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PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME

Information Paper

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1. The purpose of this paper is to describe the current status of activities under the Priority Actions Programme (PAP) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and to update the information given in paragraphs 21 - 26 of the Executive Director's Progress Report (UNEP/IG.18/3). The PAP was identified by the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of Mediterranean Coastal States in Split in February 1977 and progress was reviewed during the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of Mediterranean Coastal States and First Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related protocols, February 1979 in Geneva.
2. While the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the PAP rests with UNEP acting as the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention, the daily co-ordination and supervision of PAP related activities is in the hands of the joint UNDP/UNEP unit established in Geneva. This unit, in close co-operation with UNEP's Unit co-ordinating the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan, maintains contacts on PAP related activities with a number of UN specialized agencies. The contacts with the Mediterranean States and the European Economic Community (EEC) are handled by the Co-ordination Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan.
3. The following descriptive commentary covers the progress in the six principal sectors which were identified at the Split meeting namely: renewable sources of energy, marine living resources (aquaculture), human settlements, water resources management, soil conservation, and tourism.

Renewable Sources of Energy

4. The UNDP financed preparatory assistance project was launched on 10 December 1979 and will have a duration of six months. An experienced consulting firm has been working with UNDP and UNEP since that time and its inception report was recently reviewed by those agencies in Geneva in late January. This review took the form of a close analysis of the inception report and its technical annexes by a number of experienced consultants with a special knowledge of low cost application and development of renewable sources of energy.

5. A provisional identification has been made of activities concentrating on small solar power desalination plants, photovoltaic systems with storage facilities for small scale electricity requirements and wind energy for water pumping. It is also possible that programme activities may be formulated for the development and application of biomass. The eventual programme will consist of action oriented studies, testing and demonstration of equipment, training of specialists, intensive technological development and promotion of application. It is likely that the programme will take the form of a regional co-operative network, which will be complemented by arrangements for the systematic collection and dissemination of information probably through a support network.
6. A further technical consultation with experts from the region is planned in April 1980, followed by a review of a project document in June 1980. During the period April - June 1980 it is also expected that consultants will visit a number of coastal states in order to discuss the draft outline of a possible co-operative programme, and the contributions which these states might be able to make as part of a regional co-operative network. In addition the appropriate UN specialized agencies will be systematically briefed on the progress of the project.
7. At the conclusion of the preparatory phase, it is further expected that the draft project document will be forwarded to UNDP for its technical review and for a decision on the means by which such a regional endeavour might be financed.

Aquaculture

8. After intensive consultations between UNDP, UNEP and FAO a further draft project document for a large regional programme involving most Mediterranean coastal states has been prepared by FAO. The project foresees activities designed to promote the rapid development of coastal aquaculture, leading to increased fish and shell-fish production. In particular, through the transfer and adaptation of technology, the project will assist in conducting pilot tests on the technical and economic viability of culture systems, in planning activities such as field testing, demonstration and training, and in the development of small-scale aquaculture projects to benefit rural communities. Environmental health factors will be taken into account with the assistance of WHO.
9. UNDP's final comments on the draft are expected shortly, and on completion of this review process UNDP is expected to decide upon the circulation of the project document to Mediterranean coastal states for comment and possible endorsement. In the interim UNDP has approved the appointment of a project co-ordinator, who has been recruited by FAO, for a period of one year under a further phase of preparatory assistance.

Human Settlements

10. Mediterranean coastal states accepted the offer of the Yugoslav authorities for the Regional Activity Centre in Split (PAP/RAC) to play a technical role in selected PAP sectors. Negotiations have taken place in recent months leading to the identification of a feasibility study for the development of a regional co-operative project on Mediterranean coastal human settlements. This project is being executed by the PAP/RAC in Split in co-operation with the WHO European Office in Copenhagen.
11. The total cost for an introductory phase amounting to \$50,000 will be shared equally by PAP/RAC in Split on the one hand, and by UNEP and the Mediterranean Trust Fund on the other.
12. The project will consist of a series of technical missions by three consultants in regional planning, town planning and health hygiene who will visit coastal states which express an interest in participating. The consultants are then expected to prepare two position papers on human settlements in the Mediterranean for detailed review at a meeting of government experts to be convened and organized by PAP/RAC in Split in June 1980. Depending on the results of this meeting it should be possible to determine whether the necessary elements exist for the formulation and possible implementation of a regional co-operative project in human settlements.

Water Resources Management

13. As an introductory comment it should be noted that paragraph 26 of the Executive Director's Progress Report (UNEP/IG.18/3) has been overtaken following further technical consultations with United Nations Specialized Agencies. The present intention is to revert to the original approach whereby soil conservation and water resources management would be approached as separate subjects although the relationship between the two is well understood.
14. Consultations have been underway during recent months concerning the means by which a regional project might be developed in water resources management within the Mediterranean. It is intended to focus on a limited number of elements of applied research in which many coastal states have a common interest. After technical consultations between UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO these elements have been provisionally identified as follows:
 - (a) impact of tourism on water resources quantity and quality and the operational issues deriving from that impact.

- (b) the use of saline and waste water for agriculture drawing on appropriate on basic research projects already undertaken.
- (c) use of recycled water for industrial and other non-potable water purposes.
- (d) sediment control with special reference to reservoirs, drainage channels and hydraulic structures.
- (e) desalination of sea water and particular costs thereof in relation to other alternatives.

15. As a first step it is intended to convene an inter-agency meeting involving those United Nations organizations with special responsibilities for different aspects of water resources management.

16. Soil Conservation

Following detailed consultations with FAO and UNESCO, two separate approaches to the subject of soil conservation are under review.

17. In the first case, it has been proposed that there should be a systematic study by an FAO consultant which would collect comprehensive information on soil erosion processes in the coastal states, would identify the activities and institutional arrangements for combating soil erosion on a regional basis, and would suggest the type of inputs required for the mobilization and financing of a regional project in this field. The findings of such a consultancy would be examined by a meeting of Government experts from the countries of the region with the participation of appropriate international organizations.

18. The second approach would concentrate on the problems deriving from the transport of sediment in coastal areas, whether caused by human or natural influences. Much experience has been acquired in this field in the Nile Delta, where a large scale project to counter coastal erosion has been undertaken. A number of other states have been experiencing problems of coastal erosion in varying forms. Amongst other aspects it has proved necessary to assess the effects of the transport of sediment as part of the analytical process of arriving at investment decisions for coastal areas. It has therefore been proposed that an intensive assessment of these problems by a UNESCO consultant should be undertaken within the Mediterranean. Thereafter a small working group drawn from the Mediterranean countries would review this report and would make recommendations for a regional project.

19. The means by which these two parallel proposals should be undertaken, and the extent to which it might be desirable to integrate these activities, are under careful examination by UNDP and UNEP.

20. Tourism

A number of tentative proposals have emerged during the past year for the launching of regional activities in the tourism sector. These have included a careful examination by UNDP/UNEP and ILO of a preparatory project in socially integrated tourism. In addition, WTO has recently canvassed tourism authorities in Mediterranean coastal states as to their main pre-occupations as regards priority activities; this canvas is still in progress. Based on these enquiries it is hoped to formulate a preparatory regional activity which would meet the criteria which are applied in the development of such projects.

21. As to the next steps on the three preceding sectors - namely water resources management, soil conservation and tourism - UNDP will continue to support exploratory programme initiatives in these sectors; however, any preparatory assistance proposals will have to be considered on their individual merits and in the light of on-going or planned United Nations-supported activities in related fields. Such proposals will also be subject to a determination of overall priorities by the Governments concerned, and to the availability of UNDP resources for regional programmes.