



United Nations
Environment
Programme



UNEP/BUR/40/5
26 February 1992

Original: ENGLISH

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the Protection of the
Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and
its related protocols

Cairo, 25-26 February 1992

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU
OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST
POLLUTION AND ITS RELATED PROTOCOLS**

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was called to order by H.E. Mr. Atef M. Ebeid, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Minister of State for Administrative Development and Minister in Charge of the Environment of Egypt (President of the Bureau). Mr. Etienne Franzi, Vice-President (Monaco), and Mr. Mohamed Adel Hentati, Vice-President (Tunisia) were present. Apologies for absence due to weather conditions were received from Mr. Uri Marinov, Rapporteur (Israel). Prof. S. Busuttil, Co-ordinator of MAP, Mr. L. Jeftic, Senior Marine Scientist and Mr. I Dharat, Senior Programme Officer of MAP represented the Secretariat. Mr. I. Dharat acted as the technical Secretary of the Meeting. The list of participants is contained in Annex I to this report.
2. In his opening statement, the president welcomed the members of the Bureau and wished them success in their deliberations.

Agenda item 1- Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda suggested by the Secretariat contained in UNEP/BUR/40/1. At the request of the Co-ordinator, a closed session of the Bureau was held on 25 February 1992. Confidential agreed minutes thereof were distributed to the members of the Bureau.

Agenda item 2- Progress report by the Co-ordinator on the implementation of the 1991-1992 approved programme and budget

4. Prof. S. Busuttil, MAP Co-ordinator introduced the progress report contained in document UNEP/BUR/40/3 on the activities carried out since the Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Cairo, 8-11 October 1991). He provided additional information on recent developments.
5. The Co-ordinator informed the Meeting that an important development had taken place concerning the preparation of an Action Plan for the protection of the Black Sea against pollution. A steering committee composed of representatives from the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP was established. Mr. L. Mee (IAEA/ILMR) will represent UNEP/MAP in that committee. The MAP Co-ordinator was asked to advise on the diplomatic aspects of the exercise. An amount of 19 million US dollars was to be allocated to the project for a two year period.
It is expected that the Action Plan for the Black Sea countries will be developed in close association with the MAP.
6. The Co-ordinator pointed out that one of the main priorities facing MAP at this time concerns financing. He informed the Meeting that on his appointment he found the situation very critical in the Athens office as well as in the Regional Centres. The situation necessitated immediate action; and to this end, he had paid official visits to France and Italy which resulted in securing the contributions of these major contributors. In the case of Italy, the Co-ordinator reported that Senator Butini, (ex-Vice-President of the Bureau) was working effectively with a view to identifying ways and means to avoid delays concerning future Italian contributions.

7. The Co-ordinator informed the Meeting that at a meeting in January, H.R.H. Prince Rainier of Monaco had expressed great interest in Mediterranean affairs, demonstrating his readiness to co-sponsor a special session on problems of the Mediterranean environment and development during the UNCED Conference.
8. During a meeting with the Prime Minister of Malta and other Maltese authorities, he had been assured of the continued support of Malta to REMPEC and to MAP in general.
9. Concerning the Monitoring component, the Co-ordinator informed the Meeting that the programme was being implemented but that some Contracting Parties were not sending information and data on their activities within MED POL programme, thus hindering the Unit in presenting a complete picture of the state of pollution in the Mediterranean. He informed the Bureau that in order to ensure that the Monitoring Programme of Egypt would be fully implemented, a consultation meeting had been held on 24 February 1992 in the Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency and a plan of activities in 1992 for such implementation had been adopted.
10. The Co-ordinator informed the Meeting that during an expert meeting convened in Cairo last December, an Action Plan concerning the provision of adequate port reception facilities within the Mediterranean region was approved. The Action Plan had been distributed to all Contracting Parties for their consideration and implementation.
11. With a view to upgrading the MAP image, the Co-ordinator organised a press conference in Athens in January 1992, which was attended by more than 50 national and foreign press representatives. Contacts with non-governmental organisations were intensified, in particular with the International Juridical Organisation (IJO) on the Offshore Protocol and Hazardous Wastes Protocol, ICSEM, MAREVIVO (which wanted MAP co-sponsorship for a technical survey of Mediterranean pollution through an Italian research vessel), and ASPEN (on the impact of the Rio Conference on the Mediterranean environment).
12. Concerning UNCED, Prof. Busuttil reported that several signatories had indicated to him that there should be a special session in the Conference devoted to Mediterranean affairs. He had informally approached the UNCED Secretariat on this matter. The Co-ordinator proposed that a letter be sent by the President of the Bureau to the UNCED Secretariat expressing this desire as an important contribution to the UNCED process.
13. The Co-ordinator informed the Meeting about developments on the Nicosia Charter. An EEC Task Team meeting was held in Brussels to which the Unit was invited. During that meeting a draft Action Plan for the implementation of a long-term strategy and specific actions was discussed. After subsequently studying this draft plan, a letter was sent by MAP to EC expressing MAP's readiness to strengthen cooperation with EC and underlining the importance of benefitting from the MAP experience, and not duplicating some of the important work already being undertaken by MAP. He informed the Meeting that the EC is planning a Ministerial meeting to review the Action Plan, in Cairo, from 28 to 30 April 1992.
14. Prof. Busuttil informed the Meeting that he had received a request from Albania to send a multi-disciplinary mission to Albania to give advice on environmental policy especially concerning coastal zone management.

15. Concerning the legal component, he referred the Meeting to the specific recommendations regarding the Offshore Protocol and the Hazardous Wastes (document UNEP/BUR/40/4). Furthermore, he informed the Meeting of the establishment of the International Court for Environmental Protection of the Mediterranean Sea, on 8 December 1991, by individual experts from several Mediterranean countries. While MAP is not a partner to this project, it was ready to lend its support and co-operation to the Court.
16. Another development in the legal sphere is related to the eventual establishment of a 'Mediterranean Authority' which would have overall responsibility over marine resources of the Mediterranean.
17. Referring to administrative and financial issues, the Co-ordinator pointed out that he intended to undertake some changes which would generate greater efficiency in serving the Contracting Parties. In connection with travel costs, he was doing his utmost so that, where possible, travel costs would be covered by sponsoring organisations and was taking the necessary steps to reduce travel of staff and to streamline administrative procedures. He informed the Meeting that contacts were going on with the relevant authorities in Greece with a view to finding a suitable alternative site for the Unit in Athens.
18. Finally, he informed the Meeting of the proposal received from the Rapporteur (Israel) concerning the adoption of a new name for the MAP.
19. During the ensuing general discussion, the members of the Bureau expressed their satisfaction with the Co-ordinator's report to streamline administrative procedures.
20. The Vice-President from Tunisia requested some clarification in relation to supplementary funds for MAP and if and when the paper on MAP procedures, agreed upon during the Cairo Meeting of the Contracting Parties, had been distributed to the Contracting Parties. As regards the EC draft Action Plan, while there was a need to have a clearer picture of the proposal, he stressed the importance of benefitting from this exercise and not to appear to be disturbed by it.
21. In reply, the Co-ordinator pointed out that intensive contacts were taking place with the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with a view to securing additional financial resources. On the rules of procedure for MAP, he informed the Meeting that letters were sent to all Contracting Parties seeking their comments thereon. The Secretariat would review the working paper on the basis of these comments and would present concrete proposals at the next Bureau meeting.
22. The President of the Bureau expressed his concern on the availability of funds for MAP. He pointed out the need for urgent action by all to speed up the payment of annual agreed contributions. He promised to keep following up the issue very keenly by sending letters, faxes and through personal contacts on his part. The President proposed that a list of MAP projects to be financed by international financial institutions was to be prepared by MAP. The list would cover, *inter alia*, the afforestation and the improvement in water quality, the protection of natural and historic sites, the establishment of port reception facilities and the identification of cheap technology for water and air treatment.

23. The Vice-President from Tunisia supported the proposal adding that the list was to be based on priorities of projects for MAP which should be ready to benefit especially in the wake of expected decisions of the Rio Conference (Agenda 21).
24. The Co-ordinator stated that afforestation, and in particular, forest fires, was one of the major concerns in the Mediterranean region. In this connection, he informed the Meeting that the Council of Europe was studying the drawing up of a convention to cover the issue of afforestation in general and forest fires in particular. Concerning water resources, he pointed out that water was a priority for all Mediterranean countries. Italy was hosting a conference on fresh water resources during this year and had requested that MAP accept to co-organize it. The Co-ordinator pointed out that the SPA Centre covered issues relating to historical and natural sites, including marine parks.

Finally, the Co-ordinator stressed the importance of creating an emergency task force and stock piling of equipment in order to counter emergency pollution situations in the Mediterranean. In this connection, he referred to the Resolution adopted by an informal environmental ministerial meeting on the Mediterranean held in Malta in November 1991, prior to the "Clean Seas" Conference, which had recommended the establishment of these two important mechanisms.
25. The Bureau agreed to support the proposals put forward by the Co-ordinator requesting him to take the necessary steps, wherever possible and feasible, for their implementation.
26. At the end of the discussion of this agenda item, the Bureau took note of the progress report contained in document UNEP/BUR/40/3 and the supplementary oral comments provided by the Co-ordinator of MAP.

Agenda item 3- Status of the Regional Activity Centre for Priority Actions Programme (PAP/RAC)

27. The Bureau deliberated on a letter dated 3 February 1992 received by MAP from the Foreign Minister of Croatia requesting accession to the Barcelona Convention. It was agreed that pending recognition of Croatia by the Contracting Parties, it would not be possible to implement the procedure of accession under Article 26 of the said Convention. The letter would, however, be sent in due course, for information to the Contracting Parties.

The Bureau further considered the operation of PAP/RAC in Split. Given the uncertain situation in Croatia, the Bureau recommended to the Co-ordinator to exercise close supervision over the Split Centre. While the Bureau agreed that, until further notice, relations between MAP and the said Centre would be conducted on the basis of 'business as usual', yet the Bureau felt that, in the circumstances, alternative funding sources should be sought for the said Centre, Germany being suggested as a possible sponsor for the Split Centre. Until such time as such funds were eventually identified, the present modus operandi would be maintained.

28. Nonetheless, the Bureau felt that it was necessary for the Centre to have a juridical status conforming to the norms applied by MAP. To this end the acquisition of this status should at one and the same time be related to the accession of Croatia as a Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention and to the signing of the host country agreement for the Centre between Croatia and UNEP according to the procedures applied to the other Centres of MAP.

Agenda item 4- Recommendations on Specific issues emanating from the Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties

29. The Co-ordinator introduced document UNEP/BUR/40/4. After a brief discussion, the Bureau agreed on the following:

(I) Offshore Protocol

- (1) The Secretariat was to distribute the latest version of the draft (document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.30/4) with proposed amendments concerning particular articles to all Contracting Parties requesting their comments by a specific date.
- (2) The Bureau is to review and evaluate these comments; on the basis of this assessment, it is to decide, at its next meeting, whether to convene another meeting of experts or to authorize the Executive Director of UNEP to call the Conference of Plenipotentiaries;

(II) Hazardous Wastes

- (1) The Secretariat is to prepare a technical assessment study on the issue of hazardous wastes in the Mediterranean. Such an assessment should be prepared on the basis of information to be provided by the Contracting Parties. This assessment should include a survey of existing agreements in this field as well as proposed concrete recommendations. The Bureau will review the situation at the next Bureau meeting.

(III) Staff of UN Agencies outposted to Athens

- (1) The Bureau authorized its President to send two letters to WHO and FAO requesting that they examine the possibility of financing the salaries of the staff of the Agencies outposted to Athens from their budgets as from 1993. The sending of these letters should, nonetheless, be preceded by high level contacts with officials of these Organizations.

(IV) Amendment to the Dumping Protocol

- (1) The Bureau authorized the Secretariat to broaden the subject of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Offshore Protocol, with amendments to the Dumping Protocol in order to include banning of incineration at sea and banning of dumping of industrial wastes in the Mediterranean.
- (2) The Bureau requested the Secretariat to collect information on this issue from the Contracting Parties and to propose alternative solutions for disposal.

(V) Assistance to countries to implement the Land-Based Sources Protocol (LBS)

- (1) The Bureau agreed to the Secretariat proposal that this subject be considered at the first meeting of the Bureau in 1993.

(VI) Administrative and budgetary issues

(1) Auditing of MAP accounts

The Bureau agreed to the Secretariat proposal that the MAP accounts be certified by UNEP Headquarters for submission to the Bureau at its next meeting.

(2) Alternative Currency

The Bureau agreed that as a first step in this direction, specific activities financed by extra budgetary resources as well as counterpart contributions of states hosting Regional Activity Centres could be reflected in ECU in MAP documents. The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to pursue the study already undertaken to move forward in this direction.

(3) Rules of Procedures

The Bureau authorized the Secretariat to submit, at the next Bureau meeting, proposals arising from the comments received from the Contracting Parties on the working group paper, on rules of procedures, that had been presented during the Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

(4) REMPEC

The Bureau was informed that, in accordance with previous decisions of the Contracting Parties, an amount of U.S.\$30,000 was allocated for the instalment of INMARSAT, as well as U.S.\$ 10,000 for assistance to countries in cases of emergency.

(5) Consultants

The Vice-President from Tunisia pointed out that certain activities and studies could be carried out by the staff of the Unit and the Centres instead of through consultants.

The Co-ordinator stated that the very small number of personnel at the Unit already had a heavy workload. The proposal was appreciated but one had to be realistic. The Unit would do its best to carry the work from within its own resources, but it had to resort to outside consultancy when the situation necessitated.

Agenda item 5- Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau

30. On a proposal from the Secretariat, the Bureau decided to convene its next meeting in Athens, Greece, from 20 to 21 October, 1992.

Agenda item 6- Any other business

31. The Bureau was informed about the Italian Centre for Remote Sensing established, equipped, staffed and financed by the Italian Government, which proposed that this Centre offer its services, in a bilateral context, to the Contracting Parties. In the light of former decisions of the Bureau and the Contracting Parties concerning Remote Sensing, the Bureau, while recognizing the potential of this Centre to operate as a Regional Activity Centre for Remote Sensing under the umbrella of MAP, requested the Secretariat to obtain full information about the Centre and its programme. Such information should be distributed to all the Contracting Parties seeking their views on the proposal (to be presented to the next Bureau meeting) for this Centre to become a Regional Activity Centre for Remote Sensing under the umbrella of MAP.
32. The Bureau, apart from the authorizations given to the Co-ordinator at the closed meeting referred to in paragraph 3 of this report, authorized a sum not exceeding U.S.\$6,000 to be spent on maintenance and repair costs for building, equipment, etc. at the Co-ordinating Unit.

Agenda item 7- Adoption of the report of the Meeting

33. The Bureau adopted its report on Wednesday, 26 February 1992.
34. In adopting the report, the Bureau expressed its appreciation to its President and to the Government of Egypt for hosting its meeting in Cairo and for the facilities and hospitality it had provided.

Annex I

List of Participants

Liste des Participants

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