

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

Agenda Item 5 (f)

PROGRAMME AREA: Collaborative Activities between UN-DOALOS and SACEP/SAS

BACKGROUND

The **United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, also called the Law of the Sea Convention and the Law of the Sea Treaty is the international agreement that resulted from the third United Nations Convention [Conference] on the Law of the Sea, which took place from 1973 through 1982. The Law of the Sea Convention defines the rights and responsibilities of nations in their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources. The Convention concluded in 1982 replaced four 1958 treaties. UNCLOS came into force in 1994, a year after Guyana became the 60th state to sign the treaty. To date 155 countries and the European Community have joined in the Convention. The United States has signed the treaty, but the Senate has not ratified it.

While the Secretary General of the United Nations receives instruments of ratification and accession and the UN provides support for meetings of states party to the Convention, the UN has no direct operational role in the implementation of the Convention. There is, however, a role played by organizations such as the International Maritime Organization, the International Whaling Commission, and the International Seabed Authority (the latter being established by the UN Convention).

In this context, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs helps to coordinate the Organization's activities and programmes in the area of marine affairs. It is active in assisting and advising States in the integration of the marine sector in their development planning. It also responds to requests for information and advice on the legal, economic and political aspects of the Convention and its implications for States. Such information is used by States during the ratification process, in the management of the marine sector of their economies and in the development of a national sea-use policy.

PRESENT STATUS

Following discussions the Director General had with Senior Officials of UN-DOALOS at the UNICPOLOS Meeting in May 2007, SAS and DOALOS Secretariat are finalising arrangements for the implementation of 2 major activities. The first is the conduct of a **Regional Training Course on the Development, Implementation and Management of Marine Protected Areas in the South Asian Seas Region** and the second is the conduct of a **Two Week Scanning Phase Workshop in connection with the UNEP Shelf Programme**. The first of these activities is planned for the 2nd half of 2008.

FUNDING

The total budget for the Regional Training Course is estimated at US \$ 97,000 of which UN-DOALOS has committed US \$ 33,500. SAS and UN-DOALOS is expected to raise the balance funding through partners, national governments and other funding agencies