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Introduction

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention was held in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, on 18-19 March 2002 at the CHAM Palace Hotel, at the kind invitation of the Syrian Government.

Participants

2. The President and all the members of the Bureau were present. Mr L. Chabason, MAP Coordinator, and Mr Humberto Da Cruz, Programme Officer, represented the Secretariat. A full list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

3. In his opening statement, the President of the Bureau, H.E. Mr Bernard Fautrier, Minister Plenipotentiary, Monaco, expressed his deep interest in holding the meeting in the Syrian Arab Republic and emphasized the country's involvement in the conservation and sustainable management of the Mediterranean environment, as well as the need for improving intergovernmental cooperation. The President reminded the participants that the Mediterranean region was a model in this field, particularly under the aegis of MAP.
4. The President emphasized that the Bureau, which constituted the liaison between the meetings of the Contracting Parties, would examine the follow up of the decisions taken during the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Monaco. He referred in particular to the preparations for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), during which the Mediterranean should have a strong presence. He added that the MCSD meeting held in Antalya a few days earlier had prepared means for communicating MAP's approach to the problems of sustainable development at the WSSD.
5. The President expressed his appreciation to the Syrian Government for hosting the meeting and recalled the important natural and cultural heritage of the country. He said that its concern for the management of sustainable development deserved the encouragement and support of the Contracting Parties.
6. The MAP Coordinator, Mr L. Chabason, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr Topfer, thanked the Syrian authorities for providing all the facilities and support for the organization of the meeting. He also emphasized the efforts made by the Syrian Government to safeguard the environment and sensitize the public and all the actors concerned.
7. With regard to MAP's current priorities, he referred in particular to the responsibilities of each and every country for the protection of the Mediterranean, the principle of the participation of the major groups and NGOs, the implementation of the SAP, the need for the integration of environmental and other policies and, finally, the rights of future generations, which needed to be taken into account.
8. In conclusion, Mr Chabason referred to the issue of the ratification of the amended Convention and Protocols, the new Emergency Protocol signed in Malta in January 2002 and the importance of the two major conferences to be held in the coming months: the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of the Environment in Athens in July and the WSSD in Johannesburg in August.

9. The Minister for the Environment of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Mr Adnan Khozam addressed the meeting with a speech in which he welcomed the Bureau and expressed his wishes, on behalf of the Prime Minister, for the outcomes to be fructiferous and useful for further heading towards protecting the Mediterranean from pollution. The Minister reiterated the commitment of Syria to work together for safeguarding of the Earth and its resources for the present and future of Humankind.

Focusing on the Middle East and the Mediterranean region, the Minister invited the Mediterranean countries and the international community to help bringing an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arabic lands according to the UN Security Council resolutions and the international legitimacy, and to achieve a global and just peace; as well as to strengthen efforts to prevent possession and use of nuclear weapons and others of mass destruction and declare the Middle East a “demilitarized” region.

The Minister presented an overview of the challenges his country is facing in its path for development, such as the demographic growth, the pressure on water resources, the elimination of domestic and industrial solid and liquid wastes, and the development of all kinds of transports. He also summarized progress being made in areas such as reforestation, irrigation, use of water resources, sewage, water treatment, etc. the Minister also underlined the need for all Mediterranean countries to work collectively to face big maritime accidents.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and organization of work

10. The meeting approved the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat and distributed as document UNEP/BUR/58/1.

Agenda item 3: Progress report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention

11. The Coordinator of MAP introduced document UNEP/BUR/58/3 (Progress Report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the 12th ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona convention (November 2001 – February 2002)).

Legal issues

12. Introducing this subject, the MAP Coordinator referred to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries (Malta, 24-25 January 2002) and the adoption of the new legal instrument entitled “*Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea*”. In view of the heavy maritime traffic in the Mediterranean Sea, he said that the new Protocol would assist countries to prevent and reduce pollution from maritime activities. He hoped that it would soon be ratified by at least six countries so that it could enter into force.
13. The President of the Bureau expressed his satisfaction that, of the 15 countries that had signed the Protocol, five were Bureau members. He urged Bureau members to provide an example to other Contracting Parties by ratifying the new Protocol as soon as possible so that it would enter into force.
14. The Vice-President from Greece, referring to the signature of the new Protocol and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Malta, recalled the hard work involved throughout the process of its finalization and congratulated all his colleagues for their contribution. He proposed that, in view of the imminence of the WSSD and the Euro-

Mediterranean Conference, MAP should publicize this development with a view to improving regional cooperation.

15. The Vice-President from Slovenia shared the views of the Vice-President from Greece and presented a relevant scientific publication on this issue which had appeared in a prestigious scientific magazine in Slovenia.
16. The Vice-President from Syria requested that the Arabic translation of the Protocol be sent to the Ministry as soon as possible to facilitate the ratification procedure.
17. The MAP Coordinator reminded the Syrian delegation that the Protocol had been approved in MAP's four official languages at the Malta Conference and said that an official copy would be forwarded to the Ministry shortly.
18. He also reported to the Meeting that a MEDA project on port reception facilities, undertaken with the cooperation of the European Commission and REMPEC, was in its final stages.
19. In the following discussion on the benefits of the new Protocol for the whole region, the importance of assistance from MAP, and especially REMPEC, was emphasized.

DECISION

The Bureau decided to request the Contracting Parties to speed up the ratification of the new Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, with a view to its entry into force by the end of 2002.

Status of signatures and ratifications

20. The Programme Officer, Mr Da Cruz, indicated that, since the last Bureau Meeting, only Cyprus had ratified the amended Convention, together with three Protocols. Of the 16 countries needed for its entry into force, only ten had so far ratified it. He hoped that by the time of the WSSD six more countries would have ratified the legal instruments. He referred in this respect to the financial and technical assistance that MAP was providing to countries to help them speed up the ratification process.
21. The Vice-President from Syria informed the Bureau that the Convention and the SPA Protocol had been forwarded to Parliament for ratification. He also requested the Secretariat to prepare a document in Arabic presenting the old and new Convention and Protocols to facilitate the ratification process. He added that it would be most welcomed if the presentation could include explanations of the reasons for the amendments.
22. The Vice-President from Greece, referring to this issue, said that the text of the Land-based Sources Protocol was not very clear, due to its presentation for adoption within a short period of time (in Syracuse), which had created difficulties for its ratification. He emphasized, however, that the procedure would be easier now that some points had been clarified, especially those with political overtones. The President of the Bureau added that the explanation of the amendments could be found in the reports of the conferences of plenipotentiaries.
23. The President shared the view expressed by the Vice-President from Slovenia that some legal problems had delayed the ratification process in many countries, mainly due to the diversity of the legal instruments and national legislations.

24. The Rapporteur from Bosnia and Herzegovina, referring to the process of the succession of Yugoslavia, indicated that after its revitalization his country would take institutional measures and would soon accede to the SPA and Hazardous Wastes Protocols, as well as to the new Emergency Protocol, particularly in view of a reconstruction programme with Italy and Greece and the initiative for the protection of the Adriatic Sea. He however expressed his concern at the whole process, since his country was lacking sufficient funds and human resources.
25. In the ensuing discussion, the issue was raised of Serbia and Montenegro and their eventual accession to the Barcelona Convention.

DECISIONS

The Bureau decided that its President would send a letter to the Contracting Parties to speed up the ratification of the amended Convention and Protocols and the ratification of the new Protocols, as appropriate.

The Secretariat was requested to prepare a document in Arabic presenting the old and new text of the Convention and Protocols, as appropriate, before the end of June 2002.

The Secretariat was also requested to prepare an updated informal document including the new legal instruments in the four official MAP languages.

Concerning Serbia and Montenegro, the Secretariat would follow legal developments regarding the relations of Serbia-Montenegro vis-à-vis MAP and would report to the next meeting of the Bureau.

Reporting system

26. The MAP Programme Officer, Mr Da Cruz, introducing this issue, indicated that after the approval of the new reporting system by the Contracting Parties in Monaco in November 2001, and the decision for its initial implementation on a voluntary basis, the Secretariat had requested Contracting Parties that wished to do so to provide information to the MAP Secretariat. Up to now, in addition to Tunisia, which had announced its intention of participating in the pilot phase, six more countries had volunteered to participate, namely: Algeria, Croatia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Monaco, Spain and Turkey. He proposed to hold a meeting with these countries in May to discuss common policies.
27. The President of the Bureau expressed his satisfaction at the composition of this group, which had a balanced geographical and socio-economic distribution. He requested the Secretariat to provide the Bureau with information concerning the funds available for this exercise and for the meeting.
28. The Coordinator informed the Bureau that a sum of US\$ 15,000 allocated for this exercise could be carried forward from last year. An additional amount of US\$ 20,000 would be allocated. He hoped that Monaco and Spain would be able to pay their own costs so that this amount could be allocated to the other countries.
29. With regard to funding, the Vice-President from Greece referred to the possibility of obtaining financial support from the European Environment Agency and proposed that this matter should be explored.
30. The Vice-President from Slovenia expressed the concern that the whole exercise was very wide-ranging and that other activities, such as MED POL, might interfere in monitoring activities. He emphasized his concerns at the duplication of work.

DECISION

The Bureau requested the Secretariat to hold the first meeting on the reporting system (16-17 May 2002) of the countries participating in the voluntary trial phase (Algeria, Croatia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Monaco, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) and to keep participation open for other countries during the biennium. The sum of US\$ 20,000 would be allocated as additional funds to support the countries for this exercise. The possibility of obtaining additional funds from the European Environment Agency and other donors would be explored.

Liability and compensation

31. Introducing this subject, the MAP Coordinator indicated that the situation was very complex in view of the differences in the reactions of the various countries. The question involved economic issues, especially in relation to insurance companies. As other Conventions were involved in the same issue, the possibility of a Protocol/Convention should be further discussed. He reminded the Bureau that the only meeting that had been held on this issue had been in Brijuni some years ago.
32. The President of the Bureau informed the members that the Economic Commission for Europe was dealing with this issue and was trying to develop a legal instrument for liability and compensation.
33. It was suggested by the Secretariat that a meeting of experts could be held, the exact date of which would be decided by the next Bureau in October, to discuss how the Barcelona Convention could handle this issue.
34. The Vice-President from Greece informed the Bureau that, as Greece would hold the Presidency of the European Union during the first six months of 2003, it would not be advisable to hold such a meeting during that period.

DECISION

The Secretariat was requested to prepare a descriptive document on liability and compensation to be presented to the next Bureau meeting, taking into account recent developments in this respect.

Monitoring system for the enforcement of MAP legal instruments

35. The MAP Coordinator informed the Bureau that MAP would provide legal and technical support to countries in their sub-regional cooperation efforts and would propose a monitoring system for the enforcement of MAP legal instruments, as suggested during the last meeting of the Contracting Parties.
36. The Vice-President from Syria informed the meeting that a national workshop for the implementation of legal instruments was scheduled to be held, probably in May, with the cooperation of MAP and legal experts. Experts from Tunisia and Greece would be invited.
37. The issue of the monitoring system would be addressed during the next meeting of the Bureau and the Secretariat would prepare a report for this purpose.

Institutional matters

100 Historic Sites

38. The MAP Coordinator introduced the issue of the evaluation of the 100 Historic Sites, BP/RAC and PAP/RAC. He recalled that the exercise had been completed the previous year and had been submitted to the Contracting Parties in Monaco.

DECISION

The Secretariat was requested to prepare terms of reference for the MCSD working group, presided by France and Tunisia, for the establishment of the activity entitled "Cultural heritage and sustainable development".

Proposed activity on sustainable tourism in Antalya

39. The MAP Coordinator also referred to the presentation by the University of Antalya during the last MCSD meeting of the project by Turkey on sustainable tourism.
40. In the following discussion the Bureau members and the Secretariat expressed their views on sustainable tourism.
41. A question was raised by the Vice-President of Syria, following comments in the last Bureau meeting in Cyprus, on whether the issue of the Turkish project could fall within the activities of the Blue Plan.
42. The President of the Bureau, referring to the last MCSD meeting, said that tourism was a broad issue and could be addressed in different ways in the various countries, in view of the fact that it was not the only path for development.

DECISION

The Secretariat was requested to present a more comprehensive report on the proposed programme for sustainable tourism in Antalya at the next Bureau meeting in October 2002.

(The reports mentioned in the above two decisions will be undertaken in relation with the MAP global evaluation).

MAP Evaluation

The Bureau recommended that a general debate on this issue should be held at the next Bureau meeting after which a report would be prepared by the Secretariat to be discussed by the Bureau at its meeting in the spring of 2003.

Cooperation

Johannesburg Summit (WSSD)

43. Introducing this issue, the MAP Coordinator referred to two current initiatives: an event devoted to Regional Seas to be held in Asia, and the Third Preparatory Committee, to be chaired by Dr Topfer. He said that MAP would also support an initiative by civil society following a proposal by MIO-ECSDE for a partners' meeting to be organized in Johannesburg. The Coordinator suggested that MAP should fund this event.
44. He also referred to national publications (by 10 countries), presented in the latest issue of MEDWAVES, which also needed to be disseminated. Close cooperation between MAP and the countries should be established at all levels in this respect.
45. The President suggested unblocking funds for publications and added that the Johannesburg Summit would be an enormous exhibition fair. The Strategic Review

and the Johannesburg Declaration should be presented there. It might be advisable to produce a document containing all of these texts.

46. The Vice-President from Syria agreed with the President of the Bureau and indicated that the Arab Ministers of the Environment had also issued a declaration.
47. The Vice-President from Greece also supported the President and noted that in this way, through NGOs, the whole of society was involved.

DECISIONS

The Bureau recommended the allocation of US\$ 50,000 in additional funds to support initiatives by partners for the preparation of the Johannesburg Summit.

The Secretariat was requested to prepare a brochure including the Mediterranean Declaration adopted in Monaco, an outline of MAP and the Strategic Review.

Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

48. Introducing this issue, the President of the Bureau referred to the political importance of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. He indicated that MAP was contributing to the preparatory process for the next conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Environment to be held in Athens in July. Cooperation between Heads of Secretariats, MAP and the relevant directorate of the EC was taking place and thematic issues of common interest, such as marine pollution, coastal zone management, biodiversity etc, were being discussed. He also referred to the results of the MCSD meeting in Antalya, especially on free trade.
49. The Vice-President from Slovenia expressed his disappointment that the Eastern Adriatic countries were excluded from the partnership.
50. The Vice-President from Greece informed the members that the Euro-Mediterranean Conference was a meeting organized jointly with the European Community.

DECISION

The Bureau emphasized the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of the Environment, to be held in Athens in July 2002, and the need for MAP to contribute actively to this Conference, and particularly for the Eastern Adriatic countries to be associated with the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the field of environment and sustainable development, as well as the effective association of MAP and its structures in the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean process.

Cooperation between MAP and METAP

51. The MAP Coordinator, referring to cooperation with METAP, noted that in the past METAP had provided substantial assistance to countries in the implementation of their projects. Unfortunately, the office in Cairo had been closed and cooperation had suffered for a certain period of time. However, over the past two years METAP had once again come to the forefront and was one of the key partners in the implementation of the GEF project.

Partners

52. The Programme Officer, Mr Da Cruz, informed the meeting that the list of new criteria for MAP partners (Cooperation and Coordination with Partners), included as an Appendix to the report of the Contracting Parties (Monaco, November 2001), had

been circulated among NGOs for their comments. However, until now very few replies had been received. A report concerning the revision of the list of partners would be prepared by the Secretariat for the next meeting of the Bureau.

Meetings

53. The schedule of meetings was presented to the Bureau by the MAP Coordinator. He added that, although the schedule reflected the volume of MAP activities, it should be slimmed down so that the officials of ministries would not have to bear the burden of numerous meetings, especially in view of the forthcoming major international meetings, such as the Johannesburg Summit.
54. It was suggested that technical meetings should be separated in the schedule.

Financial matters

55. The President pointed out that MAP should provide financial assistance for the preparations for the WSSD.
56. The MAP Coordinator informed the members of the Bureau that the financial situation was sound. In addition, UNEP headquarters had agreed that interest received from the bank should be considered as income for MAP. This interest could be channeled into activities or preparations for the Johannesburg Summit. The Bureau members expressed their appreciation of the sound management.
57. The Syrian delegation expressed its concern that, despite the settlement of its contributions, a figure of US\$ 7,000.- appeared in MAP's accounts as sums due. The MAP Coordinator undertook to check the matter with the administration in MEDU and Nairobi, and to inform the Syrian Ministry as soon as possible.
58. The Vice-President from Greece also expressed concerns with regard to a Greek contribution that had been lost through the banks between Athens and New York.
59. As the same had occurred in the case of other Conventions, the President asked for receipts and bank statements so that the matter could be investigated.
60. The MAP Coordinator explained the whole procedure of how the payment of contributions reached the bank, and the procedure followed by UNON to inform countries of their dues, for which UNON received 13 per cent.

DECISIONS

The Bureau decided, on the basis of the additional income from interest for 2001, to withdraw US\$ 80,000 from the MTF for assistance to countries on legal matters, the reporting system, information activities and the preparation of the WSSD in relation with MAP partners, as proposed in the report of the Secretariat (UNEP/BUR/58/3).

The Bureau also decided to request the Secretariat to investigate possibilities for improving the mechanisms for the payment of contributions, and to provide explanations concerning the status of contributions.

Information and public awareness

61. After a brief discussion, the MAP Coordinator informed the Bureau that the new MAP website was in the final stages of its design and would soon be operational.

DECISION

The Secretariat was requested to speed up the process of updating and improving the quality of the MAP website.

Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

62. The MAP Coordinator referred to the last meeting of the MCSD, held in Antalya on 13-16 March 2002, and added that the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development would be presented at the next meeting of the MCSD in Algeria.

Pollution prevention and control

63. The MAP Coordinator informed the Bureau that monitoring agreements concluded with the countries were very important for the MAP programme. He added that only seven monitoring programmes had so far been concluded.

64. The President of the Bureau also referred to the increased rate of activities of MED POL.

65. The Vice-President from Syria promised that the National Monitoring Programme for Syria would be completed and submitted to MEDU by April 2002.

66. The Vice-President from Slovenia recalled the activities taking place in the Adriatic, particularly in relation to ballast waters.

67. The President emphasized the importance of the LBS Protocol and the implementation of the SAP, as part of the Protocol, within the framework of the GEF Project.

68. In relation to the Dumping Protocol, the MAP Coordinator informed the meeting that a comprehensive report on dumping activities would soon be completed, before the entry into force of the revised Dumping Protocol. With regard to the Hazardous Wastes Protocol, he indicated that the Secretariat had started preparing an assessment, which would be ready soon.

69. On the subject of the GEF Project, he informed the Bureau that a meeting would be taking place in Tirana and emphasized the great importance to MAP of the whole issue of the implementation of the SAP and the LBS Protocol.

DECISIONS

The Bureau decided on the following:

- ***to invite countries that had not yet done so to submit their MED POL monitoring programmes, which would include the analysis at the sub-regional level of issues relating to ballast waters;***
- ***to urge countries, in cooperation with the Secretariat, to start the process of preparing their 2003 national baseline assessments of pollutant releases;***
- ***to urge all countries to establish Inter-Ministerial Committees, which were essential for the proper coordination and follow up of the GEF Project and of the implementation of the SAP, as a transboundary Mediterranean project.***

70. The MAP Coordinator and the members of the Bureau also discussed matters related to sea-based pollution prevention and control, cleaner production, specially protected

areas and biodiversity, environment and development and the sustainable management of coastal zones, including CAMP projects, taking into account the relevant chapters of document UNEP/BUR/58/3. Special mention was made by various members of the follow-up of CAMP projects.

DECISION

The Secretariat was requested to carry out an analysis of the situation with regard to CAMP projects, based on previous documentation and feasibility studies, in order to examine the problems and obstacles encountered and lessons learned, for presentation to the next meeting of the Bureau.

Agenda item 4: Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau

71. The Bureau gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Monaco to host the next meeting of the Bureau between 10 and 20 October 2002, with the exact date to be confirmed by the end of May 2002.

Agenda item 5: Any other business

72. No other business was raised.

Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting

73. A summary of conclusions was adopted by the meeting. The President informed the meeting that all members would receive a full report. Once the draft report had been submitted to the Rapporteur for comments and amendments, the Secretariat would proceed to its finalization and dissemination.

74. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the meeting closed on Tuesday, 19 March, at 13.00 hrs.

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