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Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the
Coastal States of the Mediterranean Region
on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea
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Progress Report of the Executive Director
on the implementation of the
Mediterranean Action Plan

Addendum

"THE BLUE PLAN
for actions in the Mediterranean Region"

1. As in paragraph 19 of the Executive Director's progress report (UNEP/CONF.1/INF.3), in Chapter I of the Mediterranean Action Plan, relating to the integrated planning of the development and management of natural resources of the Mediterranean region, the Governments of the region declared themselves ready to make a joint and thorough study of any proposal aimed at reconciling the demands of development with the need to protect and improve the quality of the Mediterranean environment, with a view to the optimal utilization of its resources.
2. The Governing Council of UNEP at its Third Session gave its support to the Mediterranean Action Plan ^{1/}. Furthermore, during that Session and in the light of an initiative by the Government of France, the view was expressed that UNEP should support the publication of broad guidelines and technical manuals which would serve as a basis for action to protect the Mediterranean and similar ocean eco-regions. It was suggested that UNEP should convene an expert group to start the preparation of such publications and, in particular, to elaborate the documents relating to a project for the protection of the Mediterranean which is referred to as the "Blue Plan" ^{2/}.
3. After further consultations between the Government of France and UNEP it was agreed that the objectives of the "Blue Plan" project should be to assist the Governments of the Coastal States of the Mediterranean in achieving a better appreciation of the common problems they face both in the Mediterranean sea and in its coastal areas. This in turn would assist them in reaching the appropriate decisions relative to the management and conservation of both these zones and of their resources. It was emphasized that the protection of the marine environment, as a life-supporting system, could not be dissociated from the priorities of development or from the improvement of the living conditions of the populations of the Mediterranean region.
4. In its operational aspect, the "Blue Plan" project, would consist of various phases. Each one of these phases would have to make room for sets of successive or simultaneous actions that would lead to the harmonious socio-economic development of the Mediterranean region and bring to a halt or reduce pollution and other forms of degradation. For this purpose, it was considered that the "Blue Plan" for action in the Mediterranean region would have to make provision for studies on, for example, population and socio-cultural questions, food and agriculture, human settlements, industry, trade, transport and tourism. Long-term trends in each of these fields will be identified, and their effects on the environment analyzed. In the light of this analysis, alternative socio-economic development policies will be elaborated whenever necessary. It was stated that the ultimate objective of the project would be to put at the disposal of national decision-makers and development planners information that would enable them to formulate plans for optimal socio-economic development on a sustainable basis without environmental degradation.

^{1/} UNEP/GC/55, para.187

^{2/} *ibid*, para. 194

5. On the basis of these preliminary ideas concerning the "Blue Plan" project, the Executive Director of UNEP convened on 22 and 23 January 1976, a meeting of experts from 16 of the 18 Mediterranean coastal States to advise him on the preparation of the project. Representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and other intergovernmental bodies were also present 3/.

6. In his opening statement, the Executive Director of UNEP asked the experts to advise him on:

- a more precise definition of the objectives of the project;
- the feasibility of its execution;
- the ways and means of its implementation.

7. After the two-day consultation, the experts confirmed the view of the Executive Director that the main objective of the "Blue Plan" project should be to assist the national planners and decision-makers of the Mediterranean States in making their choices from among various possible development policies. The choices will involve differing demands on natural and human resources and the environment in general. The project should give national authorities a better opportunity to consider the potential effects of various decisions on the ecological stability of the region, particularly in relation to the need for continued balanced development throughout the Mediterranean region. The experts advised that the geographical scope of the project should cover the entire Mediterranean Basin, that is, the Sea itself and coastal areas directly affected by socio-economic activities. This coastal zone may vary in depth from one country to another, depending on the subject under consideration and the disciplines involved.

8. It should be emphasized that, in the final analysis, it is the prerogative of the Government of each State to take its own decisions concerning its development priorities. While this may result in different development styles, with different time horizons, the experts recognized that a common interest existed among Mediterranean coastal States and that therefore the main trends of development, should be collectively analysed on a continuing basis. As a result of this process of consultation among the States concerned, and taking full account of activities in progress and their potential consequences, various possible alternatives should be identified and presented to the Governments concerned through their appropriate institutions.

9. To sum up, the programme envisaged under the "Blue Plan" should aim at a general harmonization of the actions that may be taken during the coming decades, with a view to ensuring a harmonious economic and social development, taking full cognizance of the potential resources of the Mediterranean area as well as of prevailing constraints. It should aim at the progressive correction of existing economic and social imbalances.

3/ The following were represented: ECE, UNDP, UNIDO, The Office of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, WMO, IMCO, WFO, IAEA, EEC.

10. The "Blue Plan" would consist first of a basic document or documents, and secondly of a plan of action and research aiming at the establishment of a "Blue Zone" in which development would be achieved on the basis of environmentally sound management guidelines. In effect, the "Blue Plan" would provide the coastal States of the Mediterranean with a memory of their ecological and economic past, a system of monitoring their present interrelated activities and a prospective view which can form the basis of their future decisions.

11. The United Nations Environment Programme is convening from 8 to 12 March 1976 a second consultation of experts from the 18 Mediterranean coastal States to make the guidelines referred to above operational, for it is on these that the "Blue Plan" project rests. The consultation is expected to produce a draft of the proposal which the Executive Director would submit to an intergovernmental meeting of the Mediterranean coastal States which UNEP contemplates convening as early as May 1976.

12. Finally, it should be mentioned, that although the "Blue Plan" covers in one way or another many of the various aspects of the Integrated Planning of Development Chapter of the Mediterranean Action Plan, UNEP has initiated or has under consideration a number of additional concrete projects that are relevant to that Chapter.