that are complementary to the assessment needs of the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity:

(a) *The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*, which will focus on the capacity of ecosystems to provide goods and services, including current ecosystem extent, trends, pressures, conditions and value, as well as ecosystem scenarios, trade-offs, and response options;

(b) *The Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)*, which will produce a comprehensive and integrated global assessment of international waters, the ecological status of and the causes of environmental problems in 66 water areas in the world, and focus on the key issues and problems facing the aquatic environment in trans-boundary waters.

5. The second note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/9) proposes methods and procedures for the assessment process under the Convention and identifies a number of potential assessment projects. Pilot assessment projects related to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment or thematic assessments relevant to marine and coastal biological diversity may be complementary to the assessment needs of the programme of work.

6. Additionally, in accordance with decision V/7 adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting, the Executive Secretary is preparing an interim report for the seventh meeting of SBSTTA on identification, monitoring and assessment, and indicators within the thematic and other work programmes.

B. Programme element 2 - Marine and coastal living resources

7. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties delineated several issues relevant to the programme element on marine and coastal living resources for the attention of the Executive Secretary and SBSTTA, namely:

- (a) The integration of coral reefs into the programme element;
- (b) The gathering of information on approaches to the management of marine and coastal living resources in relation to those used by local and indigenous communities;
- (c) An analysis and advice on scientific, technical and technological matters related to the issue of marine and coastal genetic resources; and
- (d) Consideration and prioritization of a number of other issues: the use of unsustainable fishing practices, including the effects on marine and coastal biological diversity of the discard of by-catch; the lack of use of marine and coastal protected areas in the context of management of marine and coastal living resources; and the economic value of marine and coastal resources, including sea grasses, mangroves and other coastal ecosystems; as well as capacity-building for undertaking stock assessments and for economic evaluations.

1. Integration of coral reefs into the programme element

8. Progress with regard to the integration of coral reefs into programme element 2 of the programme of work is described in paragraphs 2-6 of the note by the Executive Secretary on the subject (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/4).

2. Approaches to the management of marine and coastal living resources in relation to those used by local and indigenous communities

9. In paragraph 11 of decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to gather information on approaches to the management of marine and coastal living resources in relation to those used by local and indigenous communities and to make the information available through the clearing-house mechanism. Currently, the Executive Secretary has information available from Parties regarding: the uses of marine biodiversity by the Maori of New Zealand; traditional systems of community-based coastal resource management in Indonesia; traditional ecological knowledge of Inuit and Cree in the Hudson Bay region; and traditional ecological knowledge about Beluga whales in the Chukchi and Northern Bering seas.

10. It should be noted that the national reports required under Article 26 of the Convention are also a potential mechanism to gather such information. Although a review of the reports submitted to date has revealed no additional information, most recognize the need to identify and document indigenous knowledge. Information on approaches to the management of marine and coastal living resources in relation to those used by local and indigenous communities may, therefore, be available in future national reports.

11. Due to the current paucity of available information, the Executive Secretary has sent a specific request for information to existing indigenous organizations regarding approaches to the management of marine and coastal living resources in relation to those used by local and indigenous communities.

3. Analyses and advice on scientific, technical and technological matters related to marine and coastal genetic resources

12. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in paragraph 12 of decision II/10, requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the United Nations Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, to undertake a study of the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources on the deep sea-bed, and with a view to enabling SBSTTA to address at future meetings, as appropriate, the scientific, technical and technological issues relating to bioprospecting of genetic resources on the deep sea-bed.

13. In decision IV/5, the Parties reconfirmed their continued interest in information on marine and coastal genetic resources, including bioprospecting, to be made available, with a view to exploring ways to expand the knowledge base on which to make informed and appropriate decisions about how marine and coastal genetic resources might be managed in accordance with the objectives of the Convention. In response to this decision, the Executive Secretary produced an information note on marine and coastal genetic resources, including bioprospecting (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/7) for the fifth meeting of Conference of the Parties.

14. In its decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties took note of the work of the Executive Secretary on marine and coastal genetic resources and requested SBSTTA to analyse, and provide advice on scientific, technical and technological matters related to the issue of marine and coastal genetic resources. The information note (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/7) prepared for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was intended to complement a study under preparation by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea under decision II/10, with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources on the deep sea-bed. As part of its continued work in this area, the Executive Secretary also participated in the International Expert Consultation on Aquatic Animal Diversity Information and Communication System,

which emphasized the need to improve availability and communication of information on aquatic diversity, especially on the genetic level (para. 33(e) below).

4. Consideration and prioritization of issues listed in paragraph 13 of decision V/3

15. In its decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties requested SBSTTA to consider the following issues and prioritize them as appropriate: (a) the use of unsustainable fishing practices, including the effects on marine and coastal biological diversity of the discard of by-catch; (b) the lack of use of marine and coastal protected areas in the context of management of marine and coastal living resources; (c) and the economic value of marine and coastal resources, including sea-grasses, mangroves and other coastal ecosystems; (d) as well as capacity-building for undertaking stock assessments and for economic evaluations.

16. In order to appropriately consider and prioritize these issues, it is necessary to take into account the ongoing activities of other relevant bodies addressing them. As these issues will be considered by SBSTTA after its seventh meeting and most probably at its ninth meeting in accordance with the recommendation of the Bureau, and considering that the discussion of several of these issues is currently taking place within other forums (e.g., the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas), it would be premature to presently propose prioritization of these issues.

C. Programme element 3 - Marine and coastal protected areas

17. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties approved the terms of reference and the duration of work specified for the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, as contained in annex II to SBSTTA recommendation V/14. As mentioned in the progress report on the status of the ad hoc technical expert groups established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/2), the Expert Group was tentatively scheduled to meet in February 2001. However, since the funding arrangements for the meeting have yet to be finalized, it is now expected that the Group will meet in New Zealand later in the first half of the year, after the sixth meeting of SBSTTA.

18. As reported in the above-mentioned progress report, the Executive Secretary is preparing a background note under activity (c) of operational objective 3.1 of the programme of work for the consideration of the Group. The note gathers and assimilates available information from various international and regional partner organizations, national reports, as well as the current scientific literature to facilitate research and monitoring activities related to the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly restricted management areas on marine and coastal biological diversity, in the context of the programme of work.

19. For the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary produced an information note (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/8) under operational objective 3.2 of the programme of work, on the criteria for the selection of marine and coastal protected areas. The note reviewed selection criteria under existing regional and international marine and coastal protected area regimes. The background note prepared under operational objective 3.1 for the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group also presents information relevant to selection criteria.

D. Programme element 4 – Mariculture

20. In accordance with the operational objectives of element 4 of the programme of work, the Executive Secretary has begun to collect and disseminate relevant information to assess the consequences

of mariculture for marine and coastal biological diversity and promote techniques that minimize adverse impact, through the clearing-house mechanism. Although information is limited at present, it is clear that further attention to sustainable practices and the ecosystem approach to the management of ecosystems impacted by mariculture is needed. Further activities under this programme element may benefit from biological and socio-economic assessments of the impacts of mariculture or the development of indicators for such assessments. Additionally, the Executive Secretary is preparing a note on sustainable use for the seventh meeting of SBSTTA, including practical principles, operational guidance and associated instruments. Other activities pertaining to the programme element are awaiting the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mariculture, which will be organized as soon as the Secretariat receives an offer of financial support from Parties, other Governments or organizations.

E. Programme element 5 - Alien invasive species and genotypes

21. The issue of alien invasive species will be considered in-depth under item 4 of the provisional agenda for the sixth meeting of SBSTTA. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in its decision V/3, requested the Executive Secretary to make use of existing information, expertise and best practices on alien species in the marine environment in the implementation of the work programme on the cross-cutting issue of alien invasive species under decision IV/1 C.

22. There are three operational objectives under this programme element of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, contributing to the existing information and expertise on alien species and genotypes:

“5.1. To achieve better understanding of the causes of the introduction of alien species and genotypes and the impact of such introductions on biological diversity;

5.2. To identify gaps in existing or proposed legal instruments, guidelines and procedures to counteract the introduction of the adverse effects exerted by alien species and genotypes which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, paying particular attention to trans-boundary effects; and to collect information on national and international actions to address these problems, with a view to prepare for the development of a scientifically-based global strategy for dealing with the prevention, control and eradication of those alien species which threaten marine and coastal ecosystems, habitats and species;

5.3. To establish an “incident list” on introductions of alien species and genotypes through the national reporting process or any other appropriate means.”

23. In regard to operational objective 5.1, the Executive Secretary has begun gathering information, data and case-studies on the subject and disseminating that information through the clearing-house mechanism. Several mechanisms have been identified to facilitate this work. A request to Parties for case-studies was sent in June 2000 to all national focal points to the Convention. A number of submissions received concern marine and coastal species and are referred to in part B of the information note on case-studies and country comments on alien invasive species prepared by the Executive Secretary for the sixth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/2).

24. Additionally, the national reports serve as a potential mechanism for Parties to submit information, data or case-studies to the Executive Secretary for dissemination through the clearing-house mechanism. A review of the national reports revealed that about half of Parties have strategies or are discussing strategies for addressing the issue of alien invasive species. Primary discussion within the national reports is of terrestrial alien invasive species, with the majority being plant species. Although two reports mention alien invasive species within a marine or coastal environment, the information provided in each is not inclusive enough to be considered a case-study.

25. The Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) held its phase I synthesis meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, in September 2000. Several case-studies of marine alien invasive species were presented at the meeting. Those case-studies will be disseminated through the GISP website (<http://jasper.stanford.edu/GISP/>) and may contribute to better understanding of the causes of the introduction of alien species in marine and coastal ecosystems and the impact of such introductions on biological diversity.

26. In addition, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), through its GloBallast programme, is contributing to the identification of pelagic juvenile stages of benthic organisms found in ballast water discharge, as ballast water has been identified as one of the primary vectors for alien invasive species in marine and coastal habitats. IMO has further contracted bio-invasive specialists, who are assembling case-studies on introductions. This component of the GloBallast programme has begun in the pilot countries of Brazil, South Africa and Ukraine and will soon expand to include China, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

27. The recent 9th International Coral Reef Symposium in October 2000 contained a session dedicated to coral-reef non-indigenous and invasive species. This session presented a number of additional case-studies in marine environments, but demonstrated the need for further taxonomic studies on reef species and further analysis of the threats of alien invasive species to tropical coral-reef ecosystems.

28. In regard to operational objective 5.2 on the identification of gaps in existing or proposed legal instruments, guidelines and procedures for marine and coastal ecosystems, the Executive Secretary produced an information note (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/9) for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which provides information on international, global and regional legal instruments, guidelines and procedures, provides information on national and international actions, and further identified gaps emerging from an analysis of that information.

29. IMO is also undergoing activities on ballast-water treatment research and development, with the intent of addressing ballast water as a vector of alien invasive species. Currently, resolution A.868(20) adopted by the General Assembly attempts to harmonize existing voluntary requirements on ballast-water procedures and minimize the impact of ballast-water discharge. The development of a single, global ballast-water control system that will apply internationally may facilitate progress by the General Assembly towards the adoption of a mandatory legal instrument on the treatment and processing of ballast water.

30. In accordance with the request of the Conference of the Parties in its decision V/3, the Executive Secretary has made use of existing information, expertise and best practices in the marine environment in the implementation of the cross-cutting issue on alien species. This is reflected in three notes by the Executive Secretary on the substantive issue of alien invasive species for consideration of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/6, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/7, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/8).

31. With regard to operational objective 5.3 on the establishment of an “incident list” on introductions of alien species and genotypes through the national reporting process or any other appropriate means, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre has been compiling a database of invasive species. It contains nearly 1000 cases across all taxonomic groups, and is global in its coverage though major sources of data have biased coverage towards the Mediterranean, Baltic and Australia. Sources of data have been varied; peer-reviewed literature, discussion groups, Internet articles or stories taken from the popular press.

F. Programme element 6 – General

32. In its decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties approved the terms of reference and the duration of work specified for the ad hoc technical expert groups on marine and coastal protected areas and mariculture, as contained in annex II to recommendation V/14 of the SBSTTA, with the addition of “identification of best practices” for mariculture. Information on matters related to these ad hoc technical expert groups is included in the progress report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/2) prepared by the Executive Secretary.

III. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

33. In its decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to further strengthen cooperation with global organizations (para. 17) and stressed coordination with regional bodies (preamble). It further requested the Executive Secretary to coordinate with the secretariats of regional seas conventions and action plans with a view to exploring the possibility of further collaboration (paragraph 18). In this regard, the Executive Secretary has undertaken several activities:

(a) The Executive Secretary has transmitted to the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at its sixth meeting, in November 2000, the view expressed by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that there is significant evidence that climate change is a primary cause of the recent and severe extensive coral bleaching, and that this evidence is sufficient to warrant remedial measures being taken in line with the precautionary approach. In this regard, the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNFCCC, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have initiated dialogue to explore the integration of biological diversity concerns into the Kyoto Protocol and possible joint actions in implementing the programme of work on coral bleaching. The Executive Secretary has produced a note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11) on climate change and biological diversity, which includes cooperative elements for exploration with the UNFCCC and the IPCC;

(b) A Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat and Wetlands International was finalized and signed by both parties in October 2000 to facilitate further cooperation and collaborative programmes on wetlands and in support of the ecosystem approach to the conservation of biological diversity through the global network for wetland conservation and wise use;

(c) With a view to coordinating activities aimed at the implementation of chapter 17 of the Agenda 21 within the United Nations system, the Convention Secretariat continues to be involved in the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC-SOCA) and collaborative efforts with SOCA member organizations. Subparagraphs (d) to (h) below reflect cooperative efforts with SOCA member organizations;

(d) The Secretariat has been accepted to join other members of SOCA as a core contributor to the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans. The Atlas will be a Web-based, interactive information system database on the science and sustainable use of oceans, and will serve as an important tool for policy makers, scientists and students. The Secretariat requested to become a member of the core group inputting data as an important step towards increasing awareness of the Convention and biodiversity issues in general and facilitating better coordination of implementation measures under the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity;

(e) The Secretariat additionally served as an observer at the International Expert Consultation on Aquatic Animal Diversity Information and Communication System organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Fisheries Trust held in Rome in November 2000. The convening of the Expert Consultation is in response to the global need for improving availability and communication of information of aquatic diversity, especially at the genetic

level, for use in fisheries, aquaculture and conservation of aquatic genetic resources in ecosystems and gene banks;

(f) In paragraph 17 of decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to continue its strong involvement in the implementation of the of the marine and coastal programme of work. In the past, UNESCO has contributed to the work programme through the secondment of a Programme Officer to the Secretariat, which facilitated strong cooperation. Continued inputs have been provided on behalf of UNESCO's major intergovernmental programmes including, *inter alia*, the Man and Biosphere Programme and the programmes and activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), as well as relevant activities of other intergovernmental programmes, such as the International Hydrological Programme and the International Geological Correlation Programme. As a specific response to the invitation contained in paragraph 4 of decision V/3, UNESCO, through the Division of Ecological Sciences and in consultation with IOC, is also contributing to the development and implementation of a specific work plan on coral bleaching;

(g) The Secretariat is cooperating with the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) to work together on biological diversity issues in marine and coastal areas. Currently, this cooperation is focused in two areas: the integration of biological diversity considerations into the methodology protocols of the GIWA; and the sharing of information on assessment evaluation;

(h) The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) share common interests with respect to the sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources and the prevention of physical degradation and destruction of habitats. For this reason, the Secretariat and the GPA Coordination Office have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to ensure harmonization at the global, regional and national levels and to facilitate implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity. A consultative meeting on cooperation among the secretariats of the GPA, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the regional seas conventions and action plans was convened in November 2000. The meeting focused on the development of a strategic plan for collaboration and coordination on the issue and the potential of joint implementation of the marine and coastal programme of work and the GPA category on physical alterations and destruction of habitats;

(i) In paragraph 18 of decision V/3, the Executive Secretary was requested to coordinate with the secretariats of regional seas conventions and action plans with a view to exploring the possibility of further collaboration, including the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate, paying particular attention to the identification of priorities for action at the regional level, the development of joint implementation strategies and identification of joint activities and the use of regional networks, and to report to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on collaboration with the regional seas conventions and action plans. In this regard, the Secretariat has existing memoranda of cooperation or understanding with the secretariats of the Cartagena, Lima and Barcelona Conventions, and is currently finalizing a similar memorandum with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). Within the framework of these cooperation agreements, joint work plans are annexed, delineating harmonization on elements between the regional conventions and the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity;

(j) Additionally, in November of 2000, the Secretariat participated in the Third Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. One of the four principle objectives of that meeting was to strengthen the linkages between the regional seas conventions and action plans and global environmental conventions and related agreements. Discussions regarding cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the regional programmes resulted in the following recommendations to participants:

- (i) The Secretariat should provide to the secretariats of the regional seas conventions and action plans the following:

- a. List of SBSTTA documents relevant to the marine and coastal programme of work available through the clearing-house mechanism;
 - b. List of documents of the Conference of the Parties relevant to the marine and coastal programme of work available through the clearing-house mechanism;
 - c. List of the national focal points of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - d. List of GEF focal points;
 - e. List of GEF supported biodiversity projects;
 - f. List of the national reports received;
 - g. The decisions of the Conference of the Parties comprising the marine and coastal programme of work;
 - h. A sample memorandum of understanding entered into by the Secretariat;
- (ii) The regional seas conventions and action plans should report to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the implementation of the marine and coastal programme of work within the respective regions, which will subsequently be reported to SBSTTA and the Conference of the Parties;
 - (iii) The regional seas conventions and action plans should seek to identify experts on marine and coastal biological diversity from the respective regions and encourage their nomination to the roster of experts under the Convention through the appropriate national focal points;
 - (iv) The regional seas conventions and action plans should be represented at the relevant meetings held under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (v) The Secretariat of the Convention should, when appropriate, seek to participate in the global meetings under the regional seas conventions and action plans;
 - (vi) The Secretariat should, when appropriate, seek comment and contributions from the secretariats of the regional seas conventions and coordinators of the action plans in the preparation of relevant documentation under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (vii) The regional seas conventions and action plans and the Convention Secretariat should seek to identify common elements between the respective regional activities and the marine and coastal programme of work, with a view to harmonizing work plans;
 - (viii) The regional seas conventions and action plans, together with the Convention Secretariat, should seek to encourage national reporting consistent with the guidelines approved by the Conference of the Parties, with a view to harmonizing reporting requirements of regional and global instruments;
 - (ix) The regional seas conventions and action plans should seek the advice and technical comments of the Convention Secretariat on project proposals regarding biodiversity-related issues;
 - (k) The Convention Secretariat has additionally strengthened cooperation with the regional coordinating units for the East Asian seas, the East African seas and the Wider Caribbean and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme through their participation in the liaison group on coral reefs in Bali, Indonesia, which contributed to the development of a specific work plan on coral bleaching under the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity;
 - (l) Under the Cartagena Convention, several ongoing activities have been identified in to be consistent with elements of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity and offer

opportunity to build further cooperation: subregional nodes for coral reef monitoring under the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) have been established; national and subregional status-of-the-reefs reports have been finalized; data has been compiled and analysed from these nodes and other sites for ReefBase, and the report was presented at the International Coral Reef Symposium in October 2000; research assessment on the status of coral reef diseases in the Wider Caribbean has been carried out in cooperation with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC); promotion of best practices within coastal tourism activities has begun; and efforts are under way to strengthen marine protected areas through an existing network, training programme, best practices demonstration sites and a small grants fund for direct technical assistance, with funding from the United States Government.
