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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the Protection of the
Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its
Protocols

Sophia Antipolis, France, 31 October 1997

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST POLLUTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

* Reissued for technical reasons

Introduction

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention was held in Sophia Antipolis (France), at the newly opened premises of the MAP/Regional Activity Centre for the Blue Plan (BP/RAC), on 31 October 1997.

Participants

2. The meeting was presided by H.E. Mr Lahoucine Tijani, Minister of the Environment of Morocco, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties. Mr Mohamed Si Youcef, Director General, Ministry of the Environment of Algeria (Vice-President), Mr Alexandros Lascaratos, MAP liaison officer for Greece (Vice-President), Ms Nehama Ronen, Director General, Ministry of the Environment of Israel (Vice-President), Mr Abdel Ghaffar Aldieb, Director of Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, representing the vice-president for Egypt, and Ms Amparo Rambla Gil, Assistant Director General, Ministry of the Environment of Spain (Rapporteur) were present.
3. Mr L. Chabason, Coordinator of MAP, and Mr I. Dharat, Senior Programme Officer, represented the Secretariat.
4. The full list of participants is contained in Annex I of this report.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

5. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr Lahoucine Tijani, President of the Bureau, who welcomed the participants and expressed his thanks to the Blue Plan Centre for hosting the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and organization of work

6. The meeting adopted the agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda contained in document UNEP/BUR/51/1 and annotated in document UNEP/BUR/51/2.

Agenda Item 3: Progress report by the Coordinator on activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau (Palma de Majorca, 9 May 1997)

7. The Coordinator introduced his progress report contained in document UNEP/BUR/51/3, which covered the period from May to September 1997. He briefed the meeting on the various sections of the report:

Financial matters

8. He pointed out that Libya has paid a good part of the arrears to the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF). The amount of US\$ 295,405 was received lately. This amount has been expected for the 1997 budget. He also pointed out that UNEP has accepted to waive the 13% programme support cost on expenditure against the EU Voluntary Contribution starting from 1998. The released funds (estimated around US\$ 63,000) will be transferred to various activities.
9. On this issue, the President, while thanking Libya for its recent payment, expressed the hope that the balance of the unpaid contribution would be paid soon by Libya.

Personnel matters

10. The Coordinator briefed the meeting on the process of filling the two posts of Deputy Coordinator and MED POL Coordinator. He pointed out that the official announcements of the two posts were advertized on 20 June 1997 and sent to all MAP focal points for their attention and wider distribution. The deadline for submission of applications was fixed as 31 July, which subsequently was extended to 15 August 1997. A panel composed of high ranking UNEP officials was established and met in Geneva on 22 October 1997. A short list of candidates was reviewed thoroughly by the panel and specific recommendations were sent to UNEP Headquarters.
11. A brief discussion took place on this issue during which the Vice-President from Greece pointed out that his country attaches a great importance to the further development of MAP. Particularly in this period of reorientation and refocusing, it is very important that the implementation of MAP Phase II and MEDPOL Phase III be organized in the best possible way. Therefore, Greece is attaching extreme importance to the recruitment of the Deputy Coordinator and the MEDPOL Coordinator which has been initiated. In this respect, Greece would like to stress that the recruitment should be done in full accordance with the relevant announcements.
12. The representative from Morocco expressed her satisfaction with the fact that UNEP has not imposed candidates from outside the Mediterranean region. She pointed out that she trusts, up to now, the UNEP mechanism for selecting personnel.
13. The President expressed his satisfaction with the interest shown by countries vis-à-vis this selection and particularly their interest in seeing that these posts are filled with competent people.

Structure of MAP

14. The Coordinator informed the meeting on the work of the *Ad-hoc* Group on MAP Structure established by the last meeting of the Contracting Parties. He briefly dealt with some of the main recommendations of this Group which will be reviewed and approved by the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997).

Environmental impact evaluation concerning MAP

15. Mr L. Chabason stated that in order to assess the effects of MAP projects on the environment and the sustainability of the results, UNEP is undertaking an Environmental Impact Evaluation for the Mediterranean Project (MAP). For this purpose, UNEP consultants have visited several Mediterranean Countries, MAP Regional Activity Centres and a number of non-government organizations. It is expected that the report of the consultants will be finalized soon and it will be distributed to the Contracting Parties for their attention.
16. During the brief discussion on this issue, it was stressed that the evaluation report should first be distributed to the MAP National focal points, before being sent to the meeting of the Contracting Parties. It was commented by some participants that the title of the Project should be changed as it is not an impact evaluation.

Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

17. The Coordinator briefed the Bureau on the main results of the recently concluded third session of the MCSD (Sophia Antipolis, 28-30 October 1997). He pointed out that concrete recommendations were agreed upon concerning the two short-term themes, namely, Sustainable Management of Coastal Zones and Management of Water Demand. Moreover, a draft Rules of procedure of the Commission was thoroughly reviewed, amended and approved by the Commission. These recommendations will be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997) for final approval.
18. During the ensuing debate, it was pointed out that the Commission should be encouraged to support the Mediterranean countries as they prepare national strategies for sustainable development. Another point was raised related to delayed work of one thematic working group, namely, the Urban/rural working group. On this point, the Coordinator, supported by another speaker, pointed out that it is up to the Commission to prepare and decide on its future work and that these issues should be raised in the Commission. It was also pointed out that the Bureau can give its general views on the work of the Commission and can recommend that it defines a methodological approach for its future work. The Secretariat could come with ideas and proposals on this issue.

Progress reports of the Regional Activity Centres

19. The Vice-President from Israel referred to the meeting on Project Performance Monitoring to be held in Beirut, on 15-17 December 1997 and requested the transfer of the venue of the meeting to another country in order for her country to participate.
20. The Secretariat pointed out that this meeting is being organized by the World Bank (METAP) and only the beneficiary countries are invited to this workshop.
21. Another point was raised on the need to avoid overlapping of work between the RAC Centres. For example both BP and PAP are dealing with the issue of water. The need to assess the real contribution of countries hosting a RAC Centre was also stressed in the meeting. Another point raised was related to the difficulties of some countries to directly deal with and benefit from a RAC Centre.

22. Concerning CAMP projects, it was stressed that the issue of follow-up to a CAMP project should be tackled in a proper way, due to the fact that it is not an easy exercise. In this connection, it was suggested that CAMP projects should include a section on a follow-up programme with a budgetary allocation that includes convening of related donor conferences. In the meantime, countries should have the means for follow-up exercises. Moreover, it was also stressed that follow-up involves assisting countries to materialize the studies prepared within a specific CAMP project. The importance of identifying exact dates for launching a CAMP project as well as dates of its conclusion was also emphasized. The Secretariat was requested to suggest concrete proposals concerning the follow-up of existing and completed CAMP projects.
23. On the issue of recruiting consultants for MAP projects, it was pointed out that there is a need to diversify the recruitment of consultants, in particular, to increase the recruitment of consultants from the South and the East of the Mediterranean.
24. The Vice-President from Israel referred to the issue of the imminent appointment of a new Director for the PAP Centre, and pointed out that this is an important issue and that MAP should be involved in the selection process. The Coordinator informed the meeting that during his visit to Croatia, in conjunction with the meeting of experts on liability and compensation (23-25 September 97), he had a meeting with the Croatian authorities during which he expressed MAP's view on the need for this post to be filled with a competent person and pointed out the necessary qualifications for this post.

Information

25. The Coordinator briefed the meeting on the publications and material issued by MAP. He mentioned in particular the translation of the Arabic version of MEDWAVES by an NGO from the South (APNEK - TUNISIA), the issuing of the French version of the MAP Brochure, the Brochure on the MCSD, and the start of the MAP Home Page (Internet), which is updated twice-a-month.

Legal matters

26. The Coordinator referred to the status of ratification of MAP Legal instruments contained in Annex III of his progress report and pointed out that unfortunately, as of today, no ratification has been received from any Contracting Party. He urged the Contracting Parties and in particular the members of the Bureau, to speed up the process of ratification. He envisaged that by the end of 1998, MAP legal instruments should be in force.
27. The Rapporteur from Spain pointed out that the ratification process has already started in her country. She expects that it will end by next year. With regard to Annex III "Status of Ratification", she proposed to add a new column with dates of signature and ratification of amendments to the Convention and any of its protocols.
28. At the end of the general discussion, the meeting took note of the progress report of the Coordinator.

Agenda Item 4: **Preparation for the Tenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997)**

29. The Coordinator briefed the meeting on the work which has been done so far on the preparation for the Tenth Ordinary Meeting. He briefly explained the contents of the Provisional Agenda of the meeting and its organizational issues. He pointed out that the meeting will be officially opened by H.E. the Minister of the Environment of Morocco, President of the present Bureau of the Contracting Parties. As Chairman of the MCSD, he will also present the work of the Commission, in conjunction with the presentation of the Coordinator's progress report on the MCSD activities.
30. The Coordinator also informed the Bureau that part of the first day (18 Nov.) and the morning of the second day (19 Nov.) will be devoted to general statements by the heads of delegation on the environment, sustainable development and Eco-Mediterranean cooperation. It is expected that the statements should not exceed 10 to 15 minutes each. The Coordinator pointed out that a new document will be prepared which will encompass the recommendations of the MCSD on coastal zone management and water resources, the revised Rules of procedure of the MCSD, the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and the new NGOs to be included in the MAP list of partners.

Agenda Item 5: **Rules of procedure of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)**

31. Mr I. Dharat (Senior Programme Officer) introduced the draft Rules of procedure of the MCSD contained in document UNEP/BUR/51/4. He informed the meeting that the first draft of the Rules of procedure was prepared by the Secretariat in conformity with the decision of the first meeting of the MCSD (Rabat, 1996). The draft text was reviewed by the first meeting of the Bureau of the Commission (Athens, 20-21 February 1997). Various proposals were made and subsequently were incorporated in a revised draft text. Due to time limitations, the Second Meeting of the Commission (Palma de Majorca, 6-8 May 1997) was not able to review the revised draft and decided to defer the issue to its Third meeting (Sophia Antipolis, 28-30 October 1997).
32. The revised (Second draft) text was thoroughly reviewed by the third meeting of the MCSD. Various amendments were made and incorporated in a new text which was approved by the meeting. The main issue of conflict was related to whether there was a need for a Bureau for the Commission. After long discussion, a consensus emerged to the effect that a Bureau consisting of 6 members shall be established on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution and an equitable distribution among the various groups. The Bureau should include three members representing Contracting Parties, one representative from each one of the three categories foreseen by the terms of reference of the MCSD. Should the need arise, the Coordinating Unit, in agreement with the President of the Bureau, could convene one meeting of the Bureau between two Commission meetings to ensure the follow-up and the smooth running of the work decided by the Commission.
33. The Vice-President from Greece, while accepting the proposal of the MCSD, reminded the Bureau of his country's concern and reservation expressed during the meeting of MAP/National focal point, about the establishment of a Bureau for the MCSD. He is

not in favour of this proposal in order to minimize MAP financial expenditure and to avoid confusion and conflicts between MAP bodies. The Vice-President from Israel shared the concern of the Greek delegation, and suggested a solution by changing the name of the proposed Bureau as it would not have the same fonctions as the MAP Bureau.

34. Others felt that as the Bureau of the MCSD has a limited authority, there would be no conflict between the Bureau of the Commission and that of the Contracting Parties, and they stressed the important role of the Bureau during the interval period between two Commission meetings.
35. With regard to the composition of the MCSD, and as the membership of the MCSD has not been completed (still four seats to be filled: two representing local authorities and two representing socio-economic actors), the Coordinator informed the Bureau that he has received two requests for membership to the MCSD: one from Turkey requesting the membership of the Municipality of Silifke (Mersin) to represent the local authorities category and another request from the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME) requesting membership to the MCSD to represent the socio-economic category.
36. After some discussion, the Bureau accepted the draft text of the Rules of procedure of the MCSD as proposed by the Third meeting of the Commission and recommended its approval by the Tenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997).
37. The Bureau also decided to request the 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997) to renew the mandate given to the Bureau by the Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Montpellier, 1-4 July 1996), with a view to completing the selection of the membership of the MCSD following consultation with the Contracting Parties.
38. The Bureau also recommended that the 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties reconfirm the present membership of the MCSD for another term until the next meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda Item 6: Review of MAP collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

39. Mr I. Dharat (Senior programme officer) noted that in conformity with the decision of the Bureau, the Secretariat has prepared a review report on the status of the non-governmental organizations incorporated in the MAP list of partnership for the consideration of the present meeting of the Bureau. In this connection, he introduced document UNEP/BUR/51/5, entitled "MAP Collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations - A Secretarial Review", pointing out that this is the first review of its kind undertaken by MAP. He explained the contents of the document which includes a section of critical review with specific recommendations relevant to the 62 NGOs already incorporated in the MAP list and also relevant to the 12 new NGOs requesting incorporation in the list. Besides the information given in the document concerning each organization, a supplementary file (dossier) was also available to the meeting which includes additional background information on each of these organizations.

40. During the ensuing discussion, a point was raised on the need to gather NGOs in networks rather than be admitted individually to the MAP list. Others raised concern about their actual role and how they communicate with each other. One delegation felt that there should be balance between the NGOs from the North and those from the South. He stressed that the important issue is not whether an NGO should be included in the MAP list or not, but rather on the actual role of the NGO and its contribution to MAP and to the work in the field.
41. Two members of the Bureau questioned the information given in the document about some new applicants and requested more information from the Secretariat.
42. At the end of the debate, it was agreed that more reflection in the future on the methodological work of MAP in relation to NGOs is needed. In this connection, it was agreed to suggest to the 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to establish a working group composed of representatives of the Contracting Parties with the objective of undertaking a methodological reflection in relation to NGOs participation in MAP.
43. With regard to the requests of the new NGOs, the Bureau decided to recommend to the 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties the inclusion of the following organizations in the MAP/NGO list of partnership:
- Association Marocaine pour la Protection de l'Environnement (ASMAPE)
 - Association Monégasque pour la Protection de la Nature (AMPN)
 - Association de Réflexion d'Echange et d'Action pour l'Environnement et le Développement (AREA-ED)
 - Association Tunisie Méditerranée pour le Développement Durable (ATUMED)
 - Chambers Group for the Development of Greek Isles (EOAEN) - Epemeleteriakos Omilos Anaptyxis Hellenikon Nision
 - EcoPeace
 - Forum of the Mediterranean for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MED Forum)
 - International Energy Foundation (IEF)
 - Mouvement Ecologique Algérien (MEA) - Algerian Ecological Movement (AEM)
44. The Bureau also decided to recommend to the 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties the deletion of the following two organizations from the MAP/NGO list of partnership:
- ICED - International Centre for Environment and Development (Switzerland)
 - UNIMED - University of the Mediterranean (Italy)

Agenda Item 7: **Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau**

45. The Secretariat proposed that the next meeting of the Bureau shall, if necessary, take place immediately before the Tenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Tunis, 18-21 November 1997).
46. After some discussion, the Bureau decided that a brief meeting of the Bureau would be convened on 18 November 1997, at 08.30 hr at the Palace Hotel, Tunis.

Agenda Item 8: **Any other business**

47. The Vice-President from Greece emphasized the need to record the deliberation of the Bureau meetings as was the case in the past.
48. The Coordinator confirmed that this will be done in the future.

Agenda Item 9: **Adoption of the report of the meeting**

49. As agreed, a draft report of the meeting will be prepared by the Secretariat and sent to members of the Bureau for their comments before its finalization and distribution.

Agenda Item 10: **Closure of the meeting**

50. The President, on behalf of all members of the Bureau and the Secretariat thanked BP/RAC for hosting the meeting on its premises and for its generous hospitality.
51. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the meeting closed on Friday, 31 October 1997, at 14.30 hours.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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**MOROCCO
MAROC**

Président

S.E. Monsieur Lahoucine Tijani

Secrétaire d'Etat auprès du

Ministre de l'Agriculture et l'Equipement

et de l'Environnement, chargé de l'Environnement

36, Charii Al Abtal

Agdal - Rabat

Maroc

Tel: 212 7 770885, 777681

Fax: 212 7 777697, 772640

**ALGERIA
ALGERIE**

Vice-Président

M. Mohamed Si. Youcef

Directeur Général de l'Environnement

Ministère de l'Intérieur des Collectivités locales

et de l'Environnement

Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Environnement

Palais Mostapha Pacha

Avenue de l'Indépendance

Alger

Algérie

Tel: 213 2 652967-651365

Fax: 213 2 652802

**EGYPT
EGYPTE**

Vice-Président

Mr Abdel Ghaffar Aldieb

Director of Environment and Sustainable

Development Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Corniche El Nile Street

Maspero

Cairo

Egypt

Tel: 202 5747847

Fax: 202 5747839

**GREECE
GRECE**

Vice-Président
Mr Alexandros Lascaratos
MAP liaison officer for Greece
Department of Applied Physics
Laboratory of Meteorology and Oceanography
University of Athens (building Phys-V)
Panepistimioupolis
Athens 15784

Tel: 301 7284839
Fax: 301 7295281
E-mail: alasc@pelagos.ocean.uoa.ariadne-T.gr

**ISRAEL
ISRAEL**

Vice-Président
Ms Nehama Ronen
Director General
Ministry of the Environment
P.O. Box 34033
5 Kanfei Nesharim Street
95464 Jerusalem
Israel

Tel: 972 2 6535934
Fax: 972 2 6553720/2

**SPAIN
ESPAGNE**

Rapporteur
Ms Amparo Rambla Gil
Subdirectora General Adjunta Normativo y
Coop. Institucional
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente
Plaza San Juan de la Cruz s/n
28002 Madrid
Spain

Tel: 34 1 5976374
Fax: 34 1 5978590
E-mail: amparo.rambla@senci.mma.es

ADVISERS-COUNSELLERS

**ISRAEL
ISRAEL**

Ms Ms Valerie Brachya
Director
Environmental Planning Division
Ministry of the Environment
P.O. Box 34033
5 Kanfei Nesharim Street
95464 Jerusalem
Israel

Tel: 972 2 6553850,1
Fax: 972 2 6553853
E-mail: valerie@netvision.net.il

**MOROCCO
MAROC**

Mme Bani Layachi
Directeur de l'observation des études et de
la coordination
Ministère de l'Environnement
75 rue de Sebou Agdal
Rabat
Maroc

Tel: 212 7 680740,41
Fax: 212 7 680746

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAMME
COORDINATING UNIT FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

**PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT
UNITE DE COORDINATION DU PLAN
D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**

Mr Lucien Chabason
Coordinator

Mr Ibrahim Dharat
Senior Programme Officer

Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean
Action Plan
P. O. Box 18019
48, Vassileos Konstantinou Avenue
116 10 Athens
Greece

Tel: 30 1 7253190-5

Fax: 30 1 7253196-7

Tlx: 222564 - 222611 MEDU GR

E-mail: unepmedu@compulink.gr