Pollution of the Marine Environment

Preamble

1. Point and non-point source pollution continue globally, resulting in the steady degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems. Over 80% of all marine pollution originates from land-based sources which are primarily industrial, agricultural and urban.

2. The continued discharge of industrial wastes including PCBs, heavy metals and other toxics, and the indirect release of nitrates, phosphates and pesticide products often result in toxic accumulations in the marine food chain. Excessive urbanization of the coastline continues unabated in many parts of the world, resulting in eutrophication and reduction of marine resources. Radioactive contamination from a variety of sources and the growing problem of plutonium buildup in sediments of some estuaries also invoke concern. The operational, deliberate and accidental pollution originating from ships and offshore installations continues, often with disastrous consequences.

3. The world's oceans also receive pollutants from or through the atmosphere, although knowledge of transportation processes and quantities, and comprehension of the physical interaction between the oceans and the atmosphere is presently insufficient.

4. The non-government organization (NGO) community recognizes that the above sources of marine pollution pose grave health risks, not only to humans, but to all aquatic organisms and the environments in which they live. Immediate attention must be given to reducing these sources of pollution if we are to save our oceans, their life forms and ourselves.

Principles

5. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and global and regional instruments, all States have an obligation to prevent, combat and control marine pollution.

6. The polluter pays principle is rapidly receiving global acceptance and requires further expression in international and national laws and regulations.

7. The precautionary principle calls for anticipatory management actions, particularly for substances that are toxic, bio-accumulative and persistent, and this should find strong expression in national laws and regulations.

8. In addition to States, NGOs should be allowed standing in international tribunals regarding environmental matters, in order to provide representation and assistance to victims of pollution and to seek appropriate compensation on their behalf.

Action Plan

Pollution from land-based sources. We will:
9. Insist that industries review their waste disposal practices with the aim of minimizing and eventually eliminating harmful waste discharge. NGOs also urge national and international authorities to regulate this activity and to enact and strictly enforce environmental laws and regulations based on the precautionary and polluter pays principles.

10. Study how ecologically acceptable biological and organic substances can increasingly be utilized so as to minimize and eventually phase out the use of non-biodegradable chemical substances currently in use.

11. Recognize that when treated and managed properly, wastes can be usefully recycled for agricultural and industrial purposes.

12. Act to encourage and assist United Nations (UN) members to draft and ratify a convention to discourage transboundary pollution in marine waters that identifies liability procedures so that nations adversely affected by transboundary pollution will be compensated for loss and the costs of clean-up.

13. Encourage and assist the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to undertake a study of regional and worldwide accumulation of toxics in marine species and their habitats within exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and in international waters; establish global lists of persistent toxic substances that should not be discharged into the marine environment; and to this end, develop a treaty among member States to ban the release of persistent toxic chemicals that accumulate in marine species and their habitats.

14. Encourage and assist UNEP, through its Regional Seas Program, to renew its effort toward the development and implementation of regional agreements to limit land-based sources of marine pollution, especially from non-point-sources.

15. Lobby the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to support appropriate regional and national governmental and nongovernmental organizations to monitor marine pollution within GEF-eligible countries.

16. Encourage and assist governments to regulate and monitor marine ecosystems and river systems that empty into marine waters for persistent toxic substances with the aim of achieving zero discharge levels.

17. Encourage and assist governments to develop and implement plans for reducing non-point sources of pollution of the marine environment.

18. Pressure States whose industries export waste products for disposal in waters of other nations to cease such activities.

19. Develop and disseminate innovative ideas concerning the utilization or recycling of wastes.

**Vessel source pollution. We will:**
20. Call upon governments to ratify international conventions and implement legislation concerned with vessel source pollution. In particular, we call upon coastal States to fulfill their commitment to establish reception facilities in accordance with the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) 73/78 and for developed countries to assist developing countries in this process.

21. Encourage and assist States to rigorously monitor and enforce provisions of MARPOL for ships registered under their jurisdiction, owned by their citizens or that use port facilities in their national waters. In particular, we will consider:

a. introducing a polluters' register for vessels known to discharge wastes or substances in violation of MARPOL 73/78

b. initiating an education and information campaign for seafarers and deck officers aimed at promoting responsible management of wastes on board.

22. Encourage and assist the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in developing international laws to regulate actions to minimize marine pollution in international waters.

23. Oppose offshore oil and gas drilling in marine areas where such activities pose serious risks to the local marine ecosystem. Where development of offshore fields does take place, NGOs will urge governments to take appropriate action to prevent the discharge of any harmful substances into the marine environment by ensuring that drilling and production comply with the strongest environmental standards.

24. Urge operators of nuclear propelled vessels to publish the amount and composition of radioactive discharges. Accidents to such vessels or to nuclear reactors must be reported in line with regulations for nuclear reactors on land.

**Pollution from the atmosphere. We will:**

25. Urge national and international scientific institutions to develop scientific models to enhance our level of understanding of transportation processes of airborne pollutants, and the interaction between the oceans and the atmosphere.

26. Encourage and support the World Bank, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to assist member nations in studies on the impact of conventional air pollutants and global atmospheric changes on marine species and ecosystems, and disseminate existing analyses to nations that are likely to be harmed by these pollutants and their effects.

**Commitment of Resources. We will:**

27. Initiate regional workshops, with assistance from international NGOs, in order to exchange and share scientific information and procedures to deal with environmental problems.

28. Form an electronic network to share information. This will be organized by NGOs
with computer technical support and should include programs to train and assist NGOs in less developed countries.

29. Develop a complete list of NGOs with names of contact persons and areas of interest and expertise, organized by region, to encourage regional network-building and meetings.

30. Initiate a newsletter among ourselves to inform each other of actions taken to implement this NGO treaty.