



United Nations
Environment
Programme



Distr.
RESTRICTED

UNEP/WG.126/5
28 February 1985

Original: ENGLISH

Inter-secretariat Meeting on Arab Regional
Co-operation for the Protection and
Development of the Marine Environment
and Coastal Areas Resources

Athens, 16 - 17 February 1985

REPORT OF THE INTER-SECRETARIAT MEETING ON ARAB REGIONAL
CO-OPERATION FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND COASTAL AREAS RESOURCES

ATHENS, 16-17 FEBRUARY 1985

Introduction

1. Several meetings held in the recent past, notably the First Meeting of the Arab Commission for the Marine Environment, Damascus, Syria 18-21 December 1982, and the Meeting of Arab Mediterranean Coastal States Government Experts on Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Environment, Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 27-30 October 1984, have emphasised the desirability of strengthened co-operation between the Arab States on matters relevant to the protection of their marine and coastal environment.

2. Twenty one Arab States* are at present participating in five regional programmes for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas resources sponsored in the framework of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. Although these action plans are at different levels of implementation, they have many common elements. Through the strengthening of inter-regional co-operation and joint efforts, maximum benefit may be derived from the accumulated valuable experience gained in each of the regions.

3. UNEP, as the organization which was instrumental in the development of several regional action plans for the protection of coastal and marine environment in the general framework of its Regional Seas Programme, decided to contribute towards the strengthening of inter-arab co-operation through a consultation between the secretariats of these programmes.

4. The representatives of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Secretariat of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme (PERSGA), the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME) and the UNEP staff responsible for the co-ordination of three regional action plans (Mediterranean, West and Central Africa, and Eastern Africa) were invited to attend the meeting.

5. At the kind offer of UNEP's Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan, the meeting took place in its offices in Athens on 16 and 17 February 1985.

6. The list of the meeting's participants, the agenda of the meeting and the list of documents which were available at the meeting are attached as annexes I, II and III to this report

Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting

7. The meeting was opened by Mr. Stjepan Keckes, Director of UNEP's Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Center and representative of the Executive Director of UNEP. He welcomed the participants, briefly outlined

* Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen (A.R.), Yemen (PDR).

the background for the meeting's organisation, and invited the participants to review the activities of the relevant regional programmes and identify those areas in which close inter-regional collaboration could be established or experience relevant to several regions could be exchanged and transferred.

8. Mr. Aldo Manos, Co-ordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, also welcomed the participants and expressed his satisfaction that the meeting was held at the seat of the Mediterranean Action Plan, which involves seven Arab States and was the first action plan which was developed in the framework of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme.

Agenda item 2. Review of the status of regional action plans

9. The representatives of the secretariats involved in specific action plans reviewed the history, present status and planned developments of the:

- (a) Mediterranean Action Plan;
- (b) Kuwait Action Plan;
- (c) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Action Plan;
- (d) West and Central African Action Plan;
- (e) Eastern African Action Plan;

emphasising the involvement and role played by Arab States in these action plans.

10. The Secretariats of the Mediterranean and Kuwait Action Plan supported their presentations with two documents (UNEP/WG.126/3 and UNEP/WG.126/4) which were specifically prepared for this meeting.

Agenda item 3. Review of areas, ways and means of inter-regional co-operation

11. The areas, ways and means of inter-regional co-operation of the Arab States in the framework of the Regional Seas Programme were discussed in detail. As a result of these discussions, the need for, and benefit from, strengthened co-operation between the twenty one Arab States participating in the five action plans in the framework of the Regional Seas Programme was recognized.

12. The meeting felt that rather than creating a specific programme for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Arab States, the participation of these States in the five existing regional action plans may be the most appropriate way for safeguarding their marine and coastal zones and that an effective strengthening of inter-arab co-operation could

be achieved in the framework of the activities already carried out through the secretariats of the five regional action plans*.

13. The following general and specific recommendations were made by the meeting:

- General recommendations

- (a) Through the secretariats of the five action plans the relevant Arab States should be kept regularly informed about the status of these action plans, with specific emphasis on activities which may be relevant to the Arab States.
- (b) A publication on "Arab co-operation for the protection and development of marine and coastal areas resources" should be prepared by UNEP-OCA/PAC with the co-operation of the relevant secretariats and distributed to all Arab States. The publication should be updated once a year and should be made available in Arabic, English and French languages.
- (c) Periodic consultations between the secretariats of regional action plans covering Arab States should be established in order to review the fields in which inter-Arab co-operation could be strengthened.
- (d) The recommendations of this meeting should be brought to the attention of the secretariats of ALECSO and of PERSGA as well as the Arab Commission for the Marine Environment.

- Programme matters

- (e) The five secretariats of the action plans should keep each other informed through direct contacts about the meetings organized by them and should invite each other to observe these meetings.
- (f) The active co-operation between the Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre (MEMAC) in Bahrain and the Regional Oil Combatting Centre (ROCC) in Malta should be encouraged, through direct contacts between these centres, in order to improve the response capability of the Arab States to oil spill emergencies.

* Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan, Athens, for the Mediterranean Action Plan; secretariat of the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME), Kuwait, for the Kuwait Action Plan; secretariat of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme (PERSGA/ALECSO), Jeddah, for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Action Plan; Programme Activity Centre for Oceans and Coastal Areas, UNEP, Geneva, for the West and Central African, and Eastern African Action Plans.

- (g) Consultations on methodological questions should be intensified and, whenever applicable, agreements should be reached between the five secretariats on the promotion of methods yielding comparable results. Methodologies related to research on and monitoring of marine pollution, to the environment impact assessment and to the contingency planning for maritime and industrial accidents should receive particular attention of the secretariats.
- (h) Technical meetings (workshops, seminars, training courses, etc.) organized in the framework of the five action plans and which are of special interest to Arab States, should be open to participants from all Arab States, unless they are convened to discuss and recommend policy issues.
- (i) A directory of Arab marine science centres should be prepared by UNEP-OCA/PAC, including detailed description of their facilities and expertise.
- (j) The protection of marine living resources, in particular the global plan of action for the protection of marine mammals should be promoted by the five secretariats within their respective regions.
- (k) When applicable and useful, inter-regional technical meetings should be organized to deal with subjects of special interest to Arab States.
- (l) The participation of Arab States and of their experts in global and inter-regional meetings convened or sponsored by UNEP in the framework of the Regional Seas Programme (e.g.: IMO/UNEP meeting of experts on regional arrangements for co-operation in combating major incidents of marine pollution, London, 29.4. - 3.5.1985; UNEP Conference on Indian Ocean Alliance for conservation, Seychelles, June 1985) should be encouraged and facilitated through the five secretariats.

- Legislation

- (m) Recognizing the importance of global conventions relevant to the protection of the marine environment (MARPOL, etc.), the secretariats of the action plans should use every occasion to draw the need for their ratifications to the attention of the States participating in the action plans.
- (n) A compendium of national legislation and management policies of Arab States relevant to the protection of the marine and coastal environment should be prepared and issued by UNEP.
- (o) Assistance should be provided to Arab States in developing their national legislation and administrative policies relevant to the protection of the marine and coastal environment, taking into account the specific experience of other Arab States in this field.

- (p) The possibility of ALECSO becoming a contracting party to the Regional Seas conventions should be explored by UNEP.

- Training

- (q) The training of Arab experts should be intensified in order to enable their full participation in the action plans. The possibility of strengthening existing institutions to become inter-Arab training centres should be explored by UNEP, in consultation with the five secretariats.
- (r) The use of Arab training facilities and experts should be intensified whenever expertise is requested from Arab States through the five secretariats.

- Finance

- (s) The five secretariats should explore the possible use of funding mechanisms which are exclusively or primarily open to Arab States in order to mobilize these resources for research and control of marine pollution in Arab States.

- Information

- (t) The secretariats of the five action plans should, as a matter of routine practice, exchange data, publications, information on workplans and major meetings. The number of copies (in each available language) needed for exchange between the secretariats:

	general information material	reports on meetings	technical reports
MED	10	5	10
KAP	10	2	2
WACAF	30	10	20
EAF	20	5	10
RED*			

* to be confirmed by the secretariat of PERSGA.

- (u) Efforts should be made to publish the results of the action plans relevant to the Arab States in the Arabic language and to give

them a wide distribution among Arab States through the relevant secretariats.

- (v) The five secretariats should foster the exchange of information on environmental matters between Arab States, using all means available, including the facilities offered by ARABSAT.
- (w) Publications and information materials intended to raise public awareness (booklets, posters, films, TV spots, radio interviews, stickers, etc.) on environmental matters in Arab States should be prepared through co-operation of the secretariats (in the Arabic language), taking into account the specific requirements of these States and should be distributed through the relevant secretariats.
- (x) Country reports prepared by, or with the assistance of the five secretariats on environmental problems of individual Arab States should be distributed for information by the relevant secretariat to all Arab States participating in the five action plans. Clearance for such distribution should be obtained from the State for which the report was prepared.
- (y) A consolidated list of regional seas focal points relevant to Arab States should be prepared and periodically updated by UNEP-OCA/PAC. The list should be made available to the five secretariats for their use in dissemination of information.

Agenda item 4. Other matters

14. No subject was raised under this agenda item.

Agenda item 5. Closure of the meeting

15. The meeting was closed at 05.00 hours p.m. on 17 February 1985.

ANNEX I

List of participants

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ANNEX II

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Review of the status of regional action plans.
 - 2.1 Mediterranean Action Plan.
 - 2.2 Kuwait Action Plan.
 - 2.3 Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Action Plan.
 - 2.4 West and Central African Action Plan.
 - 2.5 Eastern African Region Action Plan.
3. Review of areas, ways and means of inter-regional co-operation.
4. Other matters.
5. Closure of the meeting.

ANNEX III

List of documents

Working documents

- UNEP/WG.126/1 Provisional agenda.
- UNEP/WG.126/2 Provisional annotated agenda.
- UNEP/WG.126/3 Paper presented by the Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan.
- UNEP/WG.126/4 ROPME views on Inter-Regional Arab Co-operation for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas Resources.
- UNEP/WG.126/5 Report of the Inter-secretariat Meeting on Arab Regional Co-operation for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas Resources.

Information documents

- UNEP/WG.126/INF.1 Provisional list of documents.
- UNEP/WG.126/INF.2 Provisional list of participants.

Reference documents

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- IAEA/UNEP: Survey of tar, oil, chlorinated hydrocarbons and trace metal pollution in coastal waters of the Sultanate of Oman. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 5. UNEP, 1982.

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- UNEP/ECE/UNIDO/FAO/UNESCO/WHO/IAEA: Pollutants from land-based sources in the Mediterranean. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 32. UNEP, 1984.

- UNDIESA/UNEP: Onshore impact of offshore oil and natural gas development in the West and Central African region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 33. UNEP, 1984.
- UNEP: Action Plan for the protection of the Mediterranean. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 34. UNEP, 1984.
- UNEP: Action Plan for the protection of the marine environment and the coastal areas of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 35. UNEP, 1983.
- UNDIESA/UNEP: Environmental management problems in resource utilization and survey of resources in the West and Central African region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 37. UNEP, 1984.
- FAO/UNEP: Legal aspects of protecting and managing the marine and coastal environment of the East African region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 38. UNEP, 1983.
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- UNEP: Arab co-operation for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas resources of the Mediterranean. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 52. UNEP, 1984.
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- UNEP: Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related protocols. UNEP, 1982.
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- UNEP/WG.77/4 Report of the Workshop on the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the East African Region (Mahé, 27-30 September 1982).
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