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Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties
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Intergovernmental Review Meeting of
Mediterranean Coastal States on
the Action Plan

Cannes, 2-7 March 1981

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE REGIONAL OIL COMBATING CENTRE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Note by the Executive Director

At the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Mediterranean Coastal States and First Meeting of the Contracting Parties held in Geneva in February 1979, the Executive Director of UNEP was requested to submit to the next meeting of the Contracting Parties a report on the activities and organization of the Regional Centre, taking account of the lessons learnt from its activities since its establishment (UNEP/IG.14/9, Annex V, para. 30).

An overall review of the activities of the Regional Centre in relation to Resolution 7 of the 1976 Barcelona conference and the Protocol concerning co-operation in combating pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by oil and other harmful substances in case of emergency was made at the Meeting held in Malta from 7 to 20 November 1980. The documents submitted to this meeting are attached herewith.



REGIONAL OIL COMBATING CENTRE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA POLLUTION
PAR LES HYDROCARBURES



Review Meeting on the Activities
of the Regional Oil Combating
Centre for the Mediterranean Sea

MALTA, 17 - 20 November 1980

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Review of the Activities of the Centre
in Relation to the
Objectives and Functions Annexed to
Resolution 7 of the Barcelona Conference
of February 1976

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper is prepared with a view to indicate how the Centre developed its activities year by year with the co-operation of the States of the region. Objectives and functions are reviewed one after the other accordingly and in the light of the recommendations expressed by the coastal States at their previous Intergovernmental Review Meetings of the Mediterranean Action Plan (these are indicated by an asterisk).
- 1.2 Background information on the terms of reference of the Centre, its establishment, as well as administrative and financial aspects are given in documents RM/INF.3 RM/INF.4 and RM/INF.5.

2. REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE ACCORDING TO THE OBJECTIVES

* Objective 1

"To strengthen the capacities of the coastal States in the Mediterranean region and to facilitate co-operation among them in order to combat massive pollution by oil, especially in case of emergencies in which there is grave and imminent danger to the marine environment."

Visits to the coastal States

- 2.1 In order to evaluate the existing capacities of the coastal States and the ways to facilitate co-operation between them in case of serious emergencies, the Director established in 1977, a first contact with each of the coastal States, except Albania. After the visit the Director prepared a comprehensive report on each country which included all important information collected during the visit, such as communications, accident reporting systems, potential risk zones and sensitive areas, contingency plans, focal points, etc... This information was updated from time to time.
- 2.2 The establishment of focal points in every State was given priority during the visit (document RM/INF.6 contains a list of the focal points of the Centre in each coastal State as updated recently). In several countries more than one focal point has been indicated relating to the governmental, technical and scientific organization in that country.
- 2.3 Telecommunication facilities in each country, accident reporting systems, equipment and products available, contingency planning and training requirements and facilities were the most important items on which follow-up actions were taken after these visits.

- 2.4 The Centre has made considerable efforts to keep in touch with coastal States through dissemination of information and correspondence. However with respect to certain coastal States, it appears necessary to continue a programme of periodic visits in order to maintain contact. (See document RM/INF.7.) Experts are invited to express their views on the usefulness of a pre-planned programme of visits and make recommendations accordingly.

First support of the Centre in cases of emergency

- 2.5 The Centre has been able to offer its support to strengthen the capacities of coastal States and to facilitate co-operation between them during emergencies.
- 2.6 A recent example is the INDEPENDENTIA tanker casualty. In November 1979, a request came from Turkey and immediately an expert, made available by France, was sent by the Centre to Istanbul for one week. After the accident the Centre provided information to the Fisheries Directorate of Turkey which was carrying out an impact study of this accident and offered its assistance for a joint comprehensive impact study.
- 2.7 A more recent example is the ZENOBIA, a roll-on roll-off vessel, which sank near Larnaca, Cyprus, in June 1980. After a request for assistance, one expert from the Hellenic Coast Guard with a team of three divers and equipment were provided by Greece through the Centre to start immediate clean-up operations. The Director also went to the scene and participated in the operation. Information on equipment and services was supplied from the Centre. This incident proved an excellent opportunity to test the usefulness and improvement of the new directories of experts, equipment and services which the Centre was preparing.
- 2.8 These incidents are good examples of how the Centre can facilitate co-operation among coastal States in combating marine pollution. It is the view of the Centre that this type of action should be enhanced and that on such a basis, subregional meetings can be organized in the near future. Though the outcome of such meetings and the resulting co-operation depends entirely on the coastal States themselves, the Centre plans to continue to promote such co-operation especially in cases of emergencies.

* Objective 2

"To assist coastal States of the Mediterranean region, which so request, in the development of their own national capabilities to combat oil pollution and to facilitate information exchange, technological co-operation and training."

- 2.9 As far as exchange of information, technological co-operation and training corresponds to specific functions of the Centre which are described further, consideration will be given only on development of national capabilities.

Initiatives in Contingency Planning

- 2.10 The Centre gave particular attention to developing oil spill contingency planning in the region. After collecting information on the status of such planning, during the visits by the Director to each coastal State, the Centre started to work further to promote improvement of oil spill preparedness. For this purpose the Centre acted in two directions: first to assist each country, as much as possible to develop its own national contingency plan, and second to hold meetings, workshops and collect information to promote co-operation in regional and subregional contingency planning, where co-operation between States in the area could be utilized.
- 2.11 In July 1977, following a request from the Malta Government, the Centre managed, with the valuable support and experience of an expert consultant, Mr. John Wardley-Smith, to finalize a draft outline of a contingency plan for Malta. This was presented to the Minister of Health and Environment. Copy of this draft plan was made available to the coastal States with a view to serve as a model for further guidance in national contingency planning.
- 2.12 Algeria, Lebanon, the Libyan Jamahariya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia have requested the Centre to assist them in preparing their contingency plans. Due to the limited technical staff at the Centre, these could not be tackled immediately. Acting on the Tunisian request, the Centre sent a French expert for two weeks in Tunisia to assist and advise the local authorities in their preparation of the national plan. His report was submitted in March 1978.
- 2.13 Acting on the recommendation 38 of the Intergovernmental Meeting held in Monaco in January 1978, the Centre organized a Workshop on Contingency Planning. This Workshop, which was the first of its kind wholly organized by the Centre, was held in Malta in September 1978. Besides giving a first opportunity to the delegates from the coastal States to visit the Centre, the participants were extensively informed about the information being collected at the Centre which could be used by the coastal States for assistance in the field. Also they exchanged views and information on national plans, bilateral and multilateral agreements, new trends and technologies for combating pollution, training programmes and

technical co-operation. The views and recommendations of the participants for the future activities of the Regional Centre are included in the report of the Meeting which has been disseminated to all coastal States. From the discussions it appeared "to be a consensus of opinion that the first priority should be the establishment of national contingency plans, and the role of the Regional Oil Combating Centre in this respect would be to assist States at their request in the preparation of such plans both by expert advice and by the provision of information on existing plans. At the same time consideration should be given to sub-regional or sectoral approaches, possibly based on bilateral and/or multilateral agreements among those countries supporting the idea."

- 2.14 Further to this, and on an initiative of the Director of the Centre presented at the Review Meeting of Barcelona, in March 1980, contacts have already been made to convene a subregional meeting on the central Mediterranean to prepare a proposal for a subregional contingency plan. Italy, Malta and Tunisia have expressed their agreement in principle to such a meeting. The Centre has tried through various channels to get some response from the Libyan Jamahariya but have not yet succeeded.

3. REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE ACCORDING TO EACH FUNCTION

* Function A

"To collect and disseminate information on:

(i) inventories of experts and equipment in each coastal State for combating massive accidental spillages of oil."

- 3.1 The first initiatives taken up by the Centre following the visits by the Director to the coastal States, was to collect information on subjects of relevant importance to coastal States concerning oil combating. Steps to draw up inventories on experts, products and equipment were taken by sending questionnaires to all coastal States. Each questionnaire consisted of a number of forms to be completed by the focal point giving important information. This information, when received, was classified by the Information Officer and compiled in a form of inventory which was then disseminated to the coastal States.

- 3.2 In an effort to increase its capabilities of being of service to coastal States in cases of emergencies and following the recommendations expressed at the Workshop on Contingency Planning, the Centre started also

collecting information on Companies which might be available to offer services and assistance in various fields during an emergency: this includes services such as surveillance, towage, salvage, off-loading clean-up operations at sea or on land and impact assessment of oil pollution. The Centre is now preparing a directory of these services which will then be made available to all coastal States.

3.3 The following working papers have been prepared accordingly for discussion:

- RM/2/1/Add.1 - ROCC inventory of experts
- RM/2/1/Add.2 - Presentation of the questionnaire on equipment stockpiles
- RM/2/1/Add.3 - Directory of Organizations offering services in case of emergency in the Mediterranean

(ii) "plans, methods and techniques used for combating oil pollution in order to assist as far as necessary countries of the region in the preparation of their national contingency plans."

3.4 In the same way, manufacturers of oil combating equipment and products were contacted and requested to furnish to the Centre information about their products. Again, this information, when received, was classified and compiled in a special reference document kept at the Centre. The document RM/2/1/Add.4 is submitted for discussion.

3.5 A technical documentation has been progressively built up and includes IMCO documents, proceedings of various technical meetings, training course documentation, subscription to specialized publications, etc...

(iii) "those areas in the Mediterranean which are especially vulnerable to oil pollution and with reference to these areas, specification of clean-up methods which can be used with minimum environmental damage in such areas."

3.6 Apart from the information collected during the visits to the coastal States, there is presently a lack of information on the vulnerable areas of the region. This appears to be at present the main limiting factor to plan further actions at the regional level. However it is expected that the results of related MED POL Projects and of the recent Intergovernmental Meeting on Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (13-17 October, 1980) will provide added impetus to work in this field.

* Function B

"To prepare and keep up to date, in the light of information collected, emergency plans that could be implemented:

(i) in case of massive oil pollution where there is an absence of bilateral or multilateral agreements between coastal States."

3.7 A questionnaire on contingency planning was prepared and sent to the coastal States in June 1979. The purpose of this questionnaire was to collect information on existing plans, or plans in preparation and on agreements in the different regions. The response to this questionnaire was not very encouraging and a reminder was sent to every coastal State in February 1980. Up to now, twelve countries out of eighteen have replied to the questionnaire. A paper presenting the present situation on the national contingency plans and bilateral agreements in the Mediterranean has been prepared on the basis of these replies and is submitted for discussion as document RM/2/1/Add.5.

(ii) "in sectors of the Mediterranean, yet to be identified, where the risk of massive accidental oil pollution is high or where the capability for prompt counter-action in time of emergency does not presently exist."

3.8 The assessment of the risk of marine accidental oil pollution relies on various types of data, most of which has not been collected by the Centre (routes of tankers, quantities and nature of oil transported, inventory of oil terminals, oil rigs, pipelines, etc...). This lack presently impedes a proper preparation of a contingency planning at the level of the region.

3.9 Environmental and risk analysis studies are important actions that should be undertaken with regard to the development of regional or subregional contingency plans. Such studies would be possible with the cooperation of:

- . the coastal States, for the acquisition of relevant environmental data and specific information.
- . UNEP, to gather the relevant studies undertaken in the frame of the Mediterranean Action Plan, and which, have now produced interesting 'out puts'.
- . Specialized contracting Firms, or relevant professional associations, to get complementary data, and to process them, as well as some of those collected through the coastal States. Some professional associations have already offered their services to the Centre to undertake this kind of study.

Document RM/2/1/Add.6 is submitted for discussion, a proposal as what such a study might cover.

- 3.10 At the first Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the coastal States, in 1978, the Centre had presented a paper suggesting areas where to focus this activity, as well as a meeting on the central Mediterranean as a start. (See RM/INF.5.)
- 3.11 In the meantime, the use, on a multi-lateral basis, of the assistance that can be obtained through specialized organizations of services for oil combating at sea, as aerial surveillance, in some area of particular risk, could be discussed by the meeting. (See RM/2/1/Add.3.)

*Function C

"To develop and maintain a Communication/Information system appropriate to the needs of States being served by the Centre."

Communication with the coastal States

- 3.12 One cannot stress enough the importance of an adequate communications system between the Centre and the coastal States and between the coastal States themselves. It was therefore imperative that the Centre establish and keep up to date information on the communication facilities available in every coastal State, especially those which could be made available in cases of emergency.
- 3.13 During his visit to the coastal States, the Director made several efforts to collect this information, and to inform each focal point of the facilities available at the Centre and in Malta.
- 3.14 The facilities at the Centre have been developed according to the needs and increase in the activities of the Centre. The coastal States have repeatedly been informed of these facilities. At present, these include:
- . Three telephone lines: 37296, 37297, 37298
 - . Two telexes: 464 UNROCC MW, 396 UNROCC MW
 - . Telegraphic Address: UNROCC, MALTA
 - . Telephone Answering Machine to record incoming messages out of office hours.
 - . Special Services for Emergencies: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for the Director and Deputy Director to be contacted at any time should there be any urgent incoming messages.

These facilities, and also those available in Malta, have been circulated to all coastal States from time to time.

- 3.15 To test these facilities and those in the coastal States, the Centre organized two telecommunication exercises. The first one was held in June 1978 and this served to indicate the great need to improve on the present facilities in the coastal States, to operate efficiently in a case of an emergency. The second telecommunication exercise was held in January 1980 and a report on this exercise was disseminated to the coastal States in March. Three countries (Albania, Syria and the Libyan Jamahariya) did not respond to the contacts from the Centre, but otherwise, the overall result showed that an improvement had already been achieved on the results obtained from the first exercise.
- 3.16 A specific communication link has been continuously maintained for one whole week with the expert sent by the Centre to Turkey in connection with the INDEPENDENTIA accident. During his stay in Larnaca, Cyprus, in connection with the ZENOBIA incident, the Director maintained a continuous contact with the Centre. These instances are being quoted to indicate the improvement that has been achieved in the communications with the Centre.
- 3.17 Up to now, the Centre has only used and tested existing communications by telephone and telex with the focal point. In the present list of focal points, four countries (Albania, Israel, Lebanon and Syria) do not have yet telex communications with the Centre. Apart from Albania, those countries are in the eastern Mediterranean. According to the present limited combating facilities in this area, there is a great probability that those countries will need and request assistance particularly from the Centre. In this case it would be very difficult for the Centre to forward quickly, necessary technical and operational information. Information from those coastal States about their intention and eventual discussion to remedy this situation will be most useful.
- 3.18 The Workshop on Contingency Planning recommended that: "having regard to the provisions of Article 9(1)(c) of the Emergency Protocol, necessary means should be found by the Centre to set up a communications system so as to receive and transmit on a permanent and continuous basis messages on pollution emergencies from coastal States..." Referring to the present situation and to recent experiences of emergencies, the opinion of the coastal States on the different ways to provide the necessary means would be useful to plan for the next three years ahead. Consideration might be given to solutions as proposed in paragraph 43 of the final report of the Workshop, presenting information on communications system which might be usefully developed by the Centre. ("Firstly, a system to be used by the Centre itself to avoid its having to rely on ordinary public channels, and secondly, a self-contained field system which could

be transported by air to any locality where no communications system was available. This would apply particularly in the case of stranded vessels suffering damage to their communications systems. Thirdly, a system was described by which telephones could be connected to a small, suitably located transmitter in order to communicate with vehicles, ships, etc... engaged in emergency operations. The range of such a system could be increased by the installation of suitably placed relay transmitters. Personnel engaged in beach cleaning operations could maintain contact with the control centre via outstations using walkie-talkie radio sets.")

- 3.19 The use of existing specific communication systems like the Regional Navigational Warning Service NAVAREA III and the Regional Meteorological Communication System is also submitted to the meeting for discussion.
- 3.20 Apart from the communication facilities themselves, it is important to draw attention to the fact that there are still no operational focal points or national reporting centres for emergencies in various coastal States. Improvement is to be expected in the development of future national contingency planning.
- 3.21 In order to organize future alert exercises, the Centre has disseminated, to the coastal States, a questionnaire to identify the communication network in each country (document RM/2/1/Add.7) which might be discussed at the meeting.
- 3.22 As a complement to the communications system, the principle of a quick analysis and dissemination system available from the Centre to the coastal States in case of emergency might also be considered.

Present system of Information

- 3.23 Since 1979, the Centre has clearly tripled its contacts in the Mediterranean coastal States in order to disseminate information more efficiently and an extensive dissemination of Circulars has been developed (see document RM/INF.8).
- 3.24 The Centre has also produced few documents at the occasion of meetings, training courses (Urbino), conferences and for the information of the coastal States. (Document RM/INF.9 gives a list of those published during the past year.
- 3.25 Another step forward in the dissemination of information was the publishing of a quarterly newsletter called ROCC NEWS. The first number came out in September 1979 and to date four publications were made. In this newsletter coastal States are kept informed on activities signifi-

cant importance and experiences gained recently in combating oil pollution within the Mediterranean, on training courses available at the time, on alerts, products and equipment. Coastal States, through their focal points and experts, are invited to contribute material to be published in this newsletter, with a view of passing information on their experiences to others in the same field of action. This newsletter is now available in English and French. Constant effort has been made in the successive issues to improve the content and the presentation of this newsletter. A document has been prepared to discuss its future development (RM/2/1/Add.8)

*Function D

"To develop and encourage technological co-operation and training programmes for combating oil pollution."

Development of Technical Co-operation

- 3.26 Emergencies such as the accident of ZENOBIA, which, as already mentioned involved a visit by the Director, induced a profitable exchange of operational knowledge and experience. At the same time, the Director visited the main stockpile of equipment in Piraeus, Greece, and the place of accident of IRENES SERENADE in Pylos, where he met all the persons in charge of the operations locally. Involvement in these operations is regarded as vital to the Centre.
- 3.27 Manufacturers provided also field information and illustrations related to those two accidents to the Centre. Various manufacturers have already invited the Centre to attend demonstrations of equipment in France and Italy and more recently in Malta. Some are now offering equipment for its training programme.
- 3.28 The Director participated as rapporteur to a Workshop organized by UNEP on the use of oil-spill chemicals held in November 1979 at Brest (France).
- 3.29 He attended also technical meetings regularly, such as IMCO MEPC sessions, or occasionally such as ANTIPOL 80 and PETROMAR 80. Such meetings have been opportunities for the Centre to establish fruitful contacts with shipping and oil international associations (IPIECA, E and P Forum, OCIMF, INTERTANKO, ICS), Insurance International Schemes (TOVALOP), the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF) and with organizations such as EEC and OECD, which might potentially contribute to the development of technical co-operation in the Mediterranean and support or co-operate to certain activities of the Centre.
- 3.30 The coastal States are invited to give their views on the

different ways they would like this technical co-operation to develop in the next three years and how those contacts established by the Centre might be properly used.

Training

- 3.31 Emphasis was put on training activities and clearly expressed in the recommendation 30 of the coastal States at their Intergovernmental Meeting of 1979 (see RM/INF.5).
- 3.32 With regard to training, one delegation called the Committee's attention to article 11, paragraph 3, of the Barcelona Convention in which the Parties agreed "to cooperate in the provision of technical and other possible assistance in fields relating to marine pollution, with priority to be given to the special needs of developing countries in the Mediterranean region", and recommended that the Centre should give priority to the training needs of the developing States, taking into account experience already gained by the Regional Oil Combating Centre in that domain through IMCO and the seminars convened in Urbino, Italy, and by INFOPOL in France.
- 3.33 The Centre disseminated through circulars and ROCC NEWS, information on training facilities available within and outside the region, (INFOPOL 77 - 78 - 79 - 80, Malmö 78 - 79, Warren Spring Laboratory 77 - 78 - 79, Corpus Christi 78 - 79 - 80). The Centre was informed on the participation of 27 persons from 10 Mediterranean coastal States to these training courses during the period 1977 - 1978 - 1979.
- 3.34 A training course held yearly by the French Authorities at Le Havre and Marseille (INFOPOL) has been of special interest to participants from this region. In fact, in response to the call by the Centre for application for participants, the Centre sponsored in addition five candidates in 1978, two candidates in 1979 and four candidates in 1980.
- 3.35 Other courses where the Centre was more directly involved are those held in Urbino, Italy. With the support and assistance of SOGESTA and the Italian Government, the Centre organized the first IMCO/UNEP training course in Control and Combating of Oil Pollution. Eighteen participants from eleven coastal States availed themselves of the lectures and practical demonstrations in oil combating by internationally renowned experts in this field. The Centre offered thirteen fellowships for this course, which was held in October 1979.
- 3.36 In the previous year, 1978, a similar course was held by SOGESTA in Urbino, Italy. For this course the Centre sponsored twenty participants.

- 3.37 In order to be in a better position to assist countries in the training of their personnel, the Centre is collecting information through a questionnaire that has been sent to all coastal States, on training courses organized in the country, on the opinion of the focal points on the existing training courses offered and on training needs within the region (see RM/2/1/Add.9).
- 3.38 In April 1980, the Director delivered a lecture, at the invitation of SOGESTA, at the opening of the Italian Technical aJuridical Training Course on Marine Pollution by Oil and Bi-products.
- 3.39 In order to follow the programme of the training activities in the region and to facilitate the contacts between the trainees, the Centre prepared and disseminated a directory for the Mediterranean region of participants to Oil Combating Training Courses held in 1977, 1978 and 1979. This directory indicates that the Centre has given 42 fellowships and sponsored 36 individuals, mostly from developing countries, out of a total of 64 participants.
- 3.40 Referring to the initial provision of four fellowships a year by Resolution 7 and to the priority given on training activities by the coastal States at their Intergovernmental Meetings, it is considered that substantial progress has been achieved in this field.
- 3.41 The organization of training courses by the Centre for people responsible of oil combating operations within the countries has answered to an existing need of the region, which is still in demand. The problem faced up to now was for the Centre to find countries ready to host and co-operate in the arrangements.
- 3.42 It is interesting to note that generally the coastal States have made a good use of the new people trained, a number of them being now responsible of clean-up response or having participated to emergencies recently (accidents of INDEPENDENTA, IRENES SERENADE and ZENOBIA).

* Function E

"To assist in strengthening the IRS by developing the capacity to serve as a sectoral focal point which could collect data on the sources of information available in connection with oil pollution with special emphasis on dealing with massive spills of oil and will make that data available."

- 3.43 In November 1977, the Information Officer was sent to a training course on IRS in Nairobi as a preliminary step to start activity in this field.

- 3.44 Follow-up contacts have been kept with UNEP/IRS and in March 1978 the Centre was officially registered as a source of IRS in the field of oil combating. In September 1980 the registration of the Centre has been updated as a source of information within the system now designated as INFOTERRA. Up to now the Centre has not been contacted through this system but can be expected to start functioning as soon as the Directory of INFOTERRA sources will refer to it. In the meantime the Centre, by collecting information in this field, has prepared at least some preliminary data on the sources of information as required. Different requests of information of this kind have already reached the Centre directly.
- 3.45 From the discussions held with UNEP/IRS previously the registration of the Centre as a sectoral focal point seemed to be premature. The Centre is awaiting further guidelines on this matter.
- 3.46 It is to be noted that no provision has been planned in the budget for this activity.

* Function F

"To develop and maintain close working relationships with other Mediterranean regional activity centres and with the 'specialized regional organisms' which play a co-ordinating role as set forth in the Barcelona Action Plan particularly with the scientific institutions of the region."

- 3.47 Since its opening, the Director of the Centre established contacts in Malta with the Regional Activity Centre for the Pilot Projects on Monitoring of Oil and Oil Products. After an official meeting in March 1977 between UNEP, IOC, RAC and ROCC, an agreement was finalized in March 1978 which specifies the following co-operation:
- (a) exchange of data and information relevant to the level and extent of pollution by oil and petroleum hydrocarbons in the Mediterranean;
 - (b) providing mutual assistance for the preparation of reports, surveys, contingency plans, etc...;
 - (c) assisting in the development of training activities;
 - (d) establishing a common data bank.

This co-operation has developed well. For example the Centre has transmitted regularly all significant information received on oil monitoring and analysis in the environment. The reports of visits of the Director to the coastal States were transmitted to RAC I and for one country (Morocco) the existence of potential samples available for analysis was reported for eventual action. Contacts with the Malta Yacht Club were made

jointly to receive from the yachtmen reports of observations and alerts on oil spills in the Mediterranean. Contributions to conferences by lectures and films was also given by the Centre to the University of Malta. The Centre invited the Director of RAC I to deliver a lecture to the Urbino training course in 1979. Contacts were also taken by the Centre to send oil samples for analysis at occasions of alerts near Malta.

3.48 The support of other RAC's to the Centre was requested at UNEP Mid-Term Review Meeting on the Scientific Pilot Projects in July 1977. This was repeated at the Workshop on Contingency Planning in September 1978 for the Projects MED I and MED IV. In November 1978, the Director of the Centre participated to a meeting jointly organized by UNEP and CIESM in Turkey, on the progress of these Pilot Projects. A bibliography of data available has been communicated by RAC IV to the Centre. Further information is expected from the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) to be used by the Centre for the preparation of future contingency plans.

3.49 Apart these initiatives strictly related to the MAP, according to Function F of Resolution 7, working relationships with the UN agencies working in the region has been developed to support the activities of the Centre particularly to assess the potential impact of a massive oil spillage in the Mediterranean. The Centre is regularly kept informed by IMCO and UNEP of every relevant initiative they take and documents they produce. The Director has also made contacts with FAO, IOC, UNESCO, ECM and CIESM. A representative of IOC attended the Workshop on Contingency Planning, mentioned the possibilities developed in modelling and suggested that the Centre should be asked to evaluate existing knowledge on the persistence and movement of oil slicks at sea and to develop various scenarios for possible major oil spills in the Mediterranean as guide to the coastal States in developing their contingency plans. More recently the Centre received from EEC the relevant studies they have conducted to prepare their future programme for improving the present oil pollution prevention and control capacities in the member States.

* Function G

"To co-operate in all appropriate activities which are directed towards the prevention and reduction of pollution in the Mediterranean resulting from oil spills."

3.50 Since its opening, the Centre maintained close contacts with IMCO on this matter by participating in all the sessions of the Marine Environment Protection Committee. In this framework, in 1978, a feasibility study to provide adequate reception facilities in the Mediterranean

has been conducted to implement the 1973 Convention. The Centre received the experts in charge of this study in May 1978 and has been kept informed about the progress of this study, the results of which have been circulated to the coastal States by IMCO.

- 3.51 During his visits to the coastal States, the Director of the Centre informed the countries whenever needed on the existing IMCO Convention and encouraged their acceptance and implementation.
- 3.52 The accident of the INDEPENDENTA was the opportunity for the expert sent by the Centre to make proposals related to the navigation in the Bosphorus.
- 3.53 As well as accidental spillages arising from tanker casualties, chronic oil pollution from discharge of oil from ships is also of major concern for every coastal State. Perhaps more emphasis should be placed on the capacity of the Centre to assist coastal States in the implementation of international agreements and recommendations through the provision of technical assistance and conduct of studies.



IMCO

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UNEP

Review Meeting on the Activities
of the Regional Oil Combating
Centre for the Mediterranean Sea

MALTA, 17 - 20 November 1980

Agenda Item 2/2

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Review of the activities of ROCC in relation to
Articles 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the Protocol
Concerning co-operation in combating pollution
Of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other harmful
Substances in case of emergency.

Background

1. The Conference of Barcelona in 1976 established the Centre "noting that the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in cases of emergency makes provisions for a Regional Centre within the Mediterranean for the execution of some of the functions required by that Protocol."
2. The functions referred to are the general exchange of information (article 6), means of communication (article 7), dissemination of alerts in case of emergency (article 8), exchange of information during and after an emergency (article 9), assistance for combating the pollution (article 10) and might be extended as appropriate to subregional centre when established (article 11).
3. This Protocol has been in force since 1978 and has been ratified by fifteen Mediterranean coastal States (see RM/INF. 10). It will be referred to as the 'Protocol'.
4. This paper considers what actions have already been undertaken between the Regional Centre and the coastal States in request of each of these articles.

Article 6

Article 6 refers to the exchange of general information:

- "1. Each Party undertakes to disseminate to the other Parties information concerning:
 - (a) The competent national organization or authorities responsible for combating pollution of the sea by oil and other harmful substances;
 - (b) The competent national authorities responsible for receiving reports of pollution of the sea by oil and other harmful substances and for dealing with matters concerning measures of assistance between Parties;
 - (c) New ways in which pollution of the sea by oil and other harmful substances may be avoided, new measures of combating pollution and the development of research programmes.
2. Parties which have agreed to exchange information directly between themselves shall nevertheless communicate such information to the regional centre. The latter shall communicate this information to the other Parties and, on a basis of reciprocity, to coastal States of the Mediterranean Sea Area which are not Parties to this Protocol."

5. Information related to (a) has been collected from the coastal States and is regularly updated and disseminated through the list of focal points.
6. Information related to (b) has been collected during visits to the coastal States, and by questionnaires on contingency planning. It is being updated by a questionnaire on the communication network in each country.
7. Information related to (c) has been collected during visits to the coastal States, through questionnaires on contingency planning and manufacturers, as well as through scientific focal points. This information is presently very fragmentary. The Centre has completed its own information system by world-wide documentation from various sources, particularly IMCO. Until now dissemination of information has been mainly through ROCC NEWS.
8. Although the Centre is presently dealing exclusively with oil pollution, some information has already been collected on contacts and present measures for combating pollution by harmful substances.
9. Referring to paragraph 2 of this Article, there is presently no clear and regular procedure either for the communication of information to the Centre by the coastal States as it is requested, or for its dissemination to other Parties apart from the list of focal points.

Article 7

Article 7 refers to the co-ordination of the means of communication and reads as follows:

"The Parties undertake to co-ordinate the utilization of the means of communication at their disposal in order to ensure, with the necessary speed and reliability, the reception, transmission and dissemination of all reports and urgent information which relate to the occurrences and situations referred to in Article 1. The regional centre shall have the necessary means of communication to enable it to participate in this co-ordinated effort and, in particular, to fulfil the functions assigned to it by paragraph 2 of Article 10."

10. This point has already been covered in document RM/2/1. Comments are invited on the adequacy of present communications arrangements particularly the arrangements made by the Centre for receiving and disseminating messages concerning the occurrence of pollution emergencies.

Article 8

This article concerns dissemination of alerts originated from ships and aircraft for accidents and spillages. It reads as follows:

- "1. Each Party shall issue instructions to the masters of ships flying its flag and to the pilots of aircraft registered in its territory requiring them to report by the most rapid and adequate channels in the circumstances, and in accordance with annex I to this Protocol, either to a Party or to the regional centre:
 - (a) all accidents causing or likely to cause pollution of the sea by oil or other harmful substances;
 - (b) The presence, characteristics and extent of spillages of oil or other harmful substances observed at sea which are likely to present a serious and imminent threat to the marine environment or to the coast or related interests of one or more of the Parties.
2. The information collected in accordance with paragraph 1 shall be communicated to the other Parties likely to be effected by the pollution;
 - (a) By the Party which has received the information, either directly or preferably, through the regional centre; or
 - (b) By the regional centre

In case of direct communication between Parties, the regional centre shall be informed of the measures taken by these Parties.
3. In consequence of the application of the provisions of paragraph 2, the Parties are not bound by the obligation laid down in article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention."
11. The Regional Centre has disseminated a questionnaire to the coastal States recently in order to ascertain whether instructions to masters of ships and to pilots of aircraft registered in its territory have been issued by Parties to the Protocol. A document summarizing the current situation within the region will eventually be compiled and circulated to Parties by the Centre.
12. Annex I which is referred to, gives the contents of the report to be made pursuant to article 8 to the Protocol as follows:

- "1. Each report shall, as far as possible, contain, in general:
 - (a) The identification of the source of pollution (identity of the ship, where appropriate);
 - (b) The geographic position, time and date of the occurrence of the incident or of the observation;
 - (c) The wind and sea conditions prevailing in the area;
 - (d) Where the pollution originates from a ship, relevant details respecting the conditions of the ship.
2. Each report shall contain, whenever possible, in particular:
 - (a) A clear description of the harmful substances involved, including the correct technical names of such substances (trade names should not be used in place of the correct technical names);
 - (b) A statement or estimate of the quantities, concentrations and likely conditions of harmful substances discharged or likely to be discharged into the sea;
 - (c) Where relevant, a description of the packaging and identifying marks; and
 - (d) The name of the consignor, consignee or manufacturer.
3. Each report shall clearly indicate, whenever possible whether the harmful substance discharged or likely to be discharged is oil or a noxious liquid, solid or gaseous substance and whether such substance was or is carried in bulk or contained in packaged form, freight containers, portable tanks, or road and rail tank wagons.
4. Each report shall be supplemented, as necessary, by any relevant information requested by a recipient of the report or deemed appropriate by the person sending the report.
5. Any persons referred to in article 8, paragraph 1, of this Protocol shall:
 - (a) Supplement as far as possible the initial report, as necessary with information concerning further developments, and

(b) Comply as fully as possible with requests from affected States for additional information."

This Annex is only a guideline and is not actually supplemented by any standard format for the reporting of emergency situations, for example, using telex messages.

13. In the past four years, the Regional Centre has received alerts and reports of both accidents and oil spills and occasionally concerning chemicals also (see document RM/2/2/Add.1). RM/2/2/Add.2 summarizes where the alerts were coming from. It also shows that already some countries report regularly to the Centre through their operational focal point or through their representative at IMCO. On two occasions the Centre was alerted directly: from a ship and from an aircraft control tower. In some instances a country did not inform the Centre: then generally the Centre is alerted through other channels and contacts the coastal States concerned for confirmation and for further information.
14. The information transmitted during the alerts was generally poor compared to the recommendations of the Annex 1 of the Protocol. If this can be attributed to time pressure during an emergency and the present absence of an easy format to refer to, it also appeared at different occasions that information received on the identification of oil slicks, of their nature and of their size, was often imprecise or incomplete. There may therefore be a need for practical guidelines laying down standards of observation for the identification and characterization of oil slicks bearing in mind the principle sources and properties of oil transported in the Mediterranean.
15. Alerts were disseminated by the Regional Centre on a number of different occasions. An interesting example being given in document RM/2/2/Add.2.
16. Whenever possible, the Centre, on receiving an alert, took action to predict the areas potentially at risk by using data on currents in the area and prevailing weather conditions.
17. In addition to the dissemination of alerts the Centre usually keeps in touch with the country concerned until the end of the alert.
18. Referring to the possible extension of offshore oil exploration and exploitation in the Mediterranean, it would be useful to clarify whether procedures called for by the Protocol will be followed in dealing with spillages from off-shore platforms.
19. With a view to improving present reporting arrangements the Centre would appreciate receiving details of initia-

tives taken by the Mediterranean coastal States to obtain and process reports from ships and aircraft not registered within the region and whether it is considered that the Centre might eventually have a role in promoting procedures on a wider basis than presently called for by the Protocol.

Article 9

This article concerns the follow-up of an emergency and final report. It states that:

- "1. Any Party faced with a situation of the kind defined in article 1 of this Protocol shall:
 - (a) Make the necessary assessments of the nature and extent of the casualty or emergency or, as the case may be, of the type and approximate quantity of oil or other harmful substances and the direction and speed or drift of the spillage;
 - (b) Take every practicable measure to avoid or reduce the effects of pollution;
 - (c) Immediately inform all other Parties, either directly or through the regional centre, of these assessments and of any action which it has taken or which it intends to take to combat the pollution;
 - (d) Continue to observe the situation for as long as possible and report thereon in accordance with article 8.
2. Where action is taken to combat pollution originating from a ship, all possible measures shall be taken to safeguard the persons present on board and to the extent possible, the ship itself. Any Party which takes such action shall inform the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization."
20. The present role of the Regional Centre is limited to action (c) above, and this has been carried out for different emergencies. A standard format has been disseminated to the coastal States for final report which is used by IMCO.
21. The data available at the Centre for prediction of oil slicks, on existing facilities and on past accidents, are valuable information which might in the future help the coastal States in assessing the situation and in taking decisions on practicable measures. Accordingly paragraphs (a) and (b) of this article might mention "in consultation with the Regional Oil Combating Centre, when appropriate".

Article 10

Article 10 concerns request of assistance in case of emergencies and states that:

- "1. Any Party requiring assistance for combating pollution by oil or other harmful substances polluting or threatening to pollute its coasts may call for assistance from other Parties, either directly or through the regional centre referred to in article 6, starting with the Parties which appear likely to be affected by the pollution. This assistance may comprise, in particular, expert advice and the supply to or placing at the disposal of the Party concerned of products, equipment and nautical facilities. Parties so requested shall use their best endeavours to render this assistance.
 2. Where the Parties engaged in an operation to combat pollution cannot agree on the organization of the operation, the regional centre may, with their approval, co-ordinate the activity of the facilities put into operation by these Parties."
22. In document RM/2/1 reference has been made to requests for assistance received at the Centre and the services already provided by the Centre, namely sending of experts for advice, provision of equipment and task force. The new inventory of services available in case of emergency extends the possibility of assistance of other facilities in addition to those of the Parties.
 23. The coastal States are invited to give their views on the assistance offered by the Centre in the past and in the future considering in particular the role of co-ordination referred to in paragraph 2 of this article.
 24. Reference might be made in this article of the Protocol to direct assistance from coastal States or through the Regional Oil Combating Centre for:
 - (a) experts, equipment, products and nautical facilities;
 - (b) surveillance;
 - (c) to facilitate the transfer of personnelas well as the Centre may call for mobilization of resources on request of the coastal States.

Article 11

Article 11 states that:

"The application of the relevant provisions of articles 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of this Protocol relating to the regional centre shall be extended, as appropriate, to sub-regional centres in the event of their establishment, taking into account their objectives and functions and their relationship with the said regional centre."

25. No action has been taken on this line yet.



IMCO

REGIONAL OIL COMBATING CENTRE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA POLLUTION
PAR LES HYDROCARBURES



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Review of Objectives and Functions of ROCC
in the light of objective 3 of Resolution 7
of the Barcelona Conference

1. Objective 3 of the Resolution 7 of the Barcelona Conference states:

"A later objective, namely the possibility of initiating operations to combat pollution by oil and eventually by other harmful substances at the regional level, can be considered. This possibility should be submitted for approval by Governments after evaluating the results achieved in the fulfilment of the previous two objectives and in the light of financial resources which could be made available for this purpose".

2. This document is an attempt to assist the coastal States in deciding which "operational facilities" might be given to the Regional Centre.

Level of Operational Capability

(a) Consideration of a full task force

3. Some coastal States have stated an interest in the Centre having its own task force to respond to pollution emergencies. Such a task force would respond, when requested, in areas of the region where there is presently a lack of facilities, or in the case of massive oil spillage occurring anywhere in the region. However, the need for such a task force, based upon an analysis of historical data on major incidents, together with an assessment of present capabilities within the region to provide an operational response to such incidents, has not been made. It must be kept in mind that, so far, the priority role of the Centre has been to facilitate the development of response capabilities in the coastal States concerned. Establishment of a task force would require the Centre to draw up the necessary work plan which, if adopted, would then involve the recruitment of personnel, purchase of equipment, etc... Bearing in mind the present limited resources of the Centre, such activities would undoubtedly curtail the capacity of the Centre to provide assistance to those coastal States requiring advice in developing their national contingency plan.
4. It is probably true to say that in the case of a massive oil spillage, a task force based in Malta, could not be expected to be given equivalent to the present capabilities of the more industrialised countries of the region. It could be argued that the Task Force's capability for responding to major spillages would be shared between the less developed countries. However, geographically a task force based in Malta would not necessarily be in a better position to respond to any particular spillage than one of the more developed countries in the immediate vicinity.

5. On the financial side, presently it means a high cost of mobilization without knowing the exact return expected. On the other hand, this additional cost of the Centre will increase fees of the main contributors which are already the most advanced in the field. It seems more appropriate to encourage those coastal States to accelerate the co-operation with the experience they have already on hand. If they do so, and, at this condition, it appears from the above that the creation of a full task force of its own is not a realistic proposal for the Centre.
- (b) Consideration of stockpile at the regional level
6. Consideration might also be given to the establishment at the Centre, of a stockpile of equipment and materials which cannot be afforded by a single country. Moreover, because of the limited amount to which certain equipment would be used by one country, in such cases the purchase of equipment could only be justified on the basis of use by several countries. However, referring to arguments developed in paragraph (a) such a proposal seems difficult to justify at present.
- (c) Consideration of the capacity to provide an initial response
8. The Centre was recently requested to provide experts and equipment for the initial response to a number of spillages. As an example Cyprus requested an expert, 500m of boom, spray booms for dispersant and required, on the spot, pumps, light recovery systems, etc... This might be considered as a proposal by some coastal States as a solution to the problem of how to provide the initial response to a spillage.
9. The meeting may consider whether the establishment of a limited stockpile of equipment should be established at the Centre which could be transported to a coastal State requiring immediate assistance.
10. In this context it may be mentioned that a number of manufacturers have offered to arrange demonstrations of equipment to coincide with Meetings of Experts concerning the work of the Centre, including the present Meeting, which they would subsequently be prepared to donate to the Centre to be utilized according to the Centre's wishes. If the Centre was authorized by the coastal States to accept such offers, this equipment could be made available, in addition to the equipment referred to in paragraph 9 above. The Director would welcome the guidance of the Meeting on whether such offers of equipment could be accepted. In addition the Meeting may consider whether budgetary provision should be made for the Centre to establish a limited stockpile of equipment, including guidance on the basic types of equipment which should be purchased by the Centre.

(d) Consideration of the Centre as a regional focal point for the exchange of operational information and the mobilization of resources.

11. Recent emergencies have demonstrated that the Centre can be efficient at an operational level on the basis of the information which has already been collected, i.e. list of contacts in the coastal States, inventories of experts, equipment, services, etc... The Centre has presently a key advantage in case of emergency, i.e. to know already the authorities requesting assistance and their organisation on one side and the facilities available within and eventually outside the region as well as the know-how of the persons involved.
12. This is a key factor which must normally guide the coastal States to consider the Regional Oil Combating Centre in priority as a focal point for oil spill combating activities in the Mediterranean and allow it, at the request of the States concerned to coordinate their oil combating operations.
13. It is considered that priority should therefore continue to be given to the collection and rapid dissemination of data on the availability and method of mobilization of existing facilities which might be made available to the coastal States in case of emergency. Necessary facilities to set up an efficient information and communication system should be provided accordingly.