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Meeting of Directors of United Nations
Information Centres on the Mediterranean
Action Plan

Athens, 23-25 April 1985

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION
CENTRES ON THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Introduction

1. The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols, at their Extraordinary Meeting held in Athens in 1984, have authorized the secretariat to convene a meeting of relevant Directors of United Nations Information Centres on the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/IG.49/5).
2. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the ways and means to publicize objectives and results of the Mediterranean Action Plan as well as the role of the United Nations system in the field of the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution.
3. The meeting was organized in co-operation with the United Nations Department of Public Information and was held at the Headquarters of the Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) in Athens from 23 to 25 April 1985.
4. The list of participants is shown in the Annex.

Agenda Item 1 - Opening of the meeting

5. The meeting was opened by Mr. A. Manos, Co-ordinator of MAP. On behalf of the Executive Director Dr. M. Tolba, he welcomed the participants and thanked Mr. S. Sanbar, Principal Officer, External Relations Division, Department of Public Information, United Nations, and through him Mr. Y. Akashi, Under Secretary General, DPI, for their interest and support.
6. The Co-ordinator stressed the importance of MAP to the Mediterranean community and the international co-operation and inter-agency co-ordination that had characterized this major UNEP effort and invited the participants to advise the secretariat on ways and means to publicize the objectives and the results of MAP.
7. Mr. S. Sanbar made a statement. He thanked the Co-ordinator and through him the Executive Director of UNEP for organizing this meeting. He expressed his hope that the meeting will be able to reach practical results.
8. Mr. S. J. Smith-White, Chief, Information Service, UNEP, Headquarters, made a brief statement in which he expressed his thanks and expressed his hope that the participants will arrive at concrete proposals.
9. Mr. T. Loir, Director, United Nations Information Centre, Athens, briefly addressed the participants.

Agenda Item 2 - Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work

10. Mr. A. Manos chaired the meeting. Mr. I. Dharat, Programme Officer, MED Unit, served as secretary of the meeting.
11. The meeting adopted, without change, the agenda contained in document UNEP/WG.132/1 and the time table attached to it. The meeting had before it an annotated agenda, contained in document UNEP/WG.132/2.

12. The participants agreed on the manner in which the meeting would be conducted, namely, the Unit's staff will brief the meeting on various activities of MAP, then the Directors will have the chance to make statements and comments.

Agenda Item 3 - The Mediterranean Action Plan: Briefing by MED Unit staff and Directors of Regional Centres

13. Briefings on the various components of the MAP were provided as follows:

- a) The Action Plan; (Mr. A. Manos)
- b) The legal component; (Mr. A. Manos)
- c) MED-POL programme; (Mr. L. Jeftic)
- d) The role of United Nations Specialized Agencies; (Mr. G. Gabrielides)
- e) Regional Oil Combating Centres (ROCC); (Ms R. Laiviera)
- f) Blue Plan (BP); (Mr. M. Grenon)
- g) Priority Actions Programme (PAP); (Mr. A. Pavasovic)
- h) Specially Protected Areas (SPA); (Mr. I. Dharat)

14. The participants recognized the interest and the importance of the Mediterranean Action Plan to Mediterranean Community and to the other interested countries as a positive example of international co-operation and of the United Nations system in action. They recognized the need for an adequate action in the field of information in order to publicize the information gathered, the results achieved, to secure the support of decision-makers and to mobilize public opinion in further support of its goals.

15. The participants further recognized the need to increase awareness among the general public and the Media for the quality of the Mediterranean environment not only in coastal States, but also in non-Mediterranean countries specially those from which large tourist flows originate.

16. Towards that end a clearly identified information strategy for MAP could be prepared and a programme presented to the Genoa meeting.

Agenda Item 4 - General Discussion and Recommendations

17. Mr. A. Manos explained in detail various activities being undertaken or planned to be initiated in the future by the Unit concerning the information programme and invited comments from the meeting. The following MAP information components were discussed:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Briefings to journalists | 11. Leaflets |
| 2. Press conferences | 12. Photographs |
| 3. Press releases | 13. Bulletin |
| 4. Press kits | 14. Portable display |
| 5. Med Poster | 15. Films |
| 6. 1983-84 poster | 16. Exhibits |
| 7. New poster | 17. Technical publications |
| 8. Media seminars | 18. Seasons greetings |
| 9. Brochure | 19. Stickers |
| 10. National brochures | 20. Slides |

18. In the general discussion which followed, the Information Directors expressed their warm thanks to the Co-ordinator of the MAP and his colleagues for the informative briefing on the various components of the MAP. They expressed their points of views on the best possible ways and means to be undertaken to publicize the objectives and the results of the MAP as well as the role of the United Nations system in the protection of the Mediterranean sea against pollution. All participants emphasized the need for more co-operation between the MED Unit and the United Nations Information Centres.

19. Mr. S. Sanbar expressed the view that, although the Information Centres have their priorities and are fully occupied in servicing the Secretary-General and the United Nations system, nevertheless, they can provide certain services to the MED Unit, in particular, on special occasions. The Centres could, in particular, distribute Mediterranean Unit material, stimulate Media interest, organize special services as required, if costs could be covered by the Unit and maintain liaison with official circles and NGOs.

20. A suggestion was put forward to the effect that the Med Unit publish brochures on the MAP in different languages. The MED Unit can also assist in publishing country brochures in the national languages.

21. An extensive discussion took place with regard to the need to provide the Information Centres with various materials concerning MAP, in good time in various languages. The information materials to be provided are: A regular Bulletin, describing relevant developments in the programme, MED posters (possibly with blanks for text to be printed in the national language); leaflets; stickers; audio visual-material. MAP technical publications should be made more widely available in order to reach specialists concerned with the environment.

22. The participants stressed the vital necessity for information to be available in Arabic in order to serve the Arabic countries which participate in the Action Plan.

23. Some participants expressed the view that there is a need to inform mass media about the activities of the MED Unit, by organizing briefings, study tours and special seminars.

24. Strengthening contacts with non-Governmental Organizations was stressed by participants, in order to encourage their active participation in support of the programme.

25. The participants stressed that the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations presented a good opportunity for publicizing the role of the United Nations system in protecting the environment, including the Mediterranean region.

26. Another suggestion was that the Information Centres use the occasion of the Environment Day (5 June) to launch an information programme about the environmental problems and the activities of UNEP, in general and to focus on the MAP in particular on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of its adoption. The idea of launching a Mediterranean day was put forward before the meeting.

27. The need to establish a direct link between the MED Unit and the Information Centres was mentioned, while keeping DPI/ERD Headquarters informed regularly.

28. It was noted that many components of the on-going UNDP Country and Regional Programmes share the objectives of MAP and could be seen as reflecting the countries' concern for the protection of the coastal and marine environment.

29. The possibility of a joint programme with the Egyptian Television for short TV spots on pollution problems was presented, for follow-up between the Med Unit and UNIC, Cairo. In other countries, TV spots and short films, could be developed through co-production or exchange programmes

30. The participants stressed the need to include the concept and information on environmental protection of the Mediterranean in curricula of educational institutions in the region.

31. The following points were also made:

- UN Radio and TV teams could be invited to visit the Mediterranean Unit in Athens on the occasion of meetings and interview Mediterranean Government representatives and scientists;
- The possibility of co-operation with the UN Radio in Geneva should be explored;
- If sufficient interest existed, a briefing on MAP could be organized at UN Headquarters, and at the UN Office at Geneva;
- Briefings for special groups of decision-makers (e.g. Parliamentarians) and media representatives could be organized on request.

Agenda Item 5 - Adoption of the Report

32. The participants adopted the report on 25 April 1985.

Agenda Item 6 - Closure of the Meeting

33. On 25 April 1985, at 13.00 hours, the chairman declared the meeting closed.

ANNEX

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