

7. Establishment of a regional oil-combating centre  
for the Mediterranean

The Conference,

Conscious of the ever-present and growing threat to the Mediterranean environment from massive oil pollution whether caused by accident or through accumulation,

Realising the lack of regional contingency plans for co-ordinated action for the prevention, control and combating of oil spills, especially in cases of emergencies,

Recognizing the need to develop and strengthen the capacities of the coastal States of the Mediterranean and to facilitate co-operation among them in order to deal effectively with cases of massive pollution,

Noting that the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency makes provision for a Regional Centre within the Mediterranean for the execution of some of the functions required by that Protocol,

Noting also the consensus reached, at the Consultation of Experts from Mediterranean States convened by the United Nations Environment Programme at Malta in September 1975, on the advisability of the establishment of a Regional Centre and on the objectives and functions of such a Centre,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, prepared in co-operation with the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, on the Establishment of a Regional Oil-Combating Centre for the Mediterranean, <sup>1/</sup> in particular the willingness of the United Nations Environment Programme to assist in the early establishment of an oil-combating centre,

Taking into consideration the comments and observations made by various delegations during the discussion of the above-mentioned report,

1. Decides to accept the offer of the Government of the Republic of Malta to host such a Regional Centre;

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<sup>1/</sup> UNEP/CONF. 1/9 and Corr.1 and Corr.2, and Add. 1-4.

2. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, after consultations with the Government of Malta and the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, to assist in the early establishment of a Regional Oil-Combating Centre in Malta having the objectives and functions set out in the annex to this resolution;
3. Welcomes the intention of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to entrust to the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization the functions and responsibility as Co-operating Agency for the establishment and operation of the aforesaid Regional Centre, it being understood that the exercise of functions and responsibilities by IMCO should not lead to an increase in its budget;
4. As a consequence requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to submit, in the light of comments made at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries, a report on the establishment of the Regional Oil-Combating Centre to the Governing Council of UNEP at its fourth session and to seek to obtain such further authorization from the Council as he may need to draw on the Fund of UNEP for the purpose of defraying the expenses involved in the establishment and initial operating costs of the centre. This authorization might be requested on the assumption that the operating expenses of the Centre will be gradually defrayed by means of voluntary multilateral or individual contributions from governments of the Mediterranean Region, from international organizations and from non-governmental organizations. The financing of the centre should be reviewed at the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and the appropriate Protocol, when these instruments have entered into force;
5. Further requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to report to the coastal States of the Mediterranean region at the next intergovernmental meeting of these States and thereafter annually on the work and activities of the Centre.

#### ANNEX

##### Objectives and functions of a regional oil-combating centre

#### I. Objectives

1. To strengthen the capacities of the coastal States in the Mediterranean region and to facilitate co-operation among them in order to combat massive pollution by oil, especially in case of emergencies in which there is grave and imminent danger to the marine environment.
2. To assist coastal States of the Mediterranean region, which so request, in the development of their own national capabilities to combat oil pollution and to facilitate information exchange, technological co-operation and training.

3. A later objective, namely the possibility of initiating operations to combat pollution by oil and eventually by other harmful substances at the regional level, can be considered. This possibility should be submitted for approval by governments after evaluating the results achieved in the fulfilment of the previous two objectives and in the light of financial resources which could be made available for this purpose.

## II. Functions

A. To collect and disseminate information on:

- (i) inventories of experts and equipment in each coastal State for combating massive accidental spillages of oil;
- (ii) plans, methods and techniques used for combating oil pollution in order to assist as far as necessary countries of the region in the preparation of their national contingency plans;
- (iii) those areas in the Mediterranean which are especially vulnerable to oil pollution and, with reference to these areas, specification of clean-up methods which can be used with minimum environmental damage in such areas.

B. To prepare and keep up to date, in the light of information collected, emergency plans that could be implemented:

- (i) in cases of massive oil pollution where there is an absence of bilateral or multilateral agreements between coastal States;
- (ii) in sectors of the Mediterranean, yet to be identified, where the risk of massive accidental oil pollution is high or where the capability for prompt counter-action in times of emergency does not presently exist.

C. To develop and maintain a Communications/Information system appropriate to the needs of States being served by the Centre.

D. To develop and encourage technological co-operation and training programmes for combating oil pollution.

E. To assist in strengthening the IRS by developing the capacity to serve as a sectoral focal point which could collect data on the sources of information available in connexion with oil pollution with special emphasis on dealing with massive spills of oil and will make that data available.

F. To develop and maintain close working relationships with other Mediterranean regional activity centres and with the "specialized regional organisms" which play a co-ordinating role as set forth in the Barcelona Action Plan, 2/ particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

G. To co-operate in all appropriate activities which are directed towards the prevention and reduction of pollution in the Mediterranean resulting from oil spills.