



# Global International Waters Assessment

## Dear GIWA friends,

2004 comes to an end and it is time to sum up the GIWA activities. It has been a successful year for GIWA. A large number of regional reports have been completed and published. The results have been launched and received attention by decision makers and by media.

The GIWA project to assess the major environmental threats to international waters is an important contribution to the international efforts to obtain sustainable future development. Our results give advice for priorities in a complicated world where water is essential in many ways. The Millennium Development Goals set the targets and we must all make our efforts to reach there.

During this year I have been fortunate to meet people in different parts of the world devoted to make a better future for the environment. In the region of Barents Sea in the Arctic the waters look different from the Lake Chad region in Africa. There are special conditions for the international waters of the Patagonian Shelf, yet others in the Pacific Ocean. But when the GIWA experts assess the problems and their root causes there are still some common major concerns. One dominating issue to take action on is the overexploitation of fish and other living resources. Another is pollution which is seriously threatening the lives of many people.

The GIWA reports not only list the problems, we also give options for solutions. Often our recommendations underline international and cross-disciplinary collaboration. I am certain that it can be done by connecting the right experts and decision makers and by focusing on the future issues, not bonds from the past. We are all citizens of the world, all depending on a sustainable environment.

Season's greetings to you all!

**Dag Daler,**  
Scientific Director

## GIWA reports to Mauritius

**GIWA is launching four regional reports on the small island developing states at the upcoming Mauritius International Meeting on SIDS in January. The four are covering the regions Indian Ocean, Pacific Islands, Caribbean Islands and Caribbean Sea/Small Islands and present the environmental conditions in the international waters of the SIDS.**

The GIWA reports are important contribution to the review of implementations of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for the sustainable development of SIDS. In 1994, the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS was convened

in Barbados. The conference adopted the programme that set forth specific actions and measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. A comprehensive review of the BPOA was to be held at an international meeting to be held in Mauritius some ten years after its adoption. The meeting in January is expected to have more than 2000 participants from the islands, their traditional donor partners and other countries, including some 25 heads of State and Government.



The GIWA regional reports can be downloaded from [www.giwa.net](http://www.giwa.net)

## Major environmental changes in the Colorado River Delta

Freshwater shortage was the most significant GIWA concern for the Gulf of California/Colorado River region. The modification of stream flow by dams, the canalisation of riverbeds, and the alteration of riparian zones by agricultural activities in the Colorado River Basin have resulted in major environmental changes causing loss of fish, wildlife, and native flora, particularly in the Colorado River Delta region.

Pollution of water resources in the Colorado River was also considered a major concern affecting the ecology and population, since heavy metals, arsenic, lead pesticides, uranium, and other toxins have all been found in excessive levels in the soils and waters re-

sources of the Basin. Salinity is considered as a significant and continuous issue, historically affecting U.S.-Mexico relations since the early 1940s.

In order to implement effective conservation programme more water flowing directly into the delta is needed. Economic and technical support from the U.S. will be necessary, according to the report.

However the preservation of the Colorado River Delta ecosystem will remain a complex task, say the authors of the GIWA report. To maintain sufficient stream flows in the River, the alignment of numerous institutions, agreements, and organisations will be required.

# Cooperation key to improvement in the Baltic Sea region

The GIWA Baltic Sea report states two major future issues for the improvement of the Baltic Sea: Environmental policies must be integrated with agricultural policies and the EU Water Framework Directive must be implemented in all the countries of the Baltic Sea, including Russia.



*Elina Rautalahti-Miettinen, Dag Daler, Marianne Lindström and Ain Lääne presented the GIWA Baltic Sea report in Malmö.*

The GIWA report on the Baltic Sea was presented in a key note speech at the 12th Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation conference in Malmö, Sweden, where 300 regional representatives from the region were assembled. The report gives options for actions to mitigate the major environmental problems of the Baltic Sea: eutrophication and over-fishing.

The GIWA report concludes that agricultural run-off, urban wastewater discharges, industrial chemical pollution and oil spills are problems in the Baltic Sea region. There is a decreased viability of fish stocks in the Baltic Sea ecosystem. Cod, herring, salmon and eel are suffering from the reduced water quality and being fished at unsustainable rates.



**Youth project.** GIWA has invited youth to a project for better environmental water conditions in the regions of Lake Victoria and Baltic Sea. Read about the project at [www.giwa.net](http://www.giwa.net), news and highlights.

According to the report, environmental policies must be integrated with the agricultural policies, by for instance supporting cooperation network and action programmes. The Baltic Sea countries are also advised to cooperate in the field of control and enforcement in fisheries.

## The regional teams give GIWA strength

It is with great sorrow that I will leave GIWA in January 2005. The last three years at GIWA have been immensely rewarding for me both professionally and personally. I feel very fortunate to have been associated with GIWA, UNEP and the University of Kalmar. My experiences and training have been invaluable, and I will leave with many pleasant memories and useful skills. My departure is a good occasion to look back and reflect on the collective achievements of the GIWA community.

The objective of the GIWA is "to develop a comprehensive, strategic framework for the identification of priorities for remedial and mitigatory actions in international waters, designed to achieve significant environmental benefits at



*The GIWA coordinator for Southern Hemisphere Juan Carlos Belausteguiotia moves on to new challenges at the World Bank. Scientific Advisor Ulla Li Zwiefel goes on maternity leave and Professor Olof Lindén is reentering this position.*

national, regional and global levels". GIWA met this objective by identifying the regions with the most severe impacts and analyzing their institutional capacity to implement actions to remediate these impacts. This information will be very useful for GEF and other international donors and financing institutions. GIWA has demonstrated the feasibility of conducting complex assessments on a global scale that include not only an analysis of the regional environmental problems of international waters but also of their related socio-economic impacts, their root causes and policy options. Almost all GEF eligible regions were covered by GIWA regional reports. The root cause and policy option analyses were conducted through case studies developed by the regional teams. The development of more than 80 case studies across the world, allowed GIWA to have a global perspective of both causes and potential solutions to water related problems. The reports have been well received in their regions. They have already been used by policy makers and as sources of information for administrative and research purposes.

As you well know, GIWA analyzed four sets of problems (freshwater shortage, pollution, unsustainable exploitation of living resources, and habitat modification) in both freshwater and ma-

rine waters. Comparing the severity of different sets of problems in so many diverse regions was a great challenge. To do so, GIWA produced a standard methodology. The application of this methodology has taught us many lessons and we have clear ideas as to how the methodology can be improved. Both the methodology and the ideas to improve it will be very useful for future assessments.

In my view, the main strength of the GIWA has been the task teams that conducted the regional assessments. The teams were formed by experts in different disciplines and from most of the countries included in each GIWA region. Around 1500 experts from all over the world collaborated in the assessment. These experts are now familiar with a methodology that analyzes environmental conditions, causes and policy options in international waters. Furthermore, regional teams were able to go beyond fields of specialization and took an integrated approach in linking environmental threats to their root causes and to actions for reform.

I wish all my GIWA colleagues the great success that this innovative project and competent professionals deserve.

**Juan Carlos Belausteguiotia**