

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is pleased to respond to the request of the Secretary-General for information related to GEF activities at protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems and addressing safety of navigation. The information provided illustrates the programs and projects that the GEF has financed as of June 2002 in the two

Establishing marine protected areas represents an important tool for recovery of fish biomass and marine biodiversity. Community-based co-management strategies and gender-based initiatives can help achieve sustainable use goals. GEF has piloted successful strategies of community-based participation by local users through the development of local management structures. Marine conservation, small-scale fisheries management, and development of sustainable aquaculture facilities are all integral parts of integrated coastal management (ICM) in these vulnerable systems.

The international waters focal area of the GEF was established to help recipient nations address concerns of waterbodies that are transboundary in nature. Over 95 % of all captured fisheries of the oceans are taken from the 64 large marine ecosystems (LMEs) that parallel the continental shelves and make up semi-enclosed seas. Pollution may enter from upstream, non-coastal States, and the pollution may cross national boundaries within the LME. In addition, living resources may cross national boundaries, habitat within national boundaries may provide nursery areas for mobile living resources, and ships may release contaminants and alien species from other nations. In 1995, the GEF Council included the concept of LMEs in the GEF Operational Strategy as a vehicle for promoting ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources in the international waters focal area within a spirit of adaptive management. GEF allocations have played a catalytic role in this area during the last decade in order to test approaches and demonstrate strategies for reversing degradation and restoring biomass.

From 1991 to 2002, 32 GEF international waters projects were approved that address the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. The GEF allocation for these approved projects was \$US 277 million with a total project cost of \$US 600 million. Some 35 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 32 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are participating in these GEF projects addressing coastal and marine waters. A number of other GEF projects address pollution reduction in freshwater basins draining to coastal ecosystems, but they are not reported here even though they have downstream coastal benefits.

The GEF international water projects address vulnerable ecosystems in 9 LMEs as well

