

United Nations University

UNU update on its activities relating to oceans and the law of the sea: UNU's Inter-linkages Initiative is pursued as an innovative approach to managing sustainable development. Based on the recognition that environmental management is strongly related to human behaviour at all levels of natural and human interaction, it promotes greater connectivity between ecosystems and societal performance. Under this initiative, 14 national and regional case studies were carried out in Southeast Asia and the Pacific in 2001-2002, the results of which were presented at a public forum and are also disseminated widely through the UNU website <<http://www.unu.edu/inter-linkages/>> and the 2003 spring edition of *Work in Progress*, a UNU research periodical that featured the initiative and its recent findings. In spite of the diversity of the countries studied in geographical, socio-economic and environmental conditions and in institutional arrangements, the studies identified some needs common to the region: capacity development, information policies, and regional support mechanisms. Contributing to the preparations and follow-up of the WSSD in 2002, the initiative is further focused on developing a synergistic and cohesive response to environmental problems, which are of an inter-linked nature.

The UNU Fisheries Training Programme offers postgraduate training of six-months' duration in six fisheries and fisheries-related fields in Iceland, covering fishery policy and planning, marine and inland water resource assessment and monitoring, and environmental assessment and monitoring. Started in 1998, this annual programme has to date trained 62 participants from 19 countries. Participants are from developing countries with considerable fisheries potential (nationally or provincially) and are already working as professionals in their individual disciplines. The training in Iceland is practical in its approach and tailored to suit the needs of the individual participants. After a six-to-seven week introductory course, the fellows undergo specialized training in specific fields. This part consists of a five-week structured course followed by a project and work assignment. The programme is run in cooperation with several institutions and universities in Iceland, under the coordination of the Marine Research Institute in Reykjavik. (More information about the programme can be obtained at www.hafro.is/unuftp/.)

Also of note is the UNU project entitled "Environmental Monitoring and Governance in the East Asian Hydrosphere - Monitoring of POPs in the East Asian Region". One of the major components of the project deals with monitoring of the pollution of marine and coastal environments from land-based sources of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Monitoring is conducted in the coastal waters off nine East Asian countries, namely China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and the Philippines. Capacity development activities for coastal monitoring have been included in the project. The monitoring programme has clearly indicated an increasing trend in pollution from land-based sources, particularly pesticides and herbicides from agricultural sources. Urban areas also are major contributors to this pollution. Some encouraging signs of decreasing DDT levels in coastal areas have also been observed in the region, which indicates an improved control of DDT application in East Asia. A comprehensive GIS-based database of the monitoring data, called LandBase, has been developed for data coordination and dissemination, and can be accessed at <http://landbase.hq.unu.edu/>.