United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
RESTRICTED

UNEP/BUR/6
19 December 1981

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH/FRENCH

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

Geneva, 17 - 18 December 1981

REPORT

1. At the invitation of the secretariat, the Bureau met at Geneva on 17 and 18 December 1981 under the chairmanship of Mr. G. Falchi (Italy). The meeting was attended by Mr. M. Ladjouzi (Algeria), Vice-Chairman, Mr. G. Naggear (Lebanon), Rapporteur, and Mr. S. Antoine (France). The secretariat was represented by the Co-ordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, Mr. A. Manos.

2. The Bureau adopted the agenda contained in annex I.

3. The Deputy Executive Director, Mr. P.S. Thacher, welcomed the Bureau and said that it was important for it to meet frequently to deal with the disturbing situation of the Mediterranean Action Plan, which was, in UNEP's opinion, not being implemented satisfactorily because of financial difficulties and organizational problems. First, the financial resources provided for in the budget adopted at Cannes had not been supplied on time, either because of delays in the payment of contributions or because there was a discrepancy between forecasts and UNEP's actual possibilities of participation. Secondly, there was uncertainty about the functions of the secretariat, the MAP Co-ordinating Unit and the Trust Fund, particularly as far as UNEP's role was concerned. Moreover, delays which could be explained by the change of Government in Greece had occurred in the establishment of the secretariat at Athens and has created some uncertainty about the place and date of the next Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protocol concerning Mediterranean Sepcially Protected Areas.

4. At the Chairman's request, he briefly reviewed the situation of the Environment Fund in 1981 and 1982 and the effects of that situation on the financing of the Regional Seas Programme, of which MAP formed part.

He explained that, as a result of delays in the payment of contributions or reductions in contributions, particularly by the main contributor, UNEP was now being forced to cut the programme of activities adopted by its Governing Council

by one-third and to take severe economy measures allowing no new commitments of funds. Of the 222 authorized staff members, UNEP had recruited only 170, 120 of whom had been assigned to Nairobi and 50 to the regional offices. Because of those financial difficulties, the Regional Seas Programme had, for example, been cut back by one-third; MAP would also have to be cut back in order to leave the other regions (Gulf of Guinea, the Caribbean, South-West Asia and the South-East Pacific) a reasonable share.

If the situation did not improve, MAP would receive only $US 285,000 from UNEP in 1981 and $US 100,000 in 1982, although the budget adopted at Cannes in March 1981 had earmarked $US 500,000 and $US 400,000, respectively, as UNEP's share.

5. In conclusion, he said that the Bureau and the Contracting Parties would have to face facts and take the necessary decisions with regard to the MAP budget and relations with UNEP. A revision of the Barcelona Convention might have to be considered.

6. Mr. Thacher's statement was followed by a broad exchange of news during which the following points were raised:

A sudden withdrawal by UNEP from MAP could have adverse effects on contributions by the Contracting Parties and, in particular, by EEC and on the future prospects of the other regional seas projects;

Would it not be possible at least to envisage that UNEP would continue to manage the Trust Fund and that a large cut in the management fee would be made as UNEP's contribution to MAP?

Although MAP operations could have been expected to progress more rapidly, the delays could be attributed to the nature of the situation. Indeed, the results achieved were fairly satisfactory and there was no call for discouragement. All the partners in the long-term task that had been undertaken were equally responsible for any shortcomings that had been noted.

The contributions of the Contracting Parties might be supplemented by contributions in kind and, in particular, by assignments of staff to the Co-ordinating Unit; arrangements for such assignments would have to be worked out. Mr. Thacher said he agreed with that suggestion.

Further decentralization of UNEP's activities and structures might stimulate the interest of the countries which contributed to the United Nations Environment Fund;

UNDP should be urged to use regional funds for the cost of development projects in the developing countries among the Contracting Parties;

Expanded co-operation among the Contracting Parties, particularly for exchanges of information, would make MAP more interesting and more efficient as stated in recommendation No. 5 adopted at Cannes.

Agenda item 2: Follow-up action on the recommendations made by the first meeting of the Bureau

7. The Bureau heard a statement by Mr. A. Manos, MAP Co-ordinator, on the implementation of the decisions taken by the Bureau at its Athens meeting on 23 September 1981 and, in particular, on those referred to under agenda item 2.

8. It was reported that those decisions had been implemented by means of letters sent to the Contracting Parties on the following matters:

Appointment of national MED POL co-ordinators;

Speeding up of the process of the signature or ratification of the Protocol on Pollution from Land-Based Sources;

Algeria had begun the procedure for ratification of the Protocol on Pollution from Land-Based Sources.

Payment of contributions in arrears and payment of 1982 contributions by 30 April 1982;

Request for authorization to contract a loan of $US 1 million to meet needs in the first quarter of 1982.

No consensus was reached on an immediate authorization to contract a loan.

Request to UNEP to pay an additional contribution for 1981, as provided for in the budget adopted at Cannes.

UNEP refused to comply with the request to increase its contribution for 1981 to $US 500,000 and held to its decision to allocate only $US 285,000 in 1981 and $US 100,000 in 1982.

9. The letter to the Egyptian Government requesting the release of Dr. Ismail Sabri Abdallah, Co-ordinator of the Blue Plan, had been signed by the Chairman of the Bureau and sent by the secretariat.

Dr. Abdallah had recently been released. The Bureau decided that he should continue the work entrusted to him.

10. Letters had been exchanged on the subject of assistance to Tunisia and an expert had been recruited for that purpose.

11. Discussions with the Greek authorities on the transfer of the headquarters of the secretariat to Athens had continued. The change of Government in Greece had made it impossible to transfer the headquarters to Athens within the

required time. The offices now being offered were not acceptable and the headquarters agreement, on which difficulties were still being encountered, had not been signed, thus giving rise to possible financial problems. The Bureau decided that, in conjunction with action by the Executive Director of UNEP, it would officially approach the Greek Government to draw attention to the serious difficulties facing the Meeting of the Contracting Parties as a result of the delay in the implementation of a decision that had been adopted unanimously at the Cannes Meeting and should have been implemented by late 1981. The Bureau also decided to remain at the disposal of the Greek Government for further contacts on the matter (annex II).

Agenda item 3: Organization of the Extraordinary Meeting and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in 1982

12. After discussing agenda items 3 (a), 3 (b) and 3 (c), the Bureau took the following decisions:

3 (a) Place of the meetings

The Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties would be held from 29 March to 1 April 1982 and the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on 2 and 3 April 1982 at the secretariat headquarters in accordance with rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure.

If the headquarters had not been transferred to Athens by January 1982, the March meeting would, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, be held at Geneva. The letter of invitation to be sent to the Contracting Parties would indicate where the two meetings would be held.

3 (b) Agreement of the Bureau on the agenda for the two meetings

The Bureau agreed on the amended draft agendas for the two meetings to be held from 29 March to 3 April 1982. The two revised texts are contained in annexes III and IV.

3 (c) Proposals for alternative arrangements for the management of MAP resources

Following a lengthy exchange of views on document UNEP/IG.36/6, the Bureau requested clarifications and suggested some changes. It decided to meet again with the Co-ordinator on 15 and 16 February 1982 to make more specific proposals for the Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

One member of the Bureau, Mr. J. Naggear, requested that his reservations concerning the wording of the first paragraph of part III of document UNEP/IG.36/3 (page 2) and the reservations which he had formulated in document UNEP/IG.36/INF.5 should be placed on record.

3 (d) Other documents

The Bureau considered the report by the Executive Director on the implementation of MAP in 1981 (UNEP/IG.36/3) and took note of it for transmission to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

It asked the secretariat whether it could make some amendments, particularly to the table of commitments contained in annex IV. The secretariat so agreed.

The Bureau also requested the secretariat to prepare, for the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, a statement of accounts, showing not only commitments, but also payments as at 31 December 1981, as well as commitments carried over and funds available at the end of the 1981 financial year.

It welcomed the fact that, since contributions had not been paid on time, the Co-ordinator had taken economy and safety measures to reduce 1981 expenditures and make funds available ($US 920,000) to ensure some continuity in MAP activities in early 1982.

In that connection, it was pointed out that there were considerable differences between the Chapter commitments as at 30.11.1981 and the resources indicated by the secretariat and endorsed at the Bureau's last meeting. The Bureau requested that, in the commitments for late 1981 and early 1982, the Co-ordinator should take account, in so far as possible, of the Bureau's discussions as summarized below.

Section 1	Budget adopted at Cannes for 1982	Resources endorsed by the Bureau for the first three months of 1982	Commitments as at 30.11.81
Chapters 1 and 2 Co-ordination	1 004 000	450 000	587 500
Chapters 3 and 4 MED POL	1 100 000	200 000	223 500
Chapter 6 Malta Centre	418 000	220 000	99 200
Chapter 7 Training	80 000	20 000	0

Section 2	Budget adopted at Cannes for 1982	Resources endorsed by the Bureau for the first three months of 1982	Commitments as at 30.11.81
Chapter 1 Blue Plan	500 000	170 000	0
Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 PAP	520 000	50 000	0
Chapter 7 Specially protected areas	200 000	0	0

13. The Bureau took note of document UNEP/IG.36/5 on the apportionment of contributions. It stressed that the solution to the present financial difficulties of Mediterranean Action Plan lay less in a revision of the apportionment of contributions than in compliance by the Parties with the time-limits for payments and in increases in contributions with a view to the rational achievement of the objectives of the Plan. The Bureau suggested that the Parties' additional contribution should amount to $15,000, as proposed in document UNEP/IG.36/5. That proposal would not rule out other possibilities that might be discussed at the forthcoming Extraordinary Meeting.

Implementation of the Action Plan in early 1982

14. At its preceding meeting, the Bureau had decided, in the light of available funds, on the ceilings for allocations to the different MAP components for commitments in the first three months of 1982. To enable project managers to plan their work, it would have liked to be able to determine what resources would be available in the middle term, but, in view of uncertainty about receipts, it had been unable to do so. It could only recall what had been proposed for the first three months of 1982 (see table above) and stress the fact that steering a course in such uncertain conditions meant that the management of MAP was difficult, not to say problematic or even critical.

15. It therefore strongly emphasized the fundamental importance of ensuring greater regularity in the receipt of resources and welcomed the efforts made by the States which had paid their contributions in advance. It urged the eight States which had not yet paid their 1981 contributions to do so as soon as possible. Moreover, contributions for 1982 should be paid by

30 April at the latest and transfer procedures should be speeded up by States and by UNEP. It expressed the hope that the European Community would pay its contribution for 1982 as soon as possible and urged UNEP to try to keep to the figures for its 1982 contribution provided for in the budget adopted at Cannes.

Agenda item 4: Other matters

The Bureau proposed that the Extraordinary Meeting should adopt a resolution requesting the member States which took part in regional meetings that decided on the allocation of UNDP regional funds to take action to ensure that part of such funds was allocated to the projects of the States of the region for the protection of the Mediterranean.

17. The Bureau recalled that the objective of the Barcelona Convention and its related protocols was to promote co-operation with a view to the protection of the Mediterranean against pollution. Although the Contracting Parties had co-operated mainly in the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan, the potential for expanded co-operation in areas other than financial matters was enormous.

The Mediterranean countries could help one another by exchanging information, experience and documents. In the Bureau's opinion, such co-operation in kind should be promoted by the Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan which should be given all the information necessary for carrying out such a task.

The Co-ordinator was requested to submit proposals to that effect to the Contracting Parties as soon as possible.

It would, in particular, be advisable to discuss ways and means by which the Contracting Parties could make staff available and to exchange information on bilateral co-operation and improvements in communications.

Agenda item 5: Next meeting of the Bureau

19. The Bureau decided to meet on 15-16 February 1982 (agenda item 3 (c), paragraph 12 above) and on 28 March 1982.

Agenda item 6: Adoption of the report

20. The Bureau adopted the present report on 18 December 1981.

Agenda item 7: Closure of the meeting

21. The Chairman closed the meeting at 7 p.m. on 18 December 1981.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Welcome address by the Deputy Executive Director

2. Follow-up action on the Bureau's recommendations (UNEP/BUR/4):

   Paragraph 4.2: MED POL National Co-ordinators

   Blue Plan Co-ordinator

   Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources

   Assistance to Tunisia

   Paragraph 5.4: Payment of contributions

   Payments in advance

   UNEP contribution

   Meeting of Government Experts on Regional Seas

   Paragraph 6: Headquarters agreement

   Offices of the Co-ordinating Unit

   Contribution by the host country

3. Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (29 March - 1 April 1982) and Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (2-3 April 1982):

   3 (a) Place of the meetings (rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure);

   3 (b) Agreement of the Bureau on the provisional agenda for the two meetings (rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure) (UNEP/IG.36/1 and UNEP/IG.35/1);

   3 (c) Proposals for alternative arrangements for the management of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/IG.36/6);

   3 (d) Information documents:

   Report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan in 1981 (UNEP/IG.36/3);

   Recommendations by the Executive Director concerning the activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan for the biennium 1982-1983 and cost of these activities (UNEP/IG.36/4);

   Proposals for new apportionment of contributions (UNEP/IG.36/5);

   Report on the consultations on the Priority Actions Programme (UNEP/IG.36/INF.3);

   Report of the meeting of the Bureau held at Athens on 23 September 1981 (UNEP/IG.36/INF.4);

Report of the Working Group on Scientific and Technical Co-operation (UNEP/IG.36/INF.5).

4. Other business

5. Next meeting of the Bureau

6. Adoption of the report

7. Closure of the meeting

ANNEXE II

Texte du télégramme envoyé à la Grèce le 18 décembre 1981 :

"TO H.E. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ATHENS

BUREAU OF CONTRACTING PARTIES TO CONVENTION FOR PROTECTION OF MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST POLLUTION MEETING IN GENEVA HAS TAKEN NOTE WITH CONCERN OF THE DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM DELAYS IN TRANSFERRING THE OFFICES OF COORDINATING UNIT OF MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN. GENEROUS OFFER OF GREECE TO HOST THE UNIT IN ATHENS WAS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED BY SECOND MEETING CONTRACTING PARTIES 2-7 MARCH 1981 IN CANNES. TRANSFER WHICH WAS SCHEDULED FOR END 1981 CAN ONLY BE EFFECTIVE AS AGREED IN CANNES WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF SIGNATURE OF HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT, AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE OFFICE SPACE AND PAYMENT OF SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION IN DRACHMAS.

PENDING SUCH DECISIONS THE WORK OF THE ACTION PLAN IS AFFECTED. FOR INSTANCE IN CONFORMITY WITH RULES OF PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO MEETINGS UNEP WILL HAVE TO CONVENE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CONTRACTING PARTIES 29 MARCH - 1 APRIL 1982 AND DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON PROTOCOL SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS 2-3 APRIL 1982 AT GENEVA WHERE UNIT IS LOCATED AT PRESENT.

BUREAU IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN ATHENS IF IN YOUR VIEW VISIT CAN HELP IN REACHING FAVOURABLE EARLY DECISION ON ABOVE MATTERS.

(AMBASSADOR G. FALCHI, PRESIDENT CONTRACTING PARTIES, C/O UNEP, GENEVA)"

ANNEXE III

Réunion extraordinaire des Parties contractantes
à la Convention pour la protection de la mer
Méditerranée contre la pollution

Genève, 29 mars - 1er avril 1982

ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE

1. Ouverture de la Réunion

2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour

3. Organisation des travaux

4. Rapport du Directeur exécutif sur l'état d'avancement du Plan d'action pour la Méditerranée en 1981 et recommandations concernant les activités à entreprendre pour les années 1982 - 1983.

   a) Rapport sur les activités entreprises en 1981;

   b) Recommandations concernant les activités à entreprendre en 1982 (révisées) et en 1983, et propositions budgétaires y relatives.

5. Clé de répartition des contributions.

6. Dispositions à prendre au sujet de la gestion des ressources du Plan d'action pour la Méditerranée.

7. Projet de Protocole relatif aux Aires spécialement protégées de la Méditerranée.

8. Adoption du Rapport.

9. Clôture de la Réunion.

ANNEXE IV

Conférence de plénipotentiaires sur le Protocole relatif aux Aires spécialement protégées de la Méditerranée

Genève, 2 - 3 avril 1982

ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE

1. Ouverture de la Conférence
2. Election du Bureau
3. Règlement intérieur
4. Adoption de l'ordre du jour
5. Déroulement des travaux
6. Elaboration du projet final de Protocole relatif aux Aires spécialement protégées de la Méditerranée
7. Rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs
8. Adoption de l'Acte final de la Conférence
9. Signature de l'Acte final de la Conférence
10. Signature du Protocole relatif aux Aires spécialement protégées de la Méditerranée