



**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

10th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.32/8/2
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Agenda Items: 8, 9 and 10

**Matters for the consideration of and discussion
at the 10th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points**

Submitted by Israel

Entry into force of the Offshore Protocol to the Barcelona Convention

1. As regards Agenda Item 8 (Developments in the field of preparedness for and response to marine pollution), on the 23 March 2011, the 1994 Protocol to the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Subsoil (Offshore Protocol) had entered into force. The provisions set forth in this important Protocol were set almost 20 years ago. Many developments have since occurred in the field of deep sea exploration and exploitation of energy resources which in turn were not taken into account when the Protocol was written. Furthermore, marine environmental science has since evolved greatly. Specifically within the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Components, significant knowledge has been gained.

2. Since in the Offshore Protocol REMPEC is specifically mentioned and almost by definition it is the most suitable of all MAP Components to deal and coordinate the efforts of the Parties to the Convention as regards to the new Protocol, it seems that the Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points should discuss and bring up the concrete option of the Centre to bring this Protocol on board.

3. Bearing in mind the intensive activities in the Mediterranean of oil and gas exploration and exploitation and recalling the mishap and the oil spill that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico as a consequence of the Deepwater Horizon in April 2010, it is suggested herein that this Meeting should discuss and put forth the importance of the new Protocol, the need to update it, and the role of REMPEC as a possible coordinating unit.

Assignment for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group(MTWG)

4. As regards Agenda Item 9 and functions of the MTWG and relating again to the latest events in the Gulf of Mexico during the last year and as an aftermath of the largest oil spill ever, it seems that chemical dispersants have created new and perhaps inevitable questions to be raised, as relates to their true efficacy and their possible added negative effects on the marine environment. To this end, biological based agents seem more than ever fit to use in the cleaning operations of an oil spill, in a possibly more environmentally sound manner than chemicals.

5. It is therefore proposed that this Meeting assigns the MTWG to evaluate the current knowledge of biological agents for oil spill treatment, to set guidelines for their use, and to assess and outline their advantages and limitations.

Proposed programme of work of REMPEC for biennium 2012/2013

6. Regarding Agenda Item 10 and the proposed programme of work of REMPEC for 2012/2013:
 - a. Output 4.1 – either at paragraph 9 or in a new paragraph, it is very important that in national/regional full scale exercises, REMPEC representative/s would participate as controllers or observers. This will add fresh and independent view and input to the parties who executes the drills and it will also signal to governing institutions in the countries the importance of conducting oil spill exercises by the parties.
 - b. Output 1.3 – activity 2 is extremely important and relevant. It is suggested enhancing and enlarging its scope to relate to the broader issue of the provisions of the Offshore Protocol as detailed above.