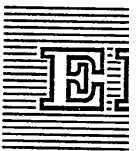




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INTRODUCTORY REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF UNEP ON THE ORIGIN, OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSALS
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "BLUE PLAN"

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The quality of life of the Mediterranean peoples and the satisfaction of their basic human needs are heavily dependent on the state of the environment in which they live. The dangers besetting the environment, particularly the marine environment, have now become so formidable that collective action is called for.
2. The Governments of Mediterranean coastal States, realizing that the protection of the marine environment as a life supporting system cannot be dissociated from the priorities of economic and social development, are committed to achieving a better quality of life for present and future generations, and are deeply concerned about the possibilities and difficulties of reconciling, in both the short and the long term, the socio-economic development of their countries and the preservation of the environment.
3. The preparation of a "Blue Plan" is a response to those concerns as voiced by the Mediterranean countries in the debates and conclusions of the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Protection of the Mediterranean held in Barcelona from 28 January to 4 February 1975.
4. At that meeting, taking particular account of the need to facilitate the much needed development of the Mediterranean countries, the Governments of the region declared themselves ready to consider proposals aimed at reconciling the demands for development with the need to protect and improve the quality of the Mediterranean environment. The Intergovernmental Meeting on the Protection of the Mediterranean accordingly requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with the Governments of the region, the organizations of the United Nations system, and intergovernmental and regional organizations concerned, to draw up a co-ordinated programme aimed

at a better utilization of resources in the interest of the countries of the region and their development in accordance with sound long-term environmental principles.^{1/}

5. At its third session in 1975, the Governing Council of UNEP gave its support to the Mediterranean Action Plan.^{2/} During that session, and on the initiative of the Government of France, the view was expressed that UNEP should support the publication of broad guidelines and technical manuals which would serve as a basis for a programme of action to protect the Mediterranean and similar oceanic ecoregions. It was suggested that UNEP should convene an expert group to start the preparation of such publications and, in particular, to elaborate the documents relating to a project for the protection and development of the Mediterranean which was referred to as the "Blue Plan".^{3/}

6. After further consultations between UNEP and the Government of France, and in order to obtain the advice of experts on the formulation of the "Blue Plan" project, the Executive Director of UNEP convened two meetings of Mediterranean experts and representatives of specialized agencies and bodies in the United Nations system.^{4/} The first

1/ UNEP/WG.2/5, Annex, paragraphs 2 and 3.

2/ UNEP/GC/55, paragraph 187.

3/ *ibid.*, paragraph 194.

4/ Experts from all Mediterranean countries were invited to both meetings. Experts from the following countries attended: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Yugoslavia. The following bodies of the United Nations system and specialized agencies were represented: Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Labour Office (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), World Tourism Organization (WTO), as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Commission of the European Communities was also represented.

meeting took place in Geneva on 22 and 23 January 1976. The second meeting was convened in Paris from 17 to 19 May 1976.

7. The Executive Director sought the views of experts with regard to the feasibility of the project, its geographical coverage, its long term and immediate objectives, and the ways and means needed for its implementation.

8. The experts acknowledged the methodological, scientific, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the implementation of a project as comprehensive as the "Blue Plan". However, in view of the vital need of the Mediterranean countries to protect and enhance the quality of the environment they also recognized that no effort should be spared to formulate and implement such a plan.

II. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

9. At these meetings, a consensus emerged that the project should cover the entire Mediterranean Basin, namely the Mediterranean Sea and the adjacent coastal zones where socio-economic activities are largely governed by their relations with the sea-board. These coastal zones might vary in width from one country to another, depending on the problems to be considered and the nature of the disciplines involved. The Mediterranean region is recognized in this respect as constituting not a single ecosystem but rather a complex of ecosystems of varying dimensions, displaying certain comparable ecological and climatic features but differing from one another according to latitude and altitude. In all cases, the States concerned are the 18 coastal States of the Mediterranean Region.

III. OBJECTIVES

A. Long-term objectives

10. The fundamental long-term objective of the "Blue Plan" is to initiate a continuous process of concerted co-operation among the Mediterranean coastal States. The term "Plan" should not, therefore, give rise to misunderstandings: the objectives of the "Blue Plan" are not to concentrate the decision-making process or to promote the establishment of a body that would define in technical terms what should be the rational management of natural resources and optimum socio-economic development for all the Mediterranean countries. By ensuring a systematic exchange of experiences in all relevant fields among the Mediterranean countries, the "Blue Plan" would create a pool of knowledge to which each of the countries concerned would have immediate access.

11. The "Blue Plan", while promoting the use of a common data base and combined efforts to solve common problems, would take existing socio-economic development styles into consideration and facilitate the independent formulation of alternative development styles by each country in accordance with its own characteristics and conditions.

12. Accordingly, the long-term objectives of the "Blue Plan" can be stated as follows:

12.1. To assist the Governments of the coastal States of the Mediterranean to gain more accurate insight into the common problems they face both in the Mediterranean sea and its coastal zones.

12.2. To assist them in reaching the appropriate decisions relating to the rational management and development of these areas and their resources.

13. More specifically, the essential objective of the "Blue Plan" is to place at the disposal of decision-makers and planners in the different countries of the Mediterranean region information enabling them to formulate plans for optimum socio-economic development on a sustainable basis without environmental degradation.

14. From the operational point of view, the "Blue Plan" would comprise three phases, each of which would make provision for sets of successive or simultaneous studies and activities considered by the Governments concerned. These studies and activities may cover fields as varied as food and agriculture, industrialization and urbanization processes, energy production and consumption, trade, transport and tourism, coastal zone management, as well as education and training. The studies and activities would be interdisciplinary, intersectoral and integrated, and would take into account the social and cultural characteristics and diversities of the countries concerned. In each of the fields to be examined, long-term trends would be identified and their effects on the environment analysed. In the light of that analysis, alternative development strategies and policies would be formulated wherever possible and brought to the attention of Governments for their consideration.

15. To sum up, the programme envisaged under the "Blue Plan" would be designed to harmonize actions to be taken during the coming decades, with a view to ensuring a continuous economic and social development of the whole Mediterranean region in a manner which will safeguard the natural systems on which sustained developments depends. To achieve this purpose, the studies and activities to be undertaken under the "Blue Plan" will be conceived and implemented in such a way as to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.^{5/} The Declaration on the Establishment

^{5/} General Assembly resolution 3517 (XXX) of 15 December 1975.

of a New International Economic Order^{6/} and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States^{7/} are also expected to have an important bearing on the activities to be undertaken in the context of the "Blue Plan".

16. The "Blue Plan" should lead to a continuous increase of co-operation among various countries in the Mediterranean region. It is through such co-operation and mutual assistance, with full respect for national sovereignty, that economic imbalances will be progressively eradicated. It is hoped that activities under the "Blue Plan" will contribute to the consolidation of peace, which is a basic condition for the development and protection of the Mediterranean environment.

B. Immediate objectives

17. The proposed immediate objectives of the "Blue Plan" are to lay the foundations for a working system of exchange of information and

^{6/} United Nations General Assembly resolution 3201(S-VI) of 1 May 1974 and resolution 3202(S-VI) of the same date setting out the Programme of Action which accompanies the Declaration. Both resolutions emphasize the rational and equitable use of the world's resources. The Declaration mentions the importance of national control of the exploitation and development of the natural resources within the State's jurisdiction. The Programme of Action recognizes, however, that all efforts should be made to refrain from damaging or deteriorating natural resources and to take appropriate steps to protect and reconstitute them.

^{7/} United Nations General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974. It should be noted that the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, like the Declaration and Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, is similarly concerned with both development and the environment, with emphasis on improving the lot of all peoples and ensuring "the protection, preservation and enhancement of the environment". Furthermore, Article 29 states "The sea-bed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as well as the resources of the area, are the common heritage of mankind, ... all States shall ensure that the exploration of the area and exploitation of its resources are carried out ... [so] that the benefits derived therefrom are shared equitably by all States". Article 30 continues: "The protection, preservation and enhancement of the environment for the present and future generations is the responsibility of all States".

co-operation. For this purpose, the project should be initiated by a survey of the Mediterranean region's potential for research and analysis in all relevant fields. In each one of the fields, a network of co-operating institutions and experts from various countries of the Mediterranean region will be established. A limited number of interdisciplinary sectoral studies and activities should then be initiated in the priority fields which will be indicated by the Governments. The implementation of these studies will help in testing the efficiency of the proposed system of exchange of information and co-operation, and improving it where necessary. In the light of the survey it should become possible to determine what additional proposals should be submitted to the Governments.

18. In practical terms, to achieve the immediate objectives the following activities should be undertaken:

18.1. A systematic survey of the main development and environmental protection activities being carried on in the Mediterranean region. The data concerning these activities should be compiled on the basis of a common methodology with a view to facilitating their comparability and assessment, as well as the transfer and exchange of data.

18.2. The preparation of a directory of institutions and experts available in the region to participate in the studies and activities of the "Blue Plan".

18.3. The launching of a number of interdisciplinary intersectoral studies in the priority areas indicated by Governments at the Intergovernmental Meeting on the "Blue Plan". Some of these areas are described in information documents UNEP/IG.5/INF.3 and following numbers.

18.4. The identification of the most significant of various existing and planned activities in and around the Mediterranean that have a clearly beneficial impact on the environment. In co-operation with Governments and the intergovernmental organizations concerned these activities should be used as demonstration projects.

18.5. Similarly, the identification of a number of national or internationally supported projects seeking the satisfaction of basic human needs on a sustainable basis. In co-operation with Governments and intergovernmental organizations concerned, some of these will be used as pilot projects in the relevant fields. These demonstration and pilot projects would be among the best ways of pooling knowledge and thus gaining invaluable information and experience at reasonable cost.

18.6. The progressive elaboration, on the basis of the data and experience gathered through the studies and activities to be undertaken, of conceptual frameworks for long-term environmentally sound development planning.

18.7. The provision of technical assistance and training in environmental management for interested countries.

IV. METHODOLOGY

19. Systems analysis and prospective methodologies were considered by the Geneva and Paris consultations of experts convened by the Executive Director in January and May 1976, to be among the best means of dealing with the problems involved. To ensure that all those concerned in the carrying out of the project use the same approach a common methodology will be worked out before the initiation of the studies.

20. Plans and reports on all studies and activities carried in the context of the "Blue Plan" will conform to the following outline:

20.1. Statement and definition of the problems encountered in a situation affecting the development and/or environment of the region;

20.2. Establish the present status of those problems and their relations with the environment;

20.3. Point to the long-term trends of those problems and their implications for the environment;

20.4. Identify the most significant aspects of those problems for the environment and make proposals for practical actions to solve or forestall them;

20.5. Formulate proposals aimed at securing long-term development with the least adverse effect on the environment.

21. In order to deal adequately with the questions raised in the preceding paragraph, the studies and activities will be interdisciplinary and intersectoral. Furthermore, to make sure that local conditions and social and cultural characteristics are fully taken into consideration, the teams concerned will include institutions and experts from all parts of the Mediterranean.

V. PHASES OF THE PROJECT

22. The project should be carried out in three phases.

23. The first phase should comprise the broadest possible exploratory work in all the fields selected by the Governments. Institutions and experts of each Mediterranean country should be encouraged to take part effectively in the continuous monitoring and analysis of development trends and the state of the environment.

24. During the second phase of the project, a more thorough investigation would be made of the most critical problems brought to light in the first phase and of the sectors affected. The results of this phase should lead to a number of more consolidated surveys of development trends from which it would be possible to determine what activities should be provided for in order to deal with problems that risk becoming serious during the coming decades.

25. In the third phase, reports should be produced synthesizing all the activities previously undertaken, which, above all, derive from those activities conclusions and appropriate recommendations that would assist the Governments of the coastal States of the Mediterranean in the planning and execution of continuous socio-economic development of their countries without environmental degradation.

26. Completion of the three phases of the project would require about three years from the date of its approval at the Intergovernmental Meeting on the "Blue Plan".

27. The institutional machinery to be devised for carrying out the "Blue Plan" should make provision for the receipt of a steady stream of information about the progress of activities, it should also make provision for ways of communicating this information to the Governments concerned. In addition, the results of each phase should be reviewed by an annual intergovernmental meeting of the Mediterranean coastal States. A progress report on the first phase will be submitted to the intergovernmental meeting of the Mediterranean coastal States scheduled to take place in Monaco late in 1977.

I. FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Responsibility for the financing of the preparatory process up to the Intergovernmental Meeting on the "Blue Plan" has been assumed, in equal proportions, by the Government of France and the United Nations Environment Programme.

29. With regard to the financial implications of the implementation of the "Blue Plan", the Executive Director of UNEP is mindful of the policy directives laid by the Governing Council of UNEP at its most recent session, namely :

- a) decision 47 (IV), paragraph 9,

"Considers that the successful achievements of the United Nations Environment Programme in the field of protection of the environment in the Mediterranean region afford a concrete example of both the integrated approach and the proper co-ordinating role that should be the major concern of the Programme in its activities, and requests the Executive Director to ensure that the catalytic function, co-ordination and integration, as opposed to involvement in longer-term activities of a primarily executive character, always constitute the main contribution of the Programme in its endeavours to ensure the protection and improvement of the environment;"^{8/}

and

- b) decision 50(IV), paragraph 7,

"Notes the Executive Director's account of how the concepts of environmental assessment and environmental management, as well as supporting activities, have been applied in the Mediterranean, and requests the Executive Director further to develop work in the Mediterranean in accordance with this framework, while taking steps towards the progressive transfer of executive responsibility to the Governments of the region;"^{9/}

30. This policy of progressive transfer of executive responsibility to the Governments applies to all parts of the Mediterranean Action Plan and will be a matter for governmental consideration at the intergovernmental meeting scheduled to take place at Monaco in late 1977. With regard to the "Blue Plan" specifically, the Executive Director believes there should be provision for financial support from the outset by Mediterranean Governments along side

^{8/} UNEP/GC/85, para 129.

^{9/} *ibid.*, page 135.

that provided by UNEP and other international sources. The Executive Director would welcome guidance from Governments on these matters both before and at the Split Intergovernmental Meeting. Some of his preliminary views are presented in document UNEP/IG.5/4.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

31. In consequence of the international trends of the relocation of industries, the increasing industrialization and urbanization of the Northern coastal zones of the Mediterranean, and of the already partially implemented intensive overall development plans of a number of North African and Middle-Eastern countries, it is likely that the Mediterranean region will experience more changes and growth during the next three decades than during the last three centuries.

32. The question is what kind of growth should be the objective. During the last few years it has been widely recognized that growth in quantitative terms, as expressed by the increase of the GNP, does not necessarily mean development. Development should be expressed in qualitative as well as quantitative terms. It should lead to the "upward movement of the whole social system". This conception of development has far-reaching implications for both developed and developing nations. Its object is to satisfy basic human needs with the least adverse effects on resources and the environment at large.

33. The "Blue Plan" as outlined in this report could become an operational and action instrument in the hands of Mediterranean Governments, which they can use as they wish, for the formulation of national and regional strategies for continuous socio-economic development without environmental degradation.

34. Activities under the "Blue Plan" may be classified under the three headings of environmental assessment, environmental management and supporting measures.

34.1. Environmental assessment:

(i) The systematic survey of main current activities which is proposed in paragraph 18.1. should show what knowledge is available within the Mediterranean region concerning the state of development and environment.

(ii) The same survey should show what are the gaps in the existing knowledge and generate the necessary research to fill these gaps.

(iii) Both of the preceding activities will be facilitated by the establishment of networks of co-operating institutions as described in paragraph 18.2.

(iv) These networks will be among the best channels in their respective fields for the pooling and exchange of information and knowledge. Above all, they would ensure that this information is available for the benefit of development planners and decision makers at all levels.

34.2. Development and environmental management:

(i) The comprehensive planning of socio-economic development, i.e. planning that continuously takes into account the side-effects of man's activities on the environment, is still extremely difficult to achieve for both scientific and political reasons. As stated in paragraph 18.6., the "Blue Plan" should contribute to the overcoming of at least the scientific difficulties.

(ii) An important element in the enhancement of the environment is the rational management of natural resources. For the purpose of illustrating measures of rational management that could be undertaken in some areas, a number of information papers are before this meeting. They are based on actual situations in the Mediterranean region and mention some of

the actions that could be undertaken. It will be for the Governments of the Mediterranean coastal States to indicate the priority areas in which they wish action to be taken immediately. (See paragraph 18.3. above).

34.3. Supporting measures

(i) The majority of the Mediterranean countries are developing countries. Although most of them are relatively well equipped to participate in a major international co-operative effort, some of them will require technical assistance and training as provided for in paragraph 18.7.

(ii) To facilitate the implementation of the activities to be agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Meeting, besides the efforts undertaken so far to circulate as widely as possible information on the Mediterranean Action Plan, specific efforts will be made to see to it that information on the "Blue Plan" and its outputs reaches not only those directly concerned but also the public at large.

35. In conclusion, it should be restated that the implementation of a project such as the "Blue Plan" might raise methodological, scientific, administrative and financial difficulties. However, in view of the future impact of unbalanced growth on the Mediterranean environment, it is hoped that all the moral and material efforts devoted by the Mediterranean coastal States and their peoples to the realization of such a project, will be considered as a wise investment in the protection and enhancement of the environment of the Mediterranean region for the benefit of present and future generations.