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Intergovernmental Consultation Concerning a  
Draft Protocol for the Protection of the  
Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from  
Land-Based Sources.

Athens, 7-11 February 1977

Note by the Executive Director

The attached document, which was prepared by the Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme, is submitted to the participants as an information document on the Expert Consultation on Mediterranean Marine Parks and Wetlands, convened by UNEP in Tunis, 12-14 January 1977.

As part of a comprehensive Action Plan for the protection and development of the Mediterranean Sea Area, adopted at the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Protection of the Mediterranean (Barcelona, 28 January to 4 February 1975), a Consultation of Experts on Mediterranean marine parks and wetlands was convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Tunis (12 to 14 January 1977) at the kind invitation of the Government of Tunisia.

The Consultation was convened to advise the Executive Director of UNEP on:

- (a) the present status of Mediterranean marine parks and wetlands, including relevant national legislation.
- (b) the importance and significance of Mediterranean marine parks and wetlands as:
  - (i) safe "sanctuaries" for the endangered indigenous Mediterranean species such as seals;
  - (ii) breeding grounds necessary for the maintenance of exploitable stocks of migratory marine species;
  - (iii) natural habitats for birds migrating to, from, or through the Mediterranean;
  - (iv) reserves of typical Mediterranean ecosystems as reference systems for scientific research, as pools of specific genetic material and as areas needed for public education.
- (c) principles and guidelines for the establishment and management of Mediterranean marine parks and wetlands.
- (d) measures to be taken for the improvement of the present situation.

The Consultation was attended by 12 experts from Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, the United States of America and Yugoslavia, each invited in his personal capacity. Representatives of international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are active in fields relevant to the subject of the Consultation, as well as local observers were also present. The agenda of the Consultation is attached as Annex I.

After examining the documents prepared for the Consultation (listed in Annex II) the expert participants of the meeting reached certain tentative conclusions including guidelines for the establishment and management of protected aquatic areas in the Mediterranean region, and addressed the following specific recommendations to the Executive Director of UNEP:

1. The Mediterranean protected areas, in particular the aquatic reserves, parks and wetlands, should be organized into an Association of Protected Mediterranean Areas. One member of the Association could act as co-ordinator and focal point of the Association's activities.

2. Regular and periodic meetings should be organized for the representatives of Mediterranean protected areas to review their experiences and problems.
3. Research on ecological problems of protected areas should be intensified and related to the ongoing UNEP Co-ordinated Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring and Research Programme.
4. An intergovernmental meeting should be convened to consider and adopt guidelines and technical principles for the creation and management of Mediterranean protected areas. The report of this Expert Consultation should be used as guidance for the preparatory work of the recommended intergovernmental meeting.
5. A Directory of Mediterranean protected areas should be prepared and kept under constant review.
6. The governments of the Mediterranean States should be informed of the work done by this Expert Consultation. The forthcoming Intergovernmental Meeting of Mediterranean Coastal States on the "Blue Plan" (Split, Yugoslavia 31 January to 4 February 1977) and the Intergovernmental Consultation concerning a draft Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources (Athens, Greece, 7 to 11 February 1977) should be particularly used as opportunities to inform these governments.