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Fourth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting
Parties to the Convention for the Protection
of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution
and its related protocols

Genoa, 9-13 September 1985

THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Note by the Executive Director of the
United Nations Environment Programme

Introduction

1. The Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, held in Athens in April 1984, was fully aware of the unique opportunity, due to the 10th anniversary of the Mediterranean Action Plan, the present Meeting would provide to review and re-examine the Mediterranean Action Plan and to reaffirm the political will to protect and enhance the Mediterranean Sea area through co-operation. The Athens meeting defined the objectives of that review and the documents to be prepared to assist Contracting Parties.
2. In order to provide independent insights the secretariat requested consultants to prepare two papers:
 - An evaluation of the progress achieved towards the goals set in the Action Plan. This is contained in the document "The first ten years of the Mediterranean Action Plan - A critical review" (UNEP/IG.56/Inf.3);
 - A general factual assessment of the state of the Mediterranean Sea based on the information available through the MED POL programme and other sources. This is contained in the document "Report on the State of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea" (UNEP/IG.56/Inf.4).
3. The two documents reflect the views of the consultants based on first hand experience with the Mediterranean Action Plan and/or extensive consultations with members of the secretariat. They are submitted as information documents in order to provide the Contracting Parties with facts and independent analysis.
4. The present document, presented by the Executive Director of UNEP, is a short retrospective analysis of the Mediterranean Action Plan's achievements from its inception, and reflects his views on its prospective development in the forthcoming years. It also includes a Draft Declaration on the 10th Anniversary of the Mediterranean Action Plan, proposed by the Executive Director and reflecting his views on the future. The document is based on the secretariat's own experience with organizing and supporting regional programmes and takes into consideration the two documents referred to in para. 2 above.

The Mediterranean Basin

5. The Mediterranean is no ordinary sea. Almost totally enclosed, it has been described as a miniature ocean whose functioning as a specific ecosystem is not yet entirely understood. It is a basin with an area of 2.5 million km² with low input of freshwater from adjacent land, high degree of evaporation and net inflow of Atlantic waters through the Straits of Gibraltar. The general circulation pattern of its waters is under the influence of the inflowing Atlantic surface waters which are poor in nutrients. Through evaporation and other complex oceanographic phenomena, these are transformed into outflowing deep Mediterranean nutrient rich, high salinity waters. The complex movement of the water masses, in particular their potential and actual role in transporting and distributing pollutants, is not sufficiently understood.
6. The chemical composition of the Mediterranean, although similar to the adjacent Atlantic waters, shows some specific characteristics. Notably, its open surface waters are poor in nutrients and as a consequence the bioproductivity of the Mediterranean is relatively low. In some areas due to natural processes, some elements, such as mercury, are found at elevated concentrations in certain marine organisms.

Pollution Research and Monitoring Programme

7. Realizing that reliable information on the sources, levels, pathways and effects of pollutants entering the Mediterranean Sea is a basic prerequisite for the design of effective measures to protect the sea, the Co-ordinated Pollution Monitoring and Research Programme (MED POL) was organized as one of the first major activities of the Action Plan.

8. Approved in 1975 at the adoption of the Action Plan in Barcelona, the first phase of MED POL was successfully completed in 1980. This phase was basically designed to develop the capabilities of the Mediterranean States to participate in a full-scale permanent research and monitoring programme. During this first phase, MED POL involved more than 80 national research centres, developed its methodology and generated the first sets of data. From 1981, MED POL entered its second phase with more emphasis on systematic monitoring organized on the basis of co-ordinated national monitoring programmes and on research directly supporting such monitoring.

9. Data generated through MED POL are used as the basis for the analysis of the present "state of health" of the Mediterranean, and of the trends in pollution levels. They also provide the scientific information needed for the formulation of rational measures to control pollution. The system of data collection and reporting by Governments is far from complete and reliable assessments of trends based on comparable time series cannot yet be produced.

10. Through MED POL, the first comprehensive assessment of pollution loads reaching the Mediterranean Sea from coastal sources has been completed in 1978. It provided important information during the negotiation of the Protocol on control of pollutants from land-based sources. The assessment revealed that the present domestic waste (sewage) disposal practices may pose the most important factor influencing adversely the quality of the coastal waters and that land runoffs, rivers in particular, contribute most significantly to the pollution load of those waters. The 1978 survey of the land-based sources and amounts of pollutants requires an urgent updating in order to provide the basic information needed for the realistic implementation of the Protocol on the control of pollutants from land-based sources.

11. Two in-depth studies, including concrete recommendations for measures to be taken by the Contracting Parties, were completed. One deals with the microbial quality of the coastal recreational waters, shellfish and shellfish growing waters, the other with the problem of mercury and its relevance to the quality of seafood in particular. Similar studies are being prepared on other subjects, such as petroleum hydrocarbons.

12. Results obtained so far have confirmed the view that the Mediterranean as a whole is still a healthy sea. However, the coastal waters of the Mediterranean which are of primary importance for the population, tourism and for exploitation of living resources, are degraded by pollution in many places. Sewage, industrial waste, tar and trash are the most frequent causative agents.

13. The information gathered and insight gained through MED POL are still not sufficient to evaluate some of the most urgent problems related to the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. There are still some Contracting Parties which did not declare their national monitoring programmes. More precise information is needed in particular on the hydrodynamic processes contributing to the transport of pollutants, and on the relevance of the atmospheric input of pollutants. The time seems appropriate also for regular monitoring of reference areas through co-ordinated multilateral programmes which may provide information on long-term trends of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea as a whole. A critical review of the priorities to be tackled by MED POL so that it could concentrate on issues directly contributing to the goals of the Action Plan, the Convention and its protocols, is also needed.

14. MED POL proved to be a highly successful operation which mobilized the Mediterranean scientific community in the service of the Action Plan. The national focal points for MED POL are gaining importance as co-ordinators of the efforts at national level, and as vital links with the secretariat. The momentum gained in the past has to be sustained by constant efforts of the secretariat in co-ordinating the agreed programme, in analysing the results obtained, and in translating these analyses into practical proposals for measures to control pollution of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Blue Plan

15. The Blue Plan, was approved in early 1977 as a study of the potentials for the socio-economic development of the Mediterranean basin compatible with the goals of the Action Plan. Its implementation started after considerable delay. The implementation was hampered by lack of clear agreement, at the early stages, on the goals of the study, and on the methodology to be used in achieving these goals.

16. Yet, the first phase of the Blue Plan was completed in 1983 resulting in twelve sectoral studies on subjects ranging from land-use systems and sub-systems to impact of non-Mediterranean influence on the Mediterranean Basin.

17. The results of the sectoral studies have been summarized in an overview and at present the Blue Plan is in its second phase. The third (last) phase is planned to be completed by the end of 1987.

18. The expected results of the Blue Plan, i.e. alternative development scenarios, should be carefully analysed by the Contracting Parties, and their relevance and usefulness for national development strategies will have to be examined by each Party individually.

Priority Actions Programme

19. The Priority Actions Programme (PAP), approved to be implemented as complementary activity to the Blue Plan, suffered also from delays caused by the late establishment of supporting infrastructure (Regional Activity Centre for PAP in Split, national PAP focal points), lack of precisely defined workplan and shortage of funds.

20. Today the PAP pursues activities in all the fields initially approved by the Contracting Parties. The buildup of a network of national PAP focal points and of experts and institutions, is progressing satisfactorily and provides the realistic basis of these activities. The first results are visible in a series of studies, evaluations and guidelines which were favourably reviewed by Mediterranean expert meetings.

21. While the ongoing PAP activities should be pursued according to the agreed workplan and timetable, and thus contribute to the completion of the Blue Plan, the future work should be problem-solving and action-oriented and emphasize transfer of experience, methodology and technology, particularly in fields not yet fully developed, such as environmental impact assessment, aquaculture and use of solar energy.

Specially Protected Areas

22. Activities related to Specially Protected Areas (SPA) are only now beginning to develop with the establishment of the Regional Activity Centre for SPA in Tunis.

23. The formulation of guidelines and methodologies suitable for surveying the Mediterranean areas which may require special protection, the adoption of these guidelines and methodologies by the Contracting Parties and the actual survey of the area covered by the Protocol on SPA, should be considered as high priority.

24. The areas declared until now as "specially protected" do not guarantee the safeguarding of Mediterranean's natural heritage. Therefore, their numbers and area should be vastly increased. The protection of Mediterranean marine mammals, some of which are on the brink of extinction, should receive the urgent attention of the Contracting Parties.

25. Areas with specific ecological significance for the Mediterranean as a whole should be declared as areas under the joint protection of the Contracting Parties, and their management should enjoy the support from the Action Plan.

The legal instruments

26. The Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its related protocols constitute an integrated package of legal instruments which has been successfully used as model to other regions covered by UNEP sponsored Regional Seas Programme. The fact that during the past ten years the Contracting Parties have felt no need to amend it, and that none have withdrawn, bears testimony to the quality and balance of these documents.

27. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has authoritatively endorsed the regional approach and most of the specific provisions found in the Mediterranean legal instruments.

28. The process of preparation involved the technical and legal experts of the Contracting Parties, which facilitated the adoption of the legal texts in a relatively short time and by consensus. Ratification by Governments followed, often in record time, a clear indication of the political support that these documents command.

29. It is, therefore, a matter of concern to the Executive Director that the subsequent implementation has not been equally prompt and that such relatively simple matters as the designation of responsible authorities, or regular reporting on national programmes and activities, should still not have been acted upon. The actions required must be given priority, and negotiations leading to the additional legal instruments called for by the Convention (e.g. on off-shore exploration and exploitation, and on liability and compensation) must be considered by the present meeting.

Control of pollution from Land-based and Maritime Sources

30. Pollution from land-based sources (LBS) are definitely the major threat to the coastal waters of the Mediterranean and the speedy implementation of the protocol on LBS is the only effective remedy to reverse the present situation.

31. The formulation of programmes and measures for the elimination or limitation of pollution by substances covered in the protocol on LBS has been initiated through MED POL. An early agreement is needed on a systematic approach to the implementation of the protocol on LBS, including the general principles, methodology and timetable for the formulation and adoption of pollution control programmes and measures.

32. However, although the Contracting parties have not challenged the scientific information and the approach used in their formulation, they seem reluctant to adopt the proposed measures.

33. Sewage remains the single most important pollutant affecting the coastal waters of the Mediterranean. Without any further scientific research and monitoring, the Contracting Parties should resolve to take the necessary technical measures to reduce this type of pollution.

34. The Regional Oil Combating Centre (ROCC), since its establishment in 1976, continued to act as an information exchange and training centre on subjects related to oil pollution resulting from maritime emergency situations. After successfully aiding several Contracting parties with the formulation of their national contingency plans, the ROCC could assist in the elaboration of subregional agreements for mutual aid in maritime emergencies in high risk areas, which should be adopted by the concerned Contracting Parties.

Other measures

35. The approach taken by the Mediterranean Action Plan is supported by the best available expertise, but the general public can not be blamed for remaining sceptical about their governments' real commitment as long as agreements are not fully implemented.

36. It should be remembered that one of the environmental success stories, the cleaning of the Thames River, did not receive public attention through reports of expert committees, but through the much publicized reappearance in the river of fish which had long been kept away by pollution. In order to achieve the same demonstrable effect a pilot experiment should be carried out in which all the legal, scientific and socio-economic provisions of the Action Plan are applied simultaneously, with strong popular participation to a selected area of the Mediterranean, to demonstrate their real potential.

Organizing the response

37. The Mediterranean Action Plan is the mechanism devised ten years ago to promote and co-ordinate the Governments' response to the problems described in the preceding paragraphs. It was built on the two basic concepts of multi-disciplinarity and co-operation.

38. A multi-disciplinary approach, needed for dealing with any environmental problem, is indispensable in view of the complexity, variety and scale of problems which are covered by the expression "pollution of the Mediterranean".

39. The experience of the past ten years has only confirmed the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach, but has also shown the difficulty of applying it in practice. The challenge still remains of how to apply this approach more systematically without making the whole exercise exceedingly cumbersome and slow.

40. Co-operation involving all Contracting Parties was the second basic concept. This was the truly innovative concept which incorporated several ideas: that no country acting alone can solve the problems of marine pollution of its coastal waters and even less of the basin as a whole; that exchange of information and joint planning of future work is economical and beneficial to all; that the declared willingness of the Contracting Parties to assist each other by transfer of technology can find in the Mediterranean a practical dimension.

41. However, the co-operation concept has been applied in a restrictive way. The Action Plan has been seen too often as a self-contained programme rather than as the instrument that co-ordinates the combined response of Governments. Thus, national programmes - unless financed at least in part with MTF resources - have not been influenced by the Action Plan. International programmes have developed independently. Bilateral relations have seldom reflected the preoccupations expressed and commitments subscribed to, in the framework of Mediterranean Action Plan. What was meant to be a rudder, has been used as a paddle and not very efficiently.

42. It was perhaps natural in the past, while the mechanism was being constructed and tested and was constrained by shortage of funds, that Governments should be cautious in the use of the inter-governmental structure and of the secretariat Unit for purposes of overall co-ordination.

43. The stage has now been reached when these structures must be used fully for the purpose for which they were designed if their complexity is to be justified.

44. Indeed, the organizational structure of the Action Plan matches the complexity of the subject it covers. On the side of the Contracting Parties there are meetings and conferences, the Bureau, the National Focal Points, the Blue Plan. Focal Points, the Blue Plan-Steering Committee, the Priority Actions Programme Focal Points, the Regional Oil Combating Centre correspondents.

On the side of the secretariat, there is UNEP as the secretariat of the Convention, the Co-ordinating Unit in Athens, the four Regional Activity Centres in Malta, Sophia Antipolis, Split and Tunis, and the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee (IAAC).

45. On both sides, the line of responsibility and reporting is clearly established to facilitate the decision-making process. Sufficient flexibility exists on the secretariat side to recognize the inter-governmental character of the programme and the fact that it is almost entirely financed by the Contracting Parties.

46. Such a complex structure can only be justified as a means to co-ordinate the response of the Contracting Parties to the Mediterranean environmental crisis; it is inappropriately heavy if it is only used to plan and control the Mediterranean Action Plan programme of some \$ 4 million per year.

47. The same is true for the secretariat structure, comprising the Co-ordinating Unit and the four Regional Activity Centres. Their role, during the first decade of MAP, was to deal essentially with programme development and only marginally with programmes financed from other sources.

48. The structures so far developed are a valuable instrument in the hands of the Contracting Parties and their experience, lessons learnt and investment in time and money can be fully justified only if Mediterranean Action Plan becomes the main forum where Mediterranean protection is discussed and co-ordinated. This requires, on the part of the Contracting Parties the regular provision of information on national programmes through annual reports; and the collection by the secretariat of information on related international activities and the publication from all these of useful synthetic reviews. The budgetary allocations should be used more and more in a catalytic role, searching out partners willing to invest their own resources in joint projects. By definition, this implies willingness to abandon total control of projects, in favour of an enlarged programme, ultimately involving the totality of activities relevant to the protection of the Mediterranean.

49. The benefit of this approach to MAP is that large resources - local, national, and multilateral - which already exist could support the Mediterranean cause and benefit at the same time from the priority-setting effort which MAP carries out on a basin-wide scale.

50. Other positive aspects deserve to be stressed. The existence of sub-regional agreements for the Ligurian, Adriatic and Ionian Seas is a positive factor, but such programmes need to become more closely integrated into the regional effort. Similar sub-regional programmes may usefully be developed in other areas (e.g. the central Mediterranean and the Alboran Sea). The secretariat is ready to assist in this connection if so requested.

51. The support provided by the EEC has always been a positive factor which will no doubt continue now that more Mediterranean Coastal States are EEC members and that interest in Mediterranean programmes is growing in the EEC as a whole.

52. The Contracting Parties have received generous and consistent support from the entire Membership of UNEP. A total of US\$ 8.2 million was provided as support to the Mediterranean Action Plan which represents a large share of UNEP's resources. Financial support has continued longer than the usual period of such support in a catalytic organization such as UNEP, and is present even now. Moral support and praise for the Mediterranean Action Plan have been voiced at almost every Governing Council. The other countries are therefore entitled to see the Mediterranean programme succeed, but also to receive some return on their investment in the form of experience and expertise. Other action plans developed within the Regional Seas Programme should be able to draw on the secretariat's experience especially since they have many similarities with the Mediterranean Action Plan.

53. UNEP is ready to continue to play its role as the secretariat of the Convention and to assist the Contracting Parties not in the mere execution of programme - since such is not its role - but as an active partner.

54. The Specialized participating Agencies of the United Nations (WHO, FAO, UNESCO/IOC, WMO, IAEA) should be given credit for their active role and co-operation which is expanding with the participation of UNIDO in the implementation of the LBS protocol, of WHO, FAO, Habitat, UNDRO, WTO in the Priority Actions Programme).

The future task

55. More will have to be accomplished, if the common objective of the Action Plan is to be achieved: international obligations will have to be translated into national legislation and practice; all the provisions of the Convention will have to be acted upon; common standards will have to be adopted as an instrument of a common environmental policy; the regular flow of monitoring data will have to be assured; information flows will have to improve.

56. The Contracting Parties can achieve these objectives by using the structures they have already created and the momentum which was not easy to build. The programme draws strength from its success. It must produce more data, better scientific knowledge, region-wide standards, and co-operation that goes beyond declarations of intent, based on the realization that the Mediterranean Coastal States are a family of nations with more in common than the present task of safeguarding the environmental quality of the sea.

57. If the Contracting Parties find the foregoing analysis generally acceptable, if they share the Executive Director's assessment of the past decade, and his vision of the Mediterranean Action Plan as a truly co-ordinating mechanism, they may wish to consider his proposed Programme Calendar (shown in Annex I) and the draft Declaration (shown in Annex II) with a view to their adoption on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

PROPOSED
PROGRAMME CALENDAR

A. MED POL

- a) Implementation of National Monitoring Programmes by all Contracting Parties - 1987
- b) Reassessment of priorities in the framework of MED POL - 1987
- c) Provision of equipment and training to MED POL participants in order to meet new priority tasks - 1988-89
- d) Organization of co-ordinated multilateral programmes, such as joint cruises sponsored by Contracting Parties - 1988
- e) Development and initial testing of models for the transport of pollutants by hydrodynamic and atmospheric processes completed - 1990

B. Blue Plan

- a) Completion of the Blue Plan exercise - 1987
- b) In-depth review by the Contracting Parties of the results of the Blue Plan, and examination of its relevance for the national development strategies - 1988-89

C. Priority Actions Programme

- a) Development of suitable methodologies for environmental impact assessment, with a view to their introduction in coastal zone development planning - 1987
- b) Establishment of a network of national aquaculture pilot projects as an expansion and follow-up of MEDRAP - 1988
- c) Establishment of a network of national pilot projects on the use of solar energy - 1988

D. Specially Protected Areas

- a) Adoption of common guidelines and methodologies for the survey of areas which may require special protection - 1987
- b) Special measures to be taken to protect marine mammals - 1988
- c) Survey of the Protocol area according to the guidelines completed - 1989
- d) Increase by 100% the areas declared as specially protected (compared with area protected in 1986) - 1990
- e) Establishment of the first areas declared as under international protection of the Contracting Parties - 1990

E. Legal instruments

- a) Ratification of Land-based Sources Protocol by all Parties to the Barcelona Convention - 1987
- b) Ratification of the Specially Protected Areas Protocol by all Parties to the Barcelona Convention - 1987
- c) Negotiations on the Protocol for control of pollution from off-shore exploration and exploitation completed - 1987
- d) Negotiations on guidelines or a legal instrument concerning environmental impact assessment for coastal zones initiated - 1986
- e) Negotiations on liability and compensation procedures and on the Inter-State guarantee fund for environment damages from substances other than oil initiated - 1986
- f) Adoption of an annex related to air pollution in framework of Land-Sources Protocol - 1988

F. Control of pollution from Land-based and Maritime Sources

- a) Adoption of programmes and measures for the elimination or limitation of pollution, for at least two substances annually from among those listed in annexes I and II of the Land-based Sources Protocol - ongoing
- b) Survey of land-based sources and amounts of pollutants reaching the Mediterranean Sea up-dated - 1986
- c) Definitions required in connection with annexes I and II of the Land-based Sources Protocol adopted - 1987
- d) Adoption of national contingency plans by all Contracting Parties - 1988
- e) Adoption of subregional agreements for mutual aid in case of maritime emergencies in high risk areas - 1988

- f) Establishment of port reception facilities for ballast water and other oily residues in the main Mediterranean ports according to IMO standards - 1990
- g) All coastal towns with more than 10,000 population equipped at least with appropriate sewage outfalls - 1992
- h) All coastal towns with more than 100,000 population equipped with appropriate sewage treatment facilities - 1995

G. Other measures

- a) Collection and dissemination by the secretariat of information on main developments concerning environmental protection in the Mediterranean Sea - 1986
- b) Establishment of an effective national mechanism in each of the Contracting Parties for the co-ordination of the implementation of all aspects of the Action Plan - 1987
- c) Selection of a demonstration area to serve as an experimental zone for the simultaneous application of all legal, scientific and socio-economic provisions and activities of the Convention (including its protocols) and the Action Plan - 1987

DRAFT

DECLARATION ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ACTION PLAN

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and related protocols,

Meeting in Genoa on 9-13 September 1985;

- having reviewed their co-operation in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan over the past ten years and the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) therein;
- having also reviewed the state of the Mediterranean pollution in the light of the documentation prepared by UNEP;
- after an extensive exchange of views on the overall environmental situation in the Mediterranean;
- expressing satisfaction with the actions already taken and the progress achieved;
- noting that the environmental quality of the Mediterranean Sea remains nevertheless a cause for concern;

reaffirm the following:

1. the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment is essential to the development of its Coastal States and for the improvement of the quality of life of their population;
2. international co-operation is essential for the protection of the Mediterranean environment and for the rational development and use of the resources of the basin;
3. the Mediterranean Action Plan has proved to be a uniquely useful mechanism to promote and co-ordinate their common action in the field of environmental protection;
4. international solidarity must play an increasing role in the defence of the Mediterranean, a common heritage of the riparian nations and, more generally, of all mankind;
5. the complex nature of the problems affecting the Mediterranean has been confirmed by the experience of the past ten years, and requires a sustained inter-disciplinary response on several levels;
6. the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols should be incorporated as appropriate in the national legislation of the Contracting Parties;
7. the programme of monitoring and research of the sources, levels and effects of Mediterranean pollution (MED POL) should continue as a permanent activity providing the sound scientific basis for remedial actions;

8. the Blue Plan alternative scenarios should be carefully analysed by the Contracting Parties and their relevance for national development strategies thoroughly assessed;
9. the Priority Actions Programme should promote projects which are problem-solving and action-oriented, with emphasis on transfer of applicable experience and technology;
10. the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre should promote the designation of Specially Protected Areas by coastal States on an urgent basis. Areas of specific ecological significance to the Mediterranean as a whole should be placed under the joint protection of the Contracting Parties;
11. the Regional Oil Combating Centre should promote co-operation among coastal States in dealing with cases of emergency involving pollution by oil;
12. the active involvement of national institutions is essential for the Mediterranean Action Plan;
13. national centres entrusted with a regional role should promote co-operative networks on a basin-wide scale as a mechanism for the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan;
14. the support of international, regional and non-governmental organizations is recognized as essential, for full achievement of the goals of the Mediterranean Action Plan;
15. the structures of the Mediterranean Action Plan should become the main forum where measures for Mediterranean protection are discussed and co-ordinated.

In view of the foregoing they:

take note with satisfaction of the progress they have accomplished together in developing appropriate scientific, legal and institutional infrastructures, and in promoting public awareness;

reaffirm their determination to co-operate for the protection of the Mediterranean environment and the rational use of its resources, being aware of the contribution they make to their common development objectives and peace in the region;

commit themselves to accelerate the implementation of national and international programmes in order to achieve the present objectives of the Action Plan;

adopt the programme-calendar which appears in the annex as a guidance for specific action on national and regional level;

decide to use their common budget increasingly in a catalytic role, in joint projects with organizations willing to contribute their own resources;

decide to make a general appeal to the 350 million inhabitants of the Mediterranean coastal States and to the 100 million tourists visiting the region, to become aware of the exceptional natural, economic and cultural value of the Mediterranean and to commit themselves individually and collectively to the protection of the Mediterranean;

decide to increase efforts, through all appropriate information channels, to make the aims and achievements of the Mediterranean Action Plan more widely known;

invite the Governments to proclaim an annual Mediterranean Environment Week to serve as the rallying point for local, national and regional initiatives;

express their appreciation to UNEP, its Executive Director and staff for their dedicated and continued support, and invite UNEP to continue its secretariat function for the Barcelona Convention.