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Meeting of the Working Group of Experts
on the draft Protocol for the protection of
the Mediterranean Sea against pollution
resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of
the Continental Shelf and the Sea-Bed and its
Sub-Soil

Athens, 8-11 January 1991

Annotated Provisional Agenda

Introduction

At their Fourth Ordinary Meeting (Genoa, September 1985), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution requested the Secretariat to initiate preparation for a protocol concerning the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the sea-bed and its sub-soil (offshore protocol). Consequently, a Technical Consultation on the offshore protocol was convened in Athens on 22-26 September 1986. The meeting reviewed the main issues to be included in the proposed protocol in order to secure adequate protection of the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea area (UNEP/WG.155/1).

On the basis of the recommendations of the above mentioned meeting, a draft protocol was prepared by the Secretariat in co-operation with the International Juridical Organization (IJO) (UNEP/IG.74/Inf.9) and was presented to the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, (Athens, September 1987), which decided that "the draft protocol should be reviewed by the national authorities, whose comments should reach the Secretariat by the end of September 1988, with a view to the convening of a Working Group in early 1989 and if preparations are sufficiently advanced, to the convening of a Plenipotentiary Conference to consider the text later in 1989".

Up to the end of 1989, only seven Contracting Parties have sent their comments on the draft protocol. On the basis of these comments, a new document was prepared embodying the draft protocol and the comments received. (UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.15/3).

The Sixth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Athens, 3-6 October 1989), decided to convene the meeting of the Working Group of Experts nominated by the Contracting Parties during 1990 in order to review and finalize the draft offshore protocol and recommend it to a Conference of Plenipotentiaries to be held for this purpose at a later stage. The Meeting of the Expert Group was convened in Athens from 7 to 11 May 1990. It thoroughly reviewed and amended the draft Offshore Protocol.

During the Joint Meeting of the Technical Committees (May/June 1990), it was agreed that the Bureau of the Contracting Parties would be expected to review the new draft Protocol contained in the report of the Meeting of the Working Group on Offshore Protocol and would decide whether a Conference of Plenipotentiaries should be convened in early 1991 or whether technical consultations should continue. During its last Meeting (Rome, 6-7 September 1990), the Bureau of the Contracting Parties was informed of recent developments and of the written comments concerning the draft Offshore Protocol submitted by France, Italy and Turkey and decided that another meeting of the Working Group should be convened. The following annotations to the proposed agenda for the present meeting were prepared by the Secretariat to assist the meeting in its deliberations.

Agenda Item 1 - Opening of the Meeting

The Meeting will be opened at 10.00 hours on Tuesday, 8 January 1991, at the premises of the Co-ordinating Unit by the Co-ordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

Agenda Item 2 - Rules of procedure

The Rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its related protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) will apply mutatis mutandis to this meeting.

Agenda Item 3 - Election of officers

In accordance with Rule 20 of the Rules of procedure, the meeting shall elect from among the representatives of the Contracting Parties a Chairman, two vice-chairmen and a Rapporteur.

Agenda Item 4 - Adoption of the Agenda and organization of work

The provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat has been distributed as document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.18/1 and its annotation is contained in the present document. It is envisaged that a small draft group or groups will be established. The working languages of the meeting will be English and French.

Agenda Item 5 - Review of the draft offshore protocol

The meeting will have before it the draft offshore protocol with the comments received contained in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.18/3. The Co-ordinator will introduce the document. The President of IJO will present the draft Protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Sea-Bed and its Sub-Soil.

The meeting is expected to thoroughly review the draft protocol and agree on a common text.

Where no agreement can be reached alternative texts will be left in brackets for further negotiation. The entire revised draft will be submitted to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties (Brussels, 6-7 February 1991). On the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group, the Bureau will decide on the date and place of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries.

Agenda Item 6 - Other business

The meeting may consider any other matters relevant to the offshore protocol.

Agenda Item 7 - Adoption of the report

A draft report of the meeting will be submitted to the participants for adoption.

Agenda Item 8 - Closure of the meeting

The meeting is expected to close by 18.00 hours on Friday, 11 January 1991.

ANNEX
Suggested timetable

Date	Session	Agenda item
Tuesday, 8 Jan.	Morning Afternoon	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 5
Wednesday, 9 Jan.	Morning Afternoon	5 5
Thursday, 10 Jan.	Morning Afternoon	5 5
Friday, 11 Jan.	Morning Afternoon	Free 6, 7, 8

Working sessions: 09:30 - 12:30
 14:30 - 17:30

Coffee break: 11:00 a.m.
 16:00 p.m.