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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 Protocols

Damascus, Syria, 31 October - 1 November 2000

**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 PROTOCOLS**

Introduction

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its protocols was held in Damascus (Syria), on 31 October and 1 November 2000, at the Le Méridien hotel.

Participants

2. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr Francis Zammit Dimech, Malta's Minister for the Environment. It was attended by: H.E. Mr Farouk Adli, State Minister for Environmental Affairs (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr Gabriel P. Gabrielides, Director of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (Cyprus), Mr Pierre Roussel, Secretary General of the General Inspectorate for the Environment, Ministry for Land Planning and the Environment (France), Mr Matteo Baradà, Director General of the Department for the Protection of the Sea, Ministry of the Environment (Italy), in their capacity as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau, and Mr Abdul Fattah Boargob, Head of the Training and Cooperation Office, Environment General Authority (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), in his capacity as Rapporteur. H.E. Mr Farouk Adli was accompanied by Mr Nidal Al Cheikh Kassem, adviser to the Minister, Messrs. Akram Darwish, Yahia Awaidah, Fouad El O'k, Ozaina Al Jundi, Mrs Reem Abed Rabboh and Mrs Abir Zeno, officials in the State Ministry for Environmental Affairs. H.E. Mr Francis Zammit Dimech was accompanied by Messrs. Paul Mifsud and Joseph Farrugia, officials from the Maltese Ministry of the Environment, Mr Matteo Baradà by Mr Giovanni Guerrieri from the Italian Ministry of the Environment, and Mr F. Boargob by Mr Farag A. El Mabrouk, Director of the Benghazi branch of the Libyan General Environmental Authority.

3. Mr Lucien Chabason, Coordinator, and Mr Fouad Abousamra, administrator of the MED POL programme, were representing the MAP Secretariat.

4. A complete list of participants is contained in **Annex I** to this report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

5. Mr Lucien Chabason, MAP Coordinator, speaking on behalf of the Secretariat, thanked the Syrian authorities, and in particular H.E. the Minister Farouk Adli for their excellent welcome and the perfect way in which the meeting had been organised. Since MAP was set up in 1975, Syria had always supported it, and had been actively involved in its implementation. Syria's remarkable historical and natural heritage deserved the attention of the international community.

6. The Coordinator briefly sketched out the background to the meeting now being opened: awaited completion of the ratification process for the new and amended instruments in the Barcelona system, MAP's financial situation which had returned to good health despite some persistent arrears, launch of the GEF/SAP in January 2001, forthcoming 6th meeting in Tunis in mid November of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, with the submission of an important Strategic Review on the state of sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean. Although MAP still had a serious information deficit, the prospect of Rio+ 10 should provide the opportunity for the programme to make a significant contribution to this second Earth Summit in 2002.

7. H.E. Mr F. Zammit Dimech, President of the Bureau, also thanked the Syrian authorities on behalf of all the members for their warm hospitality. It was his first visit to Syria, and he had already been able to appreciate the wealth of a historical heritage dating back to the dawn of civilisation. This second meeting of the Bureau since its re-election at the XIth

meeting of the Contracting Parties in Malta in 1999 should allow MAP's progress to be assessed, and certain points still pending to be tackled, such as the revision of the Emergency Protocol for which, if confirmed, Malta was offering to host the Plenipotentiaries conference. The issue of protecting our seas against accidental spills was currently one of the most crucial, as was proven by the grounding of a chemical tanker that very morning off Brittany, France. In this area as in others, MAP's mission was to show the path of regional cooperation, which was the only way to face up to the scale of new environment-development challenges. Finally, at a point in time where once again the Middle East was in deep crisis, the speaker expressed his conviction that there could be no healthy environment without peace and justice, and vice versa.

8. H.E. Mr Farouk Adli, Minister of State for Environmental Affairs in Syria, welcomed the members of the Bureau and the MAP Coordinator. Syria was proud to host such a meeting, as it was grateful to MAP and those international organisations which cooperated with it for their relentless work on behalf of the environmental and sustainable development cause. The Syrian authorities were aware both of the need for socio-economic development, but also of its perverse effects when poorly controlled. Because of its geographical location, and current flows in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, Syria often fell victim to cross-border pollution from the industrialised countries to the west of the region, and also from closer-lying countries- such as Israel- whose waste, dumping operations, and some installations constituted infringements of international law. Thus solidarity between peoples was the only viable way of facing up to environmental problems, which was why Syria was actively cooperating with international and regional programmes such as MAP, to which it regularly submitted its marine pollution monitoring data. But it was the root causes of the problems which needed to be tackled, rather than the problems themselves, and that could only be done in a climate of peace, prosperity and security. For its part, concluded H.E. Mr Farouk Adli, Syria was ready to take any necessary initiative to this end, whilst never compromising its territorial sovereignty.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organisation of work

9. The meeting adopted the proposed agenda contained in document UNEP/BUR/56/1 with one slight amendment, having been informed by the delegation from the Syrian Arab Republic that at the close of the general debate it would be submitting a draft "Damascus Declaration".

Agenda item 3: Review of activities implemented since the last meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties: progress report by the Coordinator and draft recommendations on specific activities

10. The President, all the members of the Bureau and the Coordinator one by one expressed their condolences to Mr Boargob on his recent bereavement. He said how deeply moved he was by this expression of sympathy, which only went to show how the ties built up within MAP reached beyond the purely administrative and professional context.

11. Mr L. Chabason introduced the outline of his progress report, contained in document UNEP/BUR/56/2, for the period from May to October 2000. He pointed out that it came with several draft recommendations on the decisions which the Bureau was expected to take. He would introduce it section by section so that the discussions could run in orderly fashion.

Legal Framework

Ratification Process

12. The President, who had been assigned by the last Bureau meeting in Malta with the task of sending a letter to the Contracting Parties, urging them to speed up the ratification process, reported back on the situation. Following the letters which he had sent to the eleven countries in question, three answers had been received: from Egypt, announcing that on 11 February 2000 it had ratified the amendments to the Barcelona Convention, the Dumping Protocol and the new "SPA/Biodiversity" Protocol; from Israel, providing a progress report, but with no mention of any specific dates; and finally from France which had just informed the Bureau that the Convention and some of its revised protocols were currently before the National Assembly, to be ratified before the end of the year.

13. The representative of Cyprus pointed out that his country had also answered; the Council of Ministers had approved the amendments, and it was now up to the Cypriot Parliament to deal with the issue. The representative of France confirmed what had just been announced by the President, adding that the "Land-based", "Dumping" and "SPA/Biodiversity" Protocols had been submitted to the National Assembly along with the amended Convention. The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya spoke of strong efforts done towards ratification, and pointed out to the different administrative procedure in his country, and the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that a committee had been set up for the purpose of drawing up a report on the new texts, with the intention of speeding up their ratification.

Recommendation:

The Bureau took note of the progress reported by several countries in their ratification processes. It welcomed the news that Egypt had ratified the revised Convention and "Dumping" Protocol in February 2000, as well as the new "SPA/Biodiversity" Protocol. However, given the slowness which still tended to characterise the process, he reiterated his appeal to those Contracting Parties which still had not done so to complete the process as quickly as possible, preferably before late 2000-early 2001.

Revision of the "Emergency" Protocol

14. The Coordinator reported on the dossier concerning revision of the "Emergency" Protocol. There were two issues. Basically, a revision document had been drafted in cooperation with REMPEC, which had been distributed to the national focal points. On the basis of comments received from the countries, and contact with the IMO, it would be fair to say that in its current form the text had made major headway towards the prevention of accidental marine pollution and that, once it had been revised by the new meeting of experts planned in Monaco, it could then go to a conference of plenipotentiaries, which the Maltese government had generously offered to host. As far as funding was concerned, when the budget was adopted the Contracting Parties had requested that outside funding be sought. It had transpired, as would be explained when the financial issues were dealt with, that given the state of the revolving fund it would be possible to release funds both for the experts' meeting and for the conference of plenipotentiaries, which would top up the contributions expected from Monaco, and thus ensure the funding of the diplomatic Conference.

15. Following this presentation, the President of the Bureau confirmed that Malta had offered to host the conference of plenipotentiaries. The Vice-President, representing France, stated that his country supported the current revision process, but that savings would undoubtedly be made if the conference of plenipotentiaries were to be held jointly with the next meeting of the Contracting Parties. The Vice-President representing Cyprus pointed out

that the procedure had more-or-less been approved at the last meeting of the Bureau, but that it was the actual text of the revision which posed the problem: points requiring more detailed examination, the persistence of some major differences, so that it was still impossible to say to what extent the text submitted to the plenipotentiaries would clear the way for adoption. The opinion of MAP's legal adviser, which was annexed to the table document for this meeting, added to the dilemma by raising the issue of "amended" versus "new" Protocol. As for the Vice-President representing Italy, whilst recognising that the actual principle of revision had been accepted, he felt that this could not take place without taking into account the international context, other major conferences planned on the issue, developments triggered by recent tanker incidents, and the newly emerging issue of safety. Nor should the revision be disassociated from the new responsibilities of REMPEC, which should be granted the means to take them on board.

16. The President approved this reference to REMPEC, pointing out that the Centre was moving towards a more integrated approach. However, recent accidents at sea brought the safety of shipping issue to the very fore, and a historic opportunity to adopt relevant provisions should not be wasted. For his part, the Vice-President representing Syria pointed out that the deadline was rather tight if the text was expected to be ready for June 2001, apart from the fact that the experts who would be meeting in Monaco in February would not be the same as those taking part in the Malta conference: it was a different level of expertise.

17. The Coordinator drew three initial conclusions at this stage of the discussions: reducing costs, strengthening REMPEC's means, and ensuring that deadlines could be respected. On this last point, he pointed out that MAP had been able to move ahead very quickly with the revision of the legal instruments in 1994/1995, for texts where disputes had continued until the last minute. Matters should not be dragged out. In Malta the Contracting Parties had decided that the revision process should be completed by 2001. As for jointly holding the meeting with that of the Contracting Parties in Monaco, past experience had shown that the latter should be extended by three days, and specific experts be invited. As nothing could be said before seeing the outcome of the experts' meeting, once it had been held the Secretariat could report back to the Bureau, which would then take a decision in full knowledge of the facts.

18. With the President having noted consensus on this compromise proposal, the Bureau adopted the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

The Bureau requested that the Secretariat convene a meeting of experts responsible for examining the text of the draft revision in Monaco. At its forthcoming meeting in spring 2001, having seen the outcome of the experts meeting, the Bureau shall establish its final position on the details and date of the conference of plenipotentiaries responsible for adopting the revised Protocol; it thanked the Government of Malta which had reiterated its offer to host the conference.

In parallel to the question of revising the "Emergency" Protocol, the Bureau insisted on the need to strengthen the role of REMPEC in the future, and to furnish it with the necessary means for this purpose.

Reporting System

19. The President introduced the issue of the reporting system, which the last meeting of the Contracting Parties had asked the Secretariat to finalise by inviting the Bureau to approve it; he pointed out that the Secretariat had begun work on a revised version of the document distributed to the Contracting Parties in Malta.

20. The Coordinator recalled the importance of the reporting system in international Conventions. The working party, comprised of experts from the Bureau member states, was scheduled to hold its first meeting in December 2000/ January 2001, followed by a second meeting for finalisation purposes in March 2001. In response to the representative of Cyprus who wondered whether it would be necessary for this group to meet twice, since consultants were already working on the text, he pointed out that it needed to undergo a first round of assessment and a second round of finalisation by the direct representatives of the Contracting Parties.

21. The representative of Italy pointed out that it was easy to set up a reporting system, but difficult to implement it, and that the most important point was to "keep it simple", to stick with a minimum format. Nowadays, national administrations everywhere were swamped with requests for reports (ever increasing numbers of major international conventions, EU bodies, regional bodies, etc.). Moreover, as far as possible the attempt should be made to conform to the EU's type of reporting, with this organisation preparing to take in new Mediterranean members in the near future, in the first wave of enlargement.

22. The President emphasised this notion of compatibility with the EU system, bearing in mind the accession of new countries, whilst the representative of Syria pointed out that it was something which his country was already working towards on the basis of bilateral cooperation. For his part, the rapporteur mentioned the difficulties faced by developing countries in drawing up these reports; he also felt that MAP should assist them in this task.

23. The Coordinator recognised that it was the multiplicity of bodies which led to the large numbers of reports. However, irrespective of questions of compatibility, MAP should retain its own system, which was the only way for it to assess the effect of its activities, and the follow-up of decisions taken by the Parties. Moreover, experience had shown in specific cases such as the hot spots survey, or country contributions to the MCSD's Strategic Review, that apart from it being possible within a short period of time to receive reports from all countries, these reports were often also of high quality, containing a wealth of relevant data.

24. With the President having noted that the meeting was close to an agreement subject to the few comments made, the Bureau adopted the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

The Bureau authorises the Secretariat to convene the first meeting of the working party in December 2000/ January 2001, with the submission of an introductory report, and a finalisation meeting for March 2001. It hopes that the following points will be borne in mind when the system is set up:

- i) Seek gradual harmonisation with the reporting systems of other conventions and the European Union, the latter being destined to play an increasing role in the region with the prospect of the accession of other Mediterranean countries;**
- ii) Endeavour to simplify the system to avoid increasing the workload of national administrations, which are being increasingly called upon due to the mushrooming of international bodies and conventions;**
- iii) Foresee MAP assistance for developing Mediterranean countries which have difficulties in accomplishing this task.**

Financial and Institutional Matters

State of Projects

25. Turning to the examination of MAP's financial situation, and in answer to the representative of France who expressed surprise at the fact that the GEF/SAP project had already been postponed on several occasions, the Coordinator pointed out that the project had finally been validated last spring by the instances of GEF; only then could the recruitment procedure for the administrator get underway. The successful candidate would take up his position in early 2001, when the project would immediately become operational.

State of the Mediterranean Trust Fund

26. On the question of contributions, Mr L. Chabason referred to the table annexed to his activity report, and pointed out that the majority of countries had paid their contribution for 2000. MAP's financial situation continued to be sound, following the sort out of the last few years. The problem of former Yugoslavia's arrears, which had emerged with the break-up of the country, and which it had never been possible to resolve given the disputes over its legal succession, could now be viewed in a new perspective following the power change in Belgrade and Yugoslavia's return to the United Nations fold. It was a question of awaiting clarification of their position by the new Yugoslavian authorities. Given the circumstances, examination of this question should be postponed until the next meeting of the Bureau.

Recommendation:

Following recent developments in Yugoslavia, the Bureau decided that it would deal with the question of former Yugoslavia's arrears at its next meeting, and that it would be examined in the light of any position which the new Yugoslavian authorities may have expressed by then.

Additional Funding

27. The Coordinator, as announced at the last Bureau meeting in Malta, confirmed that the Secretariat, having noted that the revolving fund had once again reached a satisfactory level, had contacted the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) to seek authorisation to withdraw 355,000 dollars to finance certain activities approved for the 2000-2001 biennium, on the condition that outside funding was available. A revolving fund should be at a reasonable level: neither too high nor too low. In view of UNON's positive response, it was proposed that the Bureau, which was empowered to adjust the budget between meetings of the Contracting Parties, should approve this withdrawal, which would be shared out between those activities deemed to be important, such as the revision process for the "Emergency" Protocol, and information-awareness raising (and particularly translating MAP information material into Arabic).

28. A further question followed on immediately from this one: the interest accrued by the revolving fund. If the interest earned over each two- year period were to be included in the budget of the following biennium, the amount generated would mean that certain activities could be strengthened.

Recommendation:

- i) The Bureau authorised the Secretariat to use the sum of 355,000 U.S. dollars drawn from the MAP revolving fund as agreed with the United Nations Office in Nairobi, broken down as follows:**

Meeting of experts	90,000 US dollars
Conference of Plenipotentiaries (tentative)	105,000 US dollars
Reporting System	40,000 US dollars
Information, awareness raising	50,000 US dollars
Assessment of MAP's structure	70,000 US dollars

- ii) **The Bureau invited the Secretariat to consider the possibility of including interest earned by the revolving fund over the preceding two year period as resources in the following MAP budget.**

Staff Issues

29. The Coordinator explained the state of play on the recruitment process for posts which still needed to be filled before the Coordinating Unit reached its full quotient: programme administrator- economist (a successor to Mr Dharat); information officer, and administrator for the GEF project with his/her administrative support staff. The management posts were in the process of being filled, with the final decision depending on UNEP's Executive Director.

30. The representative of Cyprus, whilst happy to see the Unit returning to fully operational mode thanks to these final appointments, expressed his concern at the fact that UNEP was not necessarily inclined to select citizens of Mediterranean countries. This would be tantamount to opening the floodgates to citizens of Northern countries and even from other continents in the future. Nairobi should therefore be sent a clear message to this effect.

31. The representatives of Syria, Libya and Italy echoed the words of the representative of Cyprus: not only did Mediterranean citizens by very definition have the advantage of knowing the region better, it was also only logical that candidates should be selected from amongst the citizens of countries which contributed to MAP. It was, moreover, one of MAP's established practices, along with the principle of balanced geographical distribution between the various parts of the Mediterranean.

32. The Coordinator recalled that the Secretariat did not have the final say on the appointment of MAP management figures, but that to date only Mediterranean citizens had ever been recruited. Obviously, it was a different matter for administrative support staff, whose recruitment sometimes hinged on extra-Mediterranean criteria (such as English as a mother tongue).

Recommendation:

The Bureau invited its President to send a letter as soon as possible to the Executive Director of UNEP, recalling that in accordance with an established practice oft-confirmed by the Contracting Parties, all management staff recruited in the Coordinating Unit should be citizens of Mediterranean countries, given that this is a regional programme based on financial contributions from the riparian states.

Information

MAP logo

33. Introducing this agenda item, the President thanked the many countries which, following the Bureau's lengthy discussions on the logo at its last meeting in Malta, had made their choice known, particularly the three countries- Croatia, France and Italy- which had called on the services of designers to submit new proposals.

34. The representatives of Italy and France presented their respective logos. The Italian representative stressed the symbolism of the "Sea + Mediterranean basin" in the series of ten logos which he had submitted, and which he felt better reflected MAP's new scope of activity following the revision of the Barcelona system.

35. The President expressed his preference for the Italian stylisation, which was more dynamic and avoided the geographical representation in which some countries- Malta or the countries on the Eastern banks- were barely visible.

36. The representative of France defended his proposal, whilst admitting that there was one drawback: it had called on the services of a design office to which fees would be due if one of its logos were to be selected.

37. With the balance clearly tipped towards Italy, the members of the Bureau chose one of the coloured logos presented by this country, but suggested that it should be amended by integrating certain elements borrowed from another logo in the same series. The Coordinator pointed out that the MAP logo would appear next to the UNEP one on documents.

Recommendation:

The Bureau decided to choose one of the logos submitted by Italy, i.e. on the corresponding plate in Annex V of the activity report, the logo to be found to the left of centre, combining it with the logo top left as far as the position of "MAP" was concerned, and using the colour of the two olive branches. A monochromatic logo corresponding to this one would be used for MAP publications.

Library

38. Concerning the library's activities, the Coordinator pointed out that the Secretariat was planning to build up its links with libraries in universities, ministries and existing environmental agencies. The Internet had opened up tremendous opportunities which should be put to good use. The representative of Italy added that setting up an interactive web site would be a very good move.

The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

39. Introducing this section of the progress report, the Coordinator recalled the various stages of the very intensive work put in over the last six months to prepare for the 6th meeting of the MCSD in Tunis. The Strategic Review had been completed and distributed, in the hope that it would provide for fruitful discussions. If adopted, a summary document could be produced from it as MAP's contribution to Rio + 10. The Review differed from all other documents produced by MAP thus far in its free expression and different style, adopting a critical slant. This was an original approach in response to the MCSD's role as an open and inventive forum. Looking at the indicators, there was no doubt that all of our countries without exception were faced with questions related to the implementation of sustainable development. It was the role of the MCSD to indicate any obstacles and weaknesses, then to explore and recommend remedies.

40. In response to two participants who had expressed concern that the Strategic Review would monopolise the entire meeting in Tunis, Mr L. Chabason made it clear that half of the meeting would be used to deal with the activities of those thematic groups which were still ongoing, and which would conclude with the 7th meeting in Turkey, as well as other related issues. It was therefore a "normal" MCSD meeting, enhanced by two events: submission of

the Strategic Review, and the celebrating of a ministerial segment, which would examine the "Tunis Declaration" proposed by Tunisia.

41. The representative of Italy recalled that during the Rome meeting of the MCSD, the proposal had been made to include erosion and desertification in the "agriculture and rural development" theme. What was the state of play? And, more generally speaking, were there any guarantees of a follow-up system for recommendations?

42. The Secretariat responded that in Tunis the MCSD would be examining the pre-feasibility studies for nine new themes, including "erosion-desertification" and "agriculture and rural development"; it would therefore have the opportunity to consider integrating these two themes. As for follow-up, our own resources should be used to circulate results and recommendations, and to break down into the various aspects: there were the actors, the Secretariat, and projects such as those which the RACs submit to MEDA for funding.

MAP cooperation with the NGOs

43. The Bureau was invited by the President to read through a document drawn up by a consultant: "MAP/NGO Partners: criteria and cooperation", and to make any comments they might have in order to guide its revision with an eye to the next Bureau meeting, before being submitted to the Contracting Parties in Monaco.

44. The Vice-President representing Syria opened discussions on this section, by raising his request for three NGOs from his country, "Revolutionary Youth", "The Friends of Damascus", and "The Committee of Life Sciences" to be included on the list of MAP partners; his ministry enjoyed constant and fruitful cooperation with these associations, which were actively working towards environmental protection and were neither financed nor supervised by the Syrian government.

45. The President took note of this proposal on behalf of the Bureau, whilst pointing out that for the time being it was not being called upon to select new NGO partners, but rather to examine the criteria on which their future choices would be based.

46. The representative of Cyprus praised the quality of the work produced by the consultant. He had correctly flagged up the essential problem: what was meant by "NGO"? In fact, since the moment when MAP had opened up its activities, its institutional meetings and the MCSD to NGOs, this notion had been left rather vague, which had allowed associations of highly varied status to join the ranks. Certain criteria would appear to be self-evident in qualifying a "genuine NGO": a charter or statutes, members and a bureau which were elected, and no governmental funding. Given the very broad range of MAP partners, the new classification proposed seemed most apt.

47. The representative of France expressed his confusion at two possibilities foreseen in the document before him: the setting up of a fund intended to finance "improved cooperation between MAP and its partners", and a "MAP/Society cooperation cell" which would deal specifically with this task within MAP.

48. The Coordinator pointed out that this was actually a proposal made by the consultant, on the basis of recommendations from NGO partners. But the fact remained that MAP granted scant funding to the NGOs. Ties with the NGOs presupposed a philosophy, and a very specific task within the Secretariat. It would be possible for an official to be responsible for this area, but there was obviously no question of creating a new post entitled "cooperation cell". As for the new classification, the Secretariat felt it was relevant as it was time to move beyond the all-embracing notion of NGO and define the various types of partners. In this

respect, the introduction of “educational and scientific bodies” was important, since to date this category had always been under-represented within the partnership with MAP.

Recommendation:

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to review the “MAP/NGO partners: criteria and cooperation” document for its next meeting. It recognised the validity of the proposed criteria, but priority should nonetheless be granted to the actual specific partnership, in other words to the criteria of “Contribution to MAP projects”, and “Involvement in MAP activities”. Whilst also recognising the relevance of the new classification being proposed, the Bureau felt that it should not lead to a decrease in the role and share of NGOs as such within the partnership with MAP.

Cooperation

49. The Secretariat announced that, in accordance with the unanimous decision taken at the Eleventh ordinary meeting, reiterated at the last meeting of the Bureau, the Palestinian Authority had been invited to the next meeting of the MCSD, to be represented by its minister for the environment. Moreover, the MED POL Coordinator intended to travel to Gaza in order to set up a marine environment monitoring programme. The French GEF would finance the monitoring of SAP activities for the territory of the Palestinian Authority.

50. The representative of Cyprus informed the other members of the Bureau that when he had informed his government of the decision taken by the last meeting of the Bureau, they had raised no objections to the Palestinian Authority participating in MAP activities.

Land-based Pollution

Management of Coastal Waste

51. The Secretariat drew participants' attention to this issue, which was of concern to several stakeholders in the region: local authorities and populations, tourism organisers, and tourists themselves. It was a complex issue, since it was far from clear what the origin of this solid waste was, and the questionnaire-based survey which MAP was conducting amongst the riparian states was specifically intended to shed more light on this question. A meeting to tackle this matter was scheduled for early 2001, and MAP was currently in discussions with the Italian Environmental Protection Agency (ANPA) about its organisation. One participant expressed doubts about the “draft action plan” foreseen for the whole region on a problem which he believed came under the subsidiarity principle. The Secretariat stated that, to its mind and with respect to MAP, the riparian states had “common problems” and “problems in common”; coastal waste, carried hither and thither throughout the entire region by currents, would appear to tie up with these two aspects, and thus merit a specific form of cooperation.

The INECE Network

52. The last meeting of the Bureau had requested that the Secretariat find out more about the International Network for the Respect and Effective Implementation of Environmental Legislation (INECE). The Coordinator informed the meeting that MAP had been back in contact with the network. The network's charter was to be found in Annex VI of the activity report. From clarification provided it emerged that partnership with the INECE would be of a strictly informal nature, and would not burden either the budget or the programme. However, the question of effective application had become essential for governments as well as public opinion, and it was important that the Mediterranean should participate in the network.

Emerging pollution and environmental problems

53. In response to one representative who expressed doubts about the need for a scientific meeting such as the one held in Rome in May 2000, challenging the “piloting of research by the researchers themselves”, the Secretariat pointed out that developments were coming about apace, and that decision-takers were being confronted with a mass of information published in scientific literature on new problems and hazards: the introduction of non-native species, dying-off of the gorgonian populations, the effects of dumped ballast water, the latest data on climate change, etc. Some of tomorrow’s major priorities should therefore be anticipated, to avoid being caught unawares by their occurrence, and only scientists were in a position to assist in so doing.

“Dumping” protocol

54. During examination of this heading, the Vice-President representing Syria stated that it was essential that all countries in the region be made to respect the provisions of the “Dumping” Protocol, particularly Israel, whose attitude to the question was well known. Would it not be possible to officially broach the matter with this country under MAP’s aegis?

55. The Coordinator responded that MAP had learned of certain dumping operations: once contacted, Israel had promised to put a stop to its dumping operations, even though the new provisions of the amended Protocol had still not come into force. In fact, until the amendments had obtained 15 ratifications, it was the former, less binding provisions which would continue to apply. This situation justified the speeding up of the ratification process for the “dumping” protocol and its provisions.

56. The President supported by all members felt that this was a matter on which the Bureau should draw up a recommendation.

Recommendation:

Concerning dumping, the signatory countries to the revised Protocol are invited to respect the new provisions as far as possible, which ensure better protection of the marine environment, whilst awaiting completion of the ratification process and the coming into force of the Protocol.

Regional Activity Centres

Conservation of Biodiversity

57. The Coordinator announced the departure of Mr Marco Barbieri, a marine biology expert, from the Tunis-based SPA/RAC. For many years he had been carrying out some remarkable work within MAP on the protection of species and biodiversity. A vacancy was to be announced at Mediterranean level.

Indicators for Sustainable Development

58. The Coordinator emphasised the work already completed on indicators: 15 indicator sheets had already been drawn up and circulated for observation, and a further 50 would have followed suit by the next MCSD meeting in Tunis. He added that some of these indicators had already been used in preparing the Strategic Review for the year 2000.

The MCSD's "Free Trade and the Environment" Theme

59. For the benefit of the Bureau's rapporteur, who on behalf of Libya questioned the validity of the "free trade and the environment" theme, given the perverse effects of the first part of the title on the second, the Secretariat pointed out that this issue had already been discussed and decided upon in Rome. It could, however, possibly be re-aired in Tunis within the context of discussions on the work of the current working groups. Moreover, whilst not underestimating the legitimacy of the criticisms made by the speaker, the theme did actually fit in with the prospect of the Euro-Med free trade area foreseen by the Barcelona process.

Preservation of 100 historical sites

60. The fate of the 100 Historical Sites Programme prompted a brief exchange of views. The two members of the Italian delegation recalled that at the last Bureau meeting in Malta, they had once again insisted that this MAP component should be entrusted to UNESCO, and that its role, function and efficiency should at least be assessed in line with what was decided by the Contracting Parties in Montpellier back in 1996. There was no doubt that work was going on in this area, but in piecemeal fashion and with no real scope. The issue of protecting our heritage was a very broad-ranging one, and required a thorough re-examination. The protection of our historical heritage should not be neglected. On the contrary, it should be accomplished in the most effective possible way, with its various components being defined. What, for example, was meant by "natural landscape"? Or "cultural landscape"? The two concepts could overlap, as witness the *Cinqueterre* region of Italy, which man had shaped into terraces. For his part, the Vice-President representing Syria felt that our historical heritage was being seriously damaged by excessive tourism. The 100 sites programme had not been particularly active in this respect, and needed to be rethought and given new impetus.

61. Mr L. Chabason recalled that although the programme was conducted within the MAP framework, it did not actually receive any funding from the Trust Fund. From the discussions he concluded that the Contracting Parties would undoubtedly be faced with three options at their Monaco meeting: i) to simply abandon this component; ii) to see it as being part and parcel of sustainable development and to treat it as such; iii) to introduce a different implementing mechanism. The Coordinator agreed with Italy and Syria that there should be no half measures with limited means in this area. The issue would therefore be put to the Contracting Parties, with no pre-set ideas on the part of the Secretariat.

Agenda item 4: The Draft "Damascus Declaration"

62. When the session resumed on Wednesday afternoon, the President of the Bureau announced that he himself and the MAP Coordinator had enjoyed the privilege of a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Mr Mustafa Miro, thanks to the good offices of the Vice-President representing Syria. As the examination of MAP's activities had been completed, he suggested that the draft "Damascus Declaration" be examined, which had been submitted to the members of the Bureau by the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic.

63. A brief discussion ensued on the content of the draft Declaration. Two representatives asked that the reference to the "Mediterranean Environment Day" be deleted, since one was already celebrated on 5 June each year, as part of the "Mediterranean Environment Week". Moreover, the date of 1 November as suggested by Syria was difficult.

64. Following certain minor amendments of form, the Declaration was adopted by the members of the Bureau, and is contained in **Annex II** of this document.

Agenda item 5: Other Business

65. The Vice-President representing France requested of the Secretariat that the Regional Activity Centres be granted greater flexibility to respond to calls for tender of interest to the programme. Although he was not able to quote any specific examples, he had heard that certain difficulties had arisen in this respect.

66. The Coordinator recalled that although the Centres operated using MAP resources, the Contracting Parties also invited them to seek funding elsewhere, in particular by submitting eligible projects to the LIFE and MEDA programmes, etc.. There was therefore nothing to prevent them from responding to calls for tender which they deemed of interest to MAP, and they were absolutely free so to do, providing that the necessary coordination came from the Athens Unit.

Agenda item 6: Date and Place of next Meeting

67. The Vice-President representing Cyprus confirmed the offer which his government had made in Malta last May, to host the next meeting of the Bureau. The final dates would be decided at a later stage in concertation with the Cypriot authorities, the Secretariat and the members of the Bureau, preferably in late April 2001.

68. The members of the Bureau gratefully accepted the Cypriot Republic's invitation.

Agenda item 7: Closure of the Meeting

69. A summary of conclusions was submitted to the meeting and adopted. The President informed the meeting that all members would in the near future be receiving a full-text report, once it had been submitted to Mr Boargob the rapporteur for any comments and amendments. The Secretariat would then draw up the final version.

70. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the Meeting closed on Wednesday, 1 November, at 18 hours.

ANNEX I

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

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ANNEX II**Draft Declaration of Damascus
For Mediterranean Environmental protection****The Members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its protocols,**

« Damascus, 31 October - 1 November 2000 »

- , Aware of the Mediterranean sea with its character of semi-enclosed sea,
- , Aware of the harmful effects of human activities to the marine environment, the coast and the fragile ecosystems of the Mediterranean,
- , Recognizing the important contribution of the Mediterranean Action Plan adopted at Barcelona in 1975,
- , Recognizing the significance of the 1976 Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its related protocols,
- , Understanding the importance of the euro-Mediterranean and inter-Mediterranean cooperation that are being pursued in the Mediterranean basin,
- , Aware that elaboration and implementation of sustainable development policies requires inter-ministerial coordination in every country and active participation from the public and all the parties concerned,
- , Reaffirming the principle of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development whereby human beings are seen as central to concern for sustainable development, they have the right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature,
- , Viewing any act of destruction of populations, their environment and their resources, as inadmissible acts which must be confronted with solidarity and every kind of efforts,
- , Determining to give full effect and to ensure complete respect for the commitments made at the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development and other international agreements to which the Mediterranean countries are party,

Call all Mediterranean countries and the EU to make all their efforts :

- To ratify the amended Barcelona Convention and its new or amended protocols.
- To implement the Strategic Action Programme with a view of substantially reducing the pollution in the Mediterranean Sea.
- To protect the sensitive in marine and coastal biodiversity.

The Mediterranean Countries will make sure to:

- Promote and develop cooperation, particularly North-South;
- Share their experience, to achieve exchange of information;
- Use concrete action to demonstrate solidarity and support to people, who are suffering from destruction of their environment and depletion of their natural resources;
- Make possible arrangement to engage the communities and stakeholders in protection the sea.