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Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the protection of the
Mediterranean Sea against pollution

Geneva, 10 - 11 June 1982

The Mediterranean Action Plan at a special session of UNEP's
Governing Council

Information Note

1. A session of special character of UNEP's Governing Council was held in Nairobi from the 10th to the 18th May 1982, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Stockholm Conference, and to draw up the main lines of action for the coming decade. One hundred and eleven states were represented. The heads of state of Sudan and Zaire together with some seventy ministers were present as part of the delegations.
2. Mr. Serge Antoine and Mr. M. Ladjouzi, two members of the Bureau, were present at the session. At the Plenary Session, in the course of speeches made by heads of delegations, many mentioned the Mediterranean Action Plan in positive terms. It has been considered useful to furnish the Bureau with extracts from the speeches in question.
3. The collected statements which follow are a valuable testimony of the interest and support of the Contracting Parties to the Mediterranean Action Plan.

Algeria

"Mr. President, my country has taken an active part in safeguarding the Mediterranean, the most polluted sea in the world. My government has ratified the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea together with the annexed Protocols, to manifest our care to safeguard our marine environment within the framework of international co-operation and solidarity; as well as to demonstrate our interest in environmental law, which must follow in the wake of developments in the application of the environmental action plan, which determines the priority areas to be protected and listed, according to the interests of all levels of international society."

(Mr. Raouighi MOHAMED, Secretary of State for Forestry, Land Development and the Environment).

Cyprus

"It is not surprising that Cyprus should be very interested in participating in all international initiatives aimed at the protection and improvement of the environment. From the very beginning we were aware that environmental questions were much too complex and difficult to be understood and solved at a national level and that international co-operation at all levels was essential to protect the environment for the good of present and future generations. We are very interested, therefore, in taking part in all international meetings. We most actively support regional activities such as the Mediterranean Action Plan, and are signatories of several conventions and other legal instruments promoted by UNEP and other international institutions for the protection of the environment."

(Mr. A.F. Grammenopoulos, Cyprus High Commissioner in Kenya).

European Economic Community

"11. I should also like to remind you of the active role played by the Community, in its capacity of a Contracting Party, in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention which pools the efforts of all the Mediterranean coastal states in order to save this sea from pollution. In this respect, I should like to pay a particular tribute to the Executive Director, Mr. Tolba, for his continuous support of this Convention which is part of the "Regional Seas" programme and is one of UNEP's greatest achievements."

"17. Co-operation agreements signed between the Community and several Mediterranean coastal countries since 1978, such as the Maghreb and Machrek countries and Yugoslavia, provide for co-operation in the field of environmental protection. As an example I should like to mention co-operation between the Community and Yugoslavia in the field of protection of the Adriatic against pollution, as well as the Community's large financial contributions to the effluent project of Helwan in the Arab Republic of Egypt."

(Mr. F. Aerts, Secretary of State for Public Health and the Environment, of the Kingdom of Belgium, Current President of the Council, speaking on behalf of the EEC).

"In a wider context, certainly one of the most significant successes has been the elaboration and adoption of agreements and regional and global conventions to combat and reduce the most serious types of pollution, and to preserve threatened species. We have participated directly in the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan adopted in 1976 in the framework of UNEP's "Regional Seas" programme, and as one of the contracting parties we have contributed to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and of its Protocols."

(Mr. Karl-Heinz Narjes, Member of the Community's Commission for Environmental Matters).

Egypt

"Research institutes in Egypt have taken part in the MED POL programme and the Institute of Marine Sciences co-operates with the Malta Centre. In addition there are the Blue Plan studies whose aim is the collection of data necessary for the development and planning of the Mediterranean region".

(Dr. M.S. Zaki, Minister of State for Health).

France

"But regionalization is necessary in other fields, it seems to me; the reason being that all effective environmental policies are conducted on the basis of contact with the people, the area and the environment. Happily, UNEP has been working along these lines for some ten years. For example, 110 countries are involved and co-operate in the 'Regional Seas' programme, which includes states, specialised U.N. institutions and UNEP (which we very much hope will continue to be present and not disengage itself too soon from the programmes it has launched) ... Of all these actions, I should of course like to mention the one in the Mediterranean, where, ever since the Barcelona Convention, 17 countries have collaborated in a very open action plan. There is also one for the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Guinea."

(Mr. Michel Crepeau, Minister of the Environment).

Israel

"From a regional point of view, one of UNEP's great successes has been its 'Regional Seas' programme. The Mediterranean Action Plan can serve as a model of regional co-operation, within which states have set aside their political divisions and have united in a common effort to ensure that their common sea should be a source of life and well-being for their inhabitants."

(Mr. Chaim Kuberski, Director General of the Ministry of the Interior).

Italy

"We are above all, very closely following the development of the GEMS programme relating to a worldwide system of continuous environmental monitoring. We wonder however if in the progressive application of such a system greater advantage might not be drawn from the monitoring experience acquired at a regional level, as for example in what we are doing through the MED-POL programmes of the Mediterranean Action Plan. We believe in fact, that the idea of applying worldwide systems should in any case be adapted to the specific characteristics of the various geographic areas.

The Mediterranean Action Plan, which we mentioned earlier, was initiated in the framework of UNEP's 'Regional Seas' programme. It is logical that Italy, a country entirely surrounded by this sea, so rich in history, but at present, so threatened by pollution and environmental deterioration, should take a special interest in this great initiative promoted by UNEP, which will bring together all the Mediterranean coastal countries in a collective effort of prevention and protection. In the six years since the signing of the Barcelona Convention, the monitoring work, the Blue Plan's expertise, the so called priority actions, all continue with complete commitment and increasing success. Italy intends to contribute fully to the continuation of this Mediterranean work, and not merely financially. We hope that UNEP too, will continue to make its present contribution in the years to come, again, not only from the financial point of view."

(Mr. Filippo Anfuso, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Spain

"In so far as water pollution is concerned, there are important programmes in coastal areas of the Mediterranean in particular, which are part of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

Mr. President, Spain is aware of the need to activate the creation of sanitary infrastructures in the urban and tourist centres of the Mediterranean region for the treatment of industrial effluent and to control the discharge of toxic and dangerous substances into our coastal waters. We have earmarked an investment of U.S. \$ 1,000 million per annum for the next ten years to this effect, or a total of 10,000 million U.S. \$, for the purposes of purification, control of pollutants, and recycling. Special attention has been given to inland waters, both surface and subterranean, as well as to certain river basins, where excellent results have been obtained."

(Mr. Santiago Aranz de Robles, Undersecretary for Planning and the Environment, Ministry of Public Works).

Turkey

"Turkey is a country with a long Mediterranean coastline. I should like to take this opportunity to express our satisfaction with the way in which actions have been developed in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, intended to protect this great internal sea. We note with satisfaction, the creation of a special fund for the protection of the Mediterranean against pollution. I congratulate UNEP for its pioneering work in launching the Mediterranean Action Plan. UNEP can use the experience it has gained in this field to help other threatened regional seas, through similar initiatives."

(Mr. N. Karakoylu, Ambassador to Kenya)

Yugoslavia

Mr. S. Uzunovic, Member of the Federal Executive Council (Minister) in his speech pointed out that the 'Regional Seas' programme was one of the most important of those developed by UNEP.

Morocco

"Another aspect of this co-operation which deserves mention is that of regional co-operation, of which the Action Plan for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea is a typical example. We believe that this co-operation should be encouraged, in the sense that there should be more participation by advanced countries."

(Mr. M. Lahlou, Minister of Housing and Planning)

Libya

"Mr. President, my country pays great attention to the protection of the environment at national and international levels. It does so by taking part in the various activities concerning the environment. It is a contracting party to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and to its related protocols. It follows the meetings of the Blue Plan with great interest and takes part in certain regional projects concerned with the struggle against desert encroachment, such as, for example, the North African Green Belt project, which seeks to prevent encroachment of the desert."

(Mr. M. El Mangoosh, Secretary for Housing).

Greece

"Greece is particularly active in the Mediterranean sub-region. In 1976 Greece was a signatory of the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and has worked actively ever since to develop the Mediterranean Action Plan. In 1981, Athens was chosen as the Headquarters of the Co-ordinating Unit for this programme, to which we contribute U.S. \$ 400,000 per annum. We consider the Mediterranean Action Plan to be a model of international co-operation on environmental questions."

(Mr. A. Afendoulis, Ambassador of Greece to Kenya).

Tunisia

"My country has actively contributed to the development and implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan, and has also participated in bilateral programmes with other friendly and brother nations both in the north and south of the Mediterranean basin."

(Mr. Zakaria Ben Mustapha, Mayor of Tunis, President of the Tunisian Association for the Protection of Nature and the Environment).