

## PRESS-RELEASE

### Major Commitments of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan Announced Ahead of the UN Ocean Conference



*June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Toyama, Japan/Busan, Republic of Korea:* **Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme puts forward voluntary commitment of the UN Ocean Conference to strengthen regional cooperation to achieve ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals.**

The region covered by the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) is one of the most densely populated world's areas with a total population of about 300 million people, most of them living in the coastal areas. High rates of economic growth, increasing population and the growing demand for food and energy put a lot of pressure on coastal and marine ecosystems. Among major environmental pressures as identified by the NOWPAP specialists are fragmentation and loss of habitats caused by urban and tourism development, pollution, high risk of oil and hazardous and noxious substances spill incidents, eutrophication and loss of biodiversity and overfishing. Negative impacts of warming climate represent a significant compounding factor for various socio-ecological systems in the region.

The next phase of the NOWPAP evolution focuses on the achievement of ocean-related [Sustainable Development Goals](#) of [the Agenda 2030](#) in an integrated way by assessing status of the marine and coastal environment (SDGs 13 to 15, and 17), preventing and reducing land- and sea-based sources of pollution (SDGs 12 and 14), and supporting integrated coastal and river basin planning and management based on the ecosystem-based approach (SDGs 11, 13 to 15). Among few important expected deliverables during the next years are the adoption of the Northwest Pacific Ecological Quality Objectives and associated targets towards good environmental status, effective preparedness to oil and hazardous and noxious substances spills, the integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment and thematic regional studies on eutrophic and hypoxic areas and harmful algal blooms.

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The [“Strengthening regional cooperation for the protection of the marine and coastal environment in the Northwest Pacific”](#) has been put forth as a voluntary commitment of the NOWPAP four member states at the United Nations Ocean Conference taking place at the UN Headquarters in New York from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> 2017.

NOWPAP related activities are also featured in the two other voluntary commitments submitted by the Government of Japan at the Ocean Conference: [Marine litter management through TEMM \(the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Korea\)](#) and [Marine environment protection through CEARAC \(Special Monitoring & Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre\) of NOWPAP \(Northwest Pacific Action Plan\)](#).

They are featured in the [The Ocean Conference Registry of Voluntary Commitments](#) together commitments undertaken by Governments, UN and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders toward the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

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## **About NOWPAP**

[The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region \(NOWPAP\)](#) is the regional intergovernmental mechanism established in 1994 by the governments of Japan, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation. NOWPAP’s main goal is to protect and sustainably manage the coastal and marine environment in the Northwest Pacific. NOWPAP is one of the eighteen [Regional Seas Programmes](#) of [the United Nations Environment Programme](#). NOWPAP activities are implemented by the four Regional Activity Centers hosted by the four member states - [Special Monitoring and Coastal Environment Assessment Regional Activity Centre \(CEARAC\)](#); [Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre \(DINRAC\)](#); [Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre \(MERRAC\)](#), and [Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre \(POMRAC\)](#) – and coordinated through the Regional Coordinating Unit with two offices in Japan and Republic of Korea.

Among some of the notable NOWPAP achievements over the past twenty years of cooperation to address the above challenges were adoption and implementation of the two Regional Action Plans: NOWPAP Regional Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances Spill Contingency Plan (2005) and NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (2008), establishment of the NOWPAP database and regional information management system, publication of scientific and policy-relevant regional reports on the state of the marine and coastal environment and emerging issues such as marine litter, eutrophication and harmful algal blooms, integrated coastal zone management, and persistent organic pollutants, strengthened capacities of technical experts and policy specialists, and the increased awareness about the state of the marine and coastal environment among different stakeholders in the Northwest Pacific region.

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