

CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW MEETING OF MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL STATES AND FIRST MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST POLLUTION AND ITS RELATED PROTOCOLS, HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 5-10 FEBRUARY 1979

'The Mediterranean Sea is neither dead nor dying—but the slow, progressive deterioration of the environmental quality of the whole Mediterranean Basin, provoked by Man's ever-increasing and often ill-planned activities, could only result in a situation which finally had to be confronted by a cooperative effort of all Mediterranean coastal States. A common awareness that something had to be done in order to protect the Mediterranean environment, on the health of which rests the well-being of its inhabitants, grew slowly but steadily and culminated in the adoption of an Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Mediterranean Basin by an Intergovernmental Meeting in Barcelona, January-February 1975.* The meeting was attended by 16 States bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The Action Plan, consisting of three interdependent, substantive components (*legal*: framework, convention, and specific protocols; *assessment*: research and monitoring of sources, pathways, levels, and effects, of pollutants; *management*: integrated planning) is a very complex, dynamic web of activities in which no element is viewed as an end in itself.'

This was the opening statement in the report submitted to the Intergovernmental Meeting (which was at the same time the first meeting of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention) by the United Nations Environment Programme, which coordinates the Action Plan and serves as the Secretariat of the Convention. The Meeting was called to review the progress achieved in implementing the Action Plan since it had been adopted in early 1975, and to decide on the activities to be undertaken in the next biennium as well as on the budget supporting these activities.

Representatives of 17 (out of the 18) Governments of countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and of the European Economic Community (EEC), in a six-days' Meeting, evaluated the results of the cooperation, which could be summarized as:

- The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related protocols—the Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft, and the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency—entered into force on 12 February 1978 (signed by 16 States and the EEC, ratified by 13 States and the EEC);
- Negotiations on a draft Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources, have reached an advanced stage;

*See the account by Stanley P. Johnson of that Meeting, published in *Environmental Conservation*, 2(3), pp. 235-6, 1975.—Ed.

- In connection with the Protocol on Cooperation, the Regional Oil-Combating Centre was established in Malta in December 1976 to assist the coastal states in pollution emergencies;
- Eighty-four national research institutions in 16 states actively participate in the coordinated Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring Programme (MED POL), initiated in late 1975, according to the originally adopted programme and using common methodology which ensures the Mediterranean-wide comparability of data;
- Preparatory activities for launching the first phase of the Blue Plan, as a series of systematic surveys of major development and environment protection activities and prospective studies of development trends, have been accomplished;
- The application of environmental management practices through cooperative regional projects of the Priority Actions Programme (PAP) was initiated in the field of mariculture and renewable sources of energy, with plans for similar projects in soil protection, human settlements, water resource management, and tourism.

The Meeting approved a biennial (1979-1980) programme of work to be undertaken in the framework of the Action Plan, including the budget of US\$ 6,560,000 supporting these activities. Half of this budget will be provided by cash contributions of Mediterranean States and the EEC through a Trust Fund established at the Meeting, with the other half coming from UNEP and other UN bodies supporting the Action Plan.

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SYMPOSIUM ON THE SHORE ENVIRONMENT: METHODS AND ECOSYSTEMS, HELD AT PORTSMOUTH POLYTECHNIC, ENGLAND, 3-5 APRIL 1979

In a lively introductory lecture, J. R. Lewis (University of Leeds) stressed the necessity for dynamic studies on shore ecosystems. He warned against the danger of becoming fashionably entangled in the intricacies of modern data-storing, numerical methods, statistical approaches, etc., which may all obfuscate the original biological questions. This warning having been sounded, shore ecologists proceeded to indulge in the above-mentioned methodological arts in about 10 of the 26 papers given—some of them very successfully—and thus demonstrated that these methods have now become firmly established in the ecological study of rocky shores.

M. N. Littler (University of California at Irvine), in a well-presented paper entitled 'Variation in Structure and Energetics of Rocky Intertidal Communities', used these methods to reduce the data collected on the rocky-shore biota of a Californian bay, and also to trace the general trends in their spatial and temporal distribution patterns. G. R. South and co-workers (Memorial University of