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Meeting of Experts on the Establishment
of a Mediterranean Regional Centre
for Research and Development in
Marine Industrial Technology

Vienna, Austria, 18-21 April 1989

R E P O R T*

*This document has not been edited.

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Executive Summary

1. There was consensus on the need for the establishment of the Regional Centre. A Mediterranean Centre for Research and Development in Marine Industrial Technology would fill a gap which needs to be addressed, considering:

- (a) the fundamental importance of R&D as the basis for technological innovation which is the prime motor of economic growth and sustainable development;

- (b) the changed nature of the new technologies, whose use requires continuous training, service, and further development, has transformed the concept of technology transfer. Technology transfer, which in the past could be considered as a self-contained transaction from producer to consumer, has become an ongoing process. The concept of technology transfer has been superseded by that of joint technology development. The Mediterranean Centre should embody this new concept in its structure and functions.

2. Objectives and Functions

There was consensus on the objectives and functions of the Centre. These include information, training, consultancy, especially in project planning and preparation, and will focus especially on joint technology development through R&D joint ventures, organized possibly on the EUREKA pattern but including, in each case, at least one partner from a developing country.

3. Subject Areas

There was consensus that the areas within which projects would be undertaken, should be broadly and flexibly defined. An initial listing included the following:

- (a) desalination technology;
- (b) pollution-control technologies;

- (c) non-polluting renewable energy technologies;
- (d) marine biotechnology and aquaculture technologies;
- (e) technologies for the exploration and exploitation of living and non-living resources;
- (f) technologies for shore protection and development, with special emphasis on coastal erosion and beach protection;
- (g) offshore technologies, including ocean engineering, installations and structures and deep seabed mining technologies.

4. Mode of Establishment

There was consensus that the Centre should be established as a project under the auspices of UNIDO, in co-operation with UNEP and other international and national organizations, and with close links to the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP).

5. Membership

There was consensus that the membership of the Centre should include all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention plus Albania. The Governing Board will have the right to approve additional membership.

6. Structure

- (a) The structure of the Centre should be simple and flexible, consisting of modules that could be added or deleted.
- (i) There should be a Governing Board, composed of plenipotentiary representatives of all States Members. The Governing Board would elect its own small Executive Committee on a rotating basis.
- (ii) There should be a small co-ordinating centre, consisting of a Director and a staff, initially of three professionals and three support staff.
- (iii) There should be national project officers or co-ordinators in each member State to stimulate project proposals and investments and make an initial project selection.

(iv) There should be technical working groups of experts from developed and developing countries for each of the subject areas, under the direction of the Director, which would make a further project selection with the final approval to be made by the Governing Board.

(b) The overall structure would be extremely flexible and dynamic, facilitating institute-to-institute relationships and inputs from centres of excellence, industry, science, and governments.

7. Financing

Financing would consist of core funding and project funding.

One of the innovative features of the Centre would be that core funding would be kept at an absolute minimum and that the whole institution, with its network, should be considered as generating investment rather than cost.

(a) Core funding, estimated at about half a million dollars per annum, should be secured through:

- (i) facilities offered by the host country;
- (ii) seconding of personnel to the Centre by member states;
- (iii) contributions by international organizations;
- (iv) assessed and voluntary contributions of member states;
- (v) subscription fees paid by industries for information services.

(b) Project funding would be generated:

- (i) possibly on the Eureka pattern, and involving international funding agencies for the participation of developing countries;
- (ii) UNESCO/IOC, UNCTAD, WMO and FAO technical and other assistance in their respective area of competence, which already has been offered;
- (iii) Bilateral funding

8. Location of the Regional Centre

The Meeting welcomed with appreciation the offer of the Republic of Malta to host the Regional Centre. It was also agreed that other Mediterranean States interested in hosting the Regional Centre should communicate their proposals to UNIDO. UNIDO will consult with all interested countries to facilitate the establishment of the Regional Centre.

9. Follow-up Activities

Follow-up activities should take place on several levels.

- (a) The present report will be widely circulated to all Mediterranean States, all participating agencies and institutions of the UN system, and to industries which might become partners in project implementation.
- (b) UNIDO was requested by the Meeting to continue to promote implementation of the proposal, in co-operation with UNEP and other international and national organizations and in close association with the Mediterranean Action Plan.
- (c) Contacts with industrial enterprises should be sought and their co-operation invited.
- (d) Participants attending this Meeting and others should continue to use every occasion to expound and explain the proposal at national or international seminars, workshops or conferences.
- (e) Preparatory work on the feasibility of one or two initial R&D projects should be initiated.
- (f) Potential funders should be kept fully informed.
- (g) The Regional Centre should be established when officially approved by five Mediterranean States and core funding had been secured for an initial period of five years.

Objective of the Meeting

Over the last two years, a number of reports and proposals on the establishment of regional centres for research and development in marine technology had been prepared. A draft proposal for the establishment of a Mediterranean Centre for Research and Development in Marine Industrial Technology was put forward and a detailed feasibility study was prepared on this subject in 1988. This Feasibility Study was distributed to all countries of the Mediterranean region in August 1988. UNIDO, therefore, felt it timely and appropriate to convene a meeting of experts on the subject to:

- review the feasibility study
- assess the views and comments of countries and agencies on the proposal
- agree on the objectives, functions, activities, structure and modalities of the Centre
- make recommendations on future actions for the establishment of the Regional Centre.

Documentation

An Aide-Mémoire, Annotated Agenda and Issue Paper were prepared for the Meeting in addition to the Feasibility Study. A report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the Law of the Sea providing the views and comments of the Mediterranean countries and international agencies was also provided. A number of background papers was also provided. A List of Documents can be found in Annex II.

Participants

Ten experts from seven Mediterranean countries and three international experts attended the Meeting, as well as representatives from the UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, UNEP, FAO and UNESCO/IOC, together with UNIDO secretariat. A List of Participants is provided in Annex I.

It was reported to the Meeting by Prof. E. Mann Borgese that Yugoslavia sent regrets at not having an expert attend this Meeting. However, Yugoslavia expressed its support for the Meeting and requested copies of the report and documentation.

Opening of the Meeting

The Meeting was opened by the Deputy Director-General of IPCT, UNIDO. In his welcoming speech, he stressed the fact that this endeavour must be regarded as a co-operative venture and of a multi-disciplinary nature. He indicated that the present Meeting was being held in co-operation with the United Nations Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as UNEP, FAO and UNESCO/IOC. He then provided background on UNIDO's work related to marine industrial technology and its relationship to the programme on technological advances, which had been going on for some ten years. In discussing regional co-operation through centres and networks, he shared his experiences of the situation in Latin America, and provided specific observations and guidelines, which he hoped would be useful for the Meeting.

Election of Chairman

The Meeting unanimously elected Dr. Aboul Fotouh Abdel Latif, President of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT), Egypt, as Chairman of the Meeting.

Adoption of Agenda

The Meeting reviewed the provisional agenda and adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of Meeting
2. Election of Chairman
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Presentation of proposals and papers
5. Discussion on functions, activities, structure and modalities of proposed Regional Centre
6. Miscellaneous
7. Adoption of report
8. Closure of the meeting

Presentation of proposals and papers

At the outset, Prof. Busuttill expressed his thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for bringing the proposal of a Mediterranean Regional Centre to the attention of Mediterranean states; to UNIDO for its work in marine industrial technology, and specifically for the follow-up action on the above proposal and hosting the present meeting. He also thanked the International Ocean Institute (IOI) for its contribution to this endeavour. Prof. Busuttill reiterated Malta's support for a Mediterranean Centre and Malta's offer to provide host facilities for such a Centre.

Mr. Ivanov, Bulgaria, requested the Chairman to note in the report of the Meeting that he welcomed this initiative for the Mediterranean and would like to see a similar one for the Black Sea, as well as possibilities for future co-operation among the respective countries.

The various proposals and papers for the Meeting, as shown in Annex II, were then presented by their authors as a framework for discussion.

Context and Rationale

The need for a new institutional arrangement for marine technology has to be seen in the context of the major industrial and technological changes taking place in the world. Scientific and technological development has become one of the determining factors of economic growth, industrial stability, international competitiveness and social progress. This has meant that technological innovations have become one of the primary means for establishing new production facilities and for improving the productivity of existing units. In spite of the considerable efforts taking place in developing countries in scientific research and technological development, the gap between the developed and the developing states is widening. It is considered necessary for the developing countries to take measures relating to laying more stress on market forces which lead to 'demand pull' on technology; need for changes in the organizational process, a decentralized system, provision of consultants and the introduction of innovative processes and management systems; specialization in efforts in the scientific and technological fields; integration of markets, products and technologies; establishment of interlinkages between developing countries at the regional level; and in the financing field, concentration of efforts, development of appropriate policies and growth in user-oriented (i.e. industry) financing so as to have more 'responsive' funding.

The changes taking place in the global system have to be seen in the context of the needs, desires and aspirations of the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean, situated as it is on the crossroads of three continents - Africa, Asia and Europe - is an area of considerable global strategic and political importance. It is one of the few regions of the world (the others being the Caribbean and the Sea of Japan), which at the same time includes both developed and developing countries, including some major powers, and where different social and political systems co-exist. Being a semi-enclosed sea, the nations of the Mediterranean have shared perspectives in both the economic and environmental fields.

The growing gap in technology development in the field of high-tech between Europe on the one hand and the USA, USSR and Japan on the other, led to the establishment of Eureka in 1985. Eureka was set up to serve as a Europe-wide framework for encouraging multi-state co-operation in advanced technology. Three of the Mediterranean states, namely France, Italy and Spain, are participants in this arrangement. The arrangement is, however, only meant for the members of the North and there is need to extend it to the South. This North-South co-operation would lead to better international division of capital and labour, while at the same time enlarging markets and lowering the risks normally associated with high-tech.

The Meeting also addressed itself to the question of defining what is meant by marine industrial technology. The term was obviously capable of various interpretations. After detailed discussions, the Group came to the view that marine industrial technology

"can best be described as a system of technologies having relevance to marine activities. It would include technologies flowing from marine sciences (in the areas of surveying, monitoring, analyzing, recording, computing) as well as other technologies, generally new and advanced, as for example, microelectronics, robotics, computers, satellite technology, including remote sensing, new materials, advances in engineering, biotechnology, and so on. The list of such technologies cannot be exhaustive, as the range and intensity of interaction of new technologies is constantly increasing".

New marine industries are being developed for utilizing space and for exploiting minerals, energy and biological resources. Advances in materials technology (especially the development of ion-exchange resins) offer the

possibility of producing very effective reagents that can selectively and effectively strip various elements (especially uranium, vanadium and molybdenum) out of seawater; the developments of lightweight and strong composites have interesting possibilities for replacing steel and cement; developments in fibre optics can lead to the development of new and sophisticated systems of control and monitoring of erosion in undersea structures; biotechnology could lead to developments of pharmaceuticals, have profound impacts on aquacultural practices, and help combat pollution through the development and use of appropriate microorganisms; the information 'revolution' could have major impacts on navigation techniques, steering systems and the real-time computing of marine data, thereby making possible advance warnings of earthquakes, tsunamis, weather and adverse sea conditions; developments in robotics could lead to future technological trajectories, especially in areas like deep-sea submersibles, collectors for harvesting polymetallic nodules and sulphides, and subsea oil collection systems, which would enable industrial activities in extreme environmental conditions unsuitable for humans; while space applications, and developments in remote sensing, laser and acoustic technology would have profound impacts on methods of surveying and monitoring.

Therefore, the Meeting stressed the need for the establishment of a Mediterranean Centre for Research and Development in Marine Industrial Technology for the following reasons:

In the area of industrial development, the concept of international and regional co-operation, and the development of centres of excellence in new technologies, has been found to be very valuable.

Despite the extensive global and regional co-operation in marine affairs, technology development and transfer remain unaddressed.

The industrial application stemming from research and development in marine technologies needs promotion, as it can play a major role in meeting the economic development needs of the region and provides investment opportunities.

The need for a forum specifically addressing R&D co-operation in marine industrial technology in a North-South and South-South context.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the principle of Exclusive Economic Zones have given the developing countries an added incentive to generate or acquire the technology for exploration and exploitation of their marine resources.

The growing concern with the environment and the need for environmentally sound technologies for ocean development and management.

Also, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in part 14 mandates the establishment of regional centres.

The Meeting was further of the view that, since marine technology will be used in a wide variety of activities - for exploitation, exploration, management and conservation of marine resources - there was a need for the Centre to have a multidisciplinary, multisectoral approach.

In light of the above, the Group was of the view that the real question was not why a regional centre, but what type of regional centre and what its functions could be. Besides, the Mediterranean with its clear identification as a region, historically, culturally and geographically, could provide a model for co-operation in other regions. Comments on the current Feasibility Study, whether from governments, UN agencies or funding institutions, have favoured the setting up of a regional centre. The Group also noted that the proposed Centre, dealing as it would be, specifically with the development and transfer of marine industrial technologies, would be a complement to existing activities and not a duplication, as is clear from the following brief description of ongoing activities:

- UNEP Regional Seas Programme and the Mediterranean Action Plan. Includes various conventions and protocols on pollution, scientific research related to pollution, as well as integrated management planning. In carrying out this activity, a number of regional activity centres and a UNEP Co-ordinating Unit have been established.

- World Bank, in co-operation with European Investment Bank, has an environmental programme for the Mediterranean, concerned with priorities and investment needs of direct relevance to pollution reduction.

- **Bilateral or multilateral Environmental Commissions.**
Yugoslavia/Italy
Italy/Greece
France/Monaco/Italy

- **FAO - General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean.**

- **ICSEM - International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea.**
Carries out scientific research and holds symposia.

- **UNESCO/IOC**
General scientific and oceanographic programmes in the Mediterranean region.

- **Commission of the European Communities (EEC)**
R&D programmes on marine science and technology (for EEC countries).

- **EUREKA - Co-operation projects in R&D with a special area on marine research and development known as EUROMAR.** It includes companies from at least 2 European countries, and companies and research institutions may set up such projects.

Objectives and Functions of the Mediterranean Regional Centre

It will be a centre for the benefit of all the countries of the region. The functions of the Centre, therefore, come from the needs and demands of the region itself. In contributing to investment opportunities and the overall industrial and economic development of the region, the Centre should be guided by the need for environmentally sound technology, which is capable of leading to sustainable growth while being suitable for the Mediterranean regional context. Accordingly, and without any particular order of priority, the objectives and functions should be the following:

- (a) to take all measures, including assistance to developing countries in project formulation, so as to attract capital investments;

- (b) to initiate and promote research and development co-operation, including joint R&D projects, in selected marine technologies, taking into account the Mediterranean context, and including at least one partner from a developing country;

- (c) to facilitate industrial co-operation in marine industries in the region through joint ventures and other means, especially between developed and developing countries;
- (d) to provide an information base and network on marine industries and related technologies, especially in the field of high technology, for the region;
- (e) to establish a network of national institutions, including public and private enterprises, involved in marine industrial technology in the region, as well as institutions working on associated programmes in the new and emerging technologies;
- (f) to promote the establishment of "centres of excellence" in specific areas of marine industrial technology;
- (g) to organize, and facilitate, training on various aspects of marine industrial technology using, wherever possible, existing training institutions in the countries of the region;
- (h) to provide consultancy and advisory services in order to strengthen the capabilities of national institutions and public and private enterprises;
- (i) to assist the establishment of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate development and transfer of marine industrial technology;
- (j) to interface with programmes taken up by other organizations, like the EEC, FAO, UNESCO/IOC and the UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

Subject Areas

The Regional Centre should promote environmentally sound technologies that would contribute to the economic development of the region. In so doing, it should develop links and enter into co-operative arrangements with international organizations with interests in similar subject areas. The orientation of the Regional Centre is technological and as such it will be complementary to current international co-operative efforts in similar or related fields.

There are several technological subject areas of interest to the Mediterranean, but it was suggested that initially seven such areas should be promoted:

- desalination technology;
- pollution-control technologies;
- non-polluting renewable energy technologies;
- marine biotechnology and aquaculture technologies;
- technologies for the exploration and exploitation of living and non-living resources;
- technologies for shore protection and development, with special emphasis on coastal erosion and beach protection;
- offshore technologies, including ocean engineering, installations and structures and deep seabed mining technologies.

It was understood that these areas were not exclusive and that additional ones may be considered in the future.

Structure of the Mediterranean Regional Centre

The Meeting suggested that the Regional Centre should be a project under the auspices of UNIDO, in co-operation with UNEP and other international and national organizations. It is important that the Centre have close links with the Mediterranean Action Plan so as to give it a strong regional character and strengthen existing regional co-operation. Accordingly, membership would include the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and Albania. Additional members could be admitted to the Governing Board. It was considered necessary that the Regional Centre be established with at least five members.

The structure of the Regional Centre should be simple, flexible and dynamic. It should facilitate institutional interaction and networking with centres of excellence, industry, science, governments and universities. It

could consist of modules that could be added, changed and deleted, as deemed necessary from time to time.

The Regional Centre would have a Governing Board composed of pleni-potentiary representatives from all member states. It would elect a small Executive Committee, the members of which would serve on a rotating basis.

Headed by a Director, there would be a small staff which would initially consist of three professionals and three support persons. The Director would be answerable to the Board.

In regard to joint projects, the Meeting found the EUREKA/EUROMAR arrangement to be a very useful model to be considered. Mechanisms for initiating, developing and screening project proposals would be established, such as national co-ordinators or project officers, technical working groups and centres of excellence. The functions of national co-ordinators would include stimulating project proposals and investment as well as initial project selection. The technical working groups would consist of experts from developed and developing countries. Under the Director's responsibility, they would select projects which would be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

In order to function efficiently and effectively, the Regional Centre should develop links and pursue co-operation with other institutions and arrangements, such as the following:

- UN Specialized Agencies and related bodies, e.g., UNEP (including MAP and its regional centres), UNCTAD, UNESCO/IOC, WMO, FAO/GFCM, IMO, UNU, UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, etc.;
- International funding agencies, e.g., UNDP, World Bank, European Investment Bank, African Development Bank, etc.;
- EUREKA/EUROMAR
- the EEC and its programmes, such as MAST, COST, ESPRIT, ERASMUS, COMET, Integrated Mediterranean Programmes, bilateral assistance programmes, etc.

- Other international institutions that may be deemed relevant, such as the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean (ICSEM).

Financing

From a financial perspective, the Regional Centre would require core and project funding.

Core Funding

To be kept at an absolute minimum, core funding is necessary not only to run the Regional Centre but also to develop and run an infrastructure for the preparation of project proposals. The Regional Centre and its activities should generate investment rather than cost. Secure core funding for a five-year period was deemed essential.

The Feasibility Study's estimate for core funding is US\$500,000-550,000 on a yearly basis. This sum covers emoluments, travel, rent and administration, hiring of consultants and miscellaneous expenditures. Cash contributions are vital. It was suggested that international agencies should be approached for seminal contributions. It was indicated that despite budgetary restrictions, the Mediterranean Action Plan through the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should not be ruled out as a possible source of some funding. It was also suggested that due to the small amount involved in the core budget, Mediterranean Governments should be approached for both voluntary and direct financial contributions, according to UN scales of assessment criteria.

There was a suggestion that an endowment fund be set up, with the accruing income going towards programme support.

Although programme support requires cash contributions to the greatest extent possible, it is useful to think of the possibility of contributions in kind. They must not be considered as an alternative to cash contributions, but rather as a measure to buttress the Regional Centre's work and increase participation.

Contributions in kind could include:

- host country contributions, such as those already offered by the Republic of Malta;
- Government secondment or loan of resident and non-resident experts/personnel to the Regional Centre;
- contributions from international organizations, which has already been offered;
- subscription fees paid by industries for information services.

Project funding

It was considered important that specific projects attract both public and private investment, particularly through joint-venture arrangements. Insofar as the developing countries are concerned, it was suggested that the international development agencies, such as the World Bank and UNDP, should be approached. In this regard, it was noted and appreciated that the World Bank already communicated its interest in funding individual research and development activities within its project lending programme for countries in the Mediterranean region.

One other possibility concerns funding that may be agreed upon through bilateral agreements between states.

Further, technical and other assistance will be forthcoming from international organizations, and due appreciation expressed in this regard to UNCTAD, FAO, UNESCO/IOC and WMO for their offers of co-operation and the interest in co-operation expressed by IMO and UNU.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Provisional Agenda
2. Annotated Agenda
3. Issue Paper
4. Opening Speech by Mr. A. Aracz, Deputy-Director General,
Department for Industrial Promotion, Consultations and Technology,
UNIDO
5. Feasibility Study on Mediterranean Centre for Research and
Development in Marine Industrial Technology
6. UN Convention on the Law of the Sea - Relevant provisions/parts
7. The new international technological order emerging from the United
Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
8. Report on the possibility of establishing Regional Centres for
Research and Development in Marine Industrial Technology
9. Draft proposal for the establishment of a Mediterranean Centre for
Research and Development in Marine Industrial Technology
10. Establishment in Malta of a Mediterranean Centre for Research and
Development in Marine Industrial Technology
11. Various background information material