

Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the Protection of the
Mediterranean Sea against Pollution

Geneva, 29 March - 1 April 1982

CLOSING STATEMENT

by

P. S. THACHER

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

When I had the honour to welcome you here last Monday I was fully aware of the very great tasks that were before this Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, and of the difficulty to resolve so many important issues in so few days of debate.

I therefore share in your satisfaction for the accomplishment of your meeting. You have indeed reached important decisions and ensured the further development of the Mediterranean Action Plan on a sound scientific and financial basis.

In Cannes you had to end the meeting with an unbalanced budget. Today you have approved a programme for 1982 and 1983 which actually exceeds the proposals of your secretariat, and you have pledged the funds necessary for implementation of a two year budget of \$ 7.1 million. When your previous contributions are added to this total, and when the UNEP contributions since 1974 are also added, the total direct investment

in the Mediterranean Action Plan exceeds 20 million dollars.

This figure of \$ 20 million embraces the direct costs to your governments of \$ 11.5 million plus the UN Environment Fund of \$ 8.5 million for work at the international level in the development and execution of the Plan your governments approved in Barcelona seven years ago, and includes equipment in national institutions around your sea, and the active work of your experts in all aspects of the plan.

This figure of \$ 20 million does not include the money and services provided by our partners in the UN system; UNDP and the many Specialized Agencies and UN programmes who continue to play active roles in the achievement of your common objectives, nor does it cover fully UNEP's costs as a coordination and catalyst.

And, of course, the \$ 20 million figure does not include the far greater investments your governments are making at the national level to maintain the parallel processes of environment and development throughout the Mediterranean Sea area.

The magnitude of these investments, political as well as financial, surely demonstrates once again to a sceptical world that the UN provides a place where governments can cooperate to protect their common future - even when today's differences seem almost insurmountable - and that together with the UN System, in the words of the UN Charter, it remains "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends", the purposes set forth in Article 1 of the Charter.

As I informed you at the outset of this meeting, there are today some 110 states served by UNEP's Regional Seas Programme by Action Plans they have approved based on the example set by the Mediterranean.

The UN needs this demonstration at this time, a demonstration of success, and I am confident that the Executive Director, Dr. Tolba, will bring it to the attention of the Secretary General who, as many of you know, will meet next Monday with the heads of all agencies and programmes in Rome.

This demonstration also comes on the eve of the Session of Special Character of UNEP's Governing Council on 10 May at our Headquarters in Nairobi; I hope I will see many of you there.

On the matter of apportionment of contributions the proposals of two countries to introduce a basic fee to the scale of assessment did not obtain the support of this meeting. Nevertheless I share your Chairman's hope that existing generosity will be maintained and that those countries whose contributions are the lowest would do everything in their power to increase their inputs, financial and otherwise, to the common programme.

You have examined carefully the complex issues raised by alternative arrangements for the management of your resources and you have decided to continue to entrust UNEP with this task. I shall transmit your request to Dr. Tolba who will convey it to the forthcoming 10th session of the Governing Council of UNEP. I thank you for your renewed confidence in UNEP

and wish to assure you that we shall continue to manage your funds with utmost prudence and care as well as with initiative and imagination.

Your discussions on the draft protocol on Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas have been active and protracted. But here again you succeeded despite the short time available, in agreeing on changes which broaden the area of agreement. It is only natural that certain points, whose importance I do not wish to belittle, still remain to be resolved. This is the task of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which I shall have the honour to convene to-morrow morning. I therefore remain highly confident that after another full day of consideration by delegates empowered to negotiate and sign the Protocol on Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas, it will be possible on Saturday to open a new international agreement for signature. If so, it will again demonstrate the spirit of cooperation and mutual give and take that have already produced in six short years the Barcelona Convention and three related protocols that are considered landmarks in international treaty-making and co-operation for the protection of the environment.

Mr. President, it only remains for me to thank the elected officials of the Working Group, Mr. Ros of Spain and Mr. El Hafdhi of Tunisia, to thank Mr. Naggear of Lebanon for his untiring efforts as your rapporteur and to thank in a very special way you, Mr. President, for the wise, energetic and diplomatic way in which you have steered one of the most successful meetings under the Mediterranean Action Plan.