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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Orientation Course
Study Tour for African
Environmental Experts

Addis Ababa, 8-9 November 1977

REPORT OF UNEP/ECA MISSION ON EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF
AND ADVICE ON NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MACHINERIES IN SELECTED
AFRICAN COUNTRIES (PROJECT FP/0302-75-13)

Tunisia (27 February - 2 March 1976)

MISSION TO TUNISIA (27 February - 2 March 1976)

1. Discussions with various officials revealed that there is no institutionalized environmental machinery in Tunisia. Consequently, Tunisia needs advice more than evaluation on environmental machinery and the presence of the Association for the Protection of Nature and the environment is a good source of environmental consciousness. The Government is aware of the environmental problems but corrective action is ad hoc and unsystematized. The immediate problems are those arising from a tourism-oriented economy. The rural sector with about 70 per cent of the population is faced with serious soil erosion problems arising from lack of conservation measures. The population growth is low - 2.13 and is likely to remain low in view of existing aggressive population growth control policy. However, the overall country position with regard to renewable natural resources is gradually sliding.

Discussions with Charge de Service de L'Environnement - Direction de L'Enseignement de la Recherche et la Formation des Cadres: 30 rue Alain Savery, Tunis.

2. Until a year ago, there was an unofficial Commissioner for the Environment. But a small organization is now in the Ministry of Agriculture and involves both official and private interests and co-ordinates between Government and non-Government and also acts as liaison officer for the internal affairs. Within a year, their legal status will be legalized in a secretariat for the Environment in the Ministry of Agriculture. The secretariat would have:

- i. The duty to co-ordinate all the activities related to the environment
- ii. To promulgate regulation legislation e.g., pollution, construction etc.

3. There is a quasi official Association for Nature Conservation. It receives and lays emphasis on fauna (endangered), soil, marine life, etc. There is another society created in 1975 for Bird protection - "Friends of Birds" - chaired by the son of the President - NB: Birds of Prey, the Peregrine Falcon, falconry is still practiced in Tunisia.

4. Tunisia participated in the Barcelona Conference on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution.

Tunisia is currently not able to feed her population - substantial foods are still imported but she is the world's leading exporter of olive oil.

5. Although the Environment Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture does not have much power over the other ministries there is a detectable increase of environmental awareness among the decision-makers. Environmental education is primarily connected with the arid zone training programme. As of 1975, two-year post-graduate optional course will be introduced in the University. Also, the High School curriculum includes ecological glimpses. At Tabaca there is an institute of Forestry which lays emphasis on ecology in the Forestry Curriculum.

6. The structure of Environmental machinery foreseen will fall within the structure and protocol of the Ministry of Agriculture which has the following divisions:

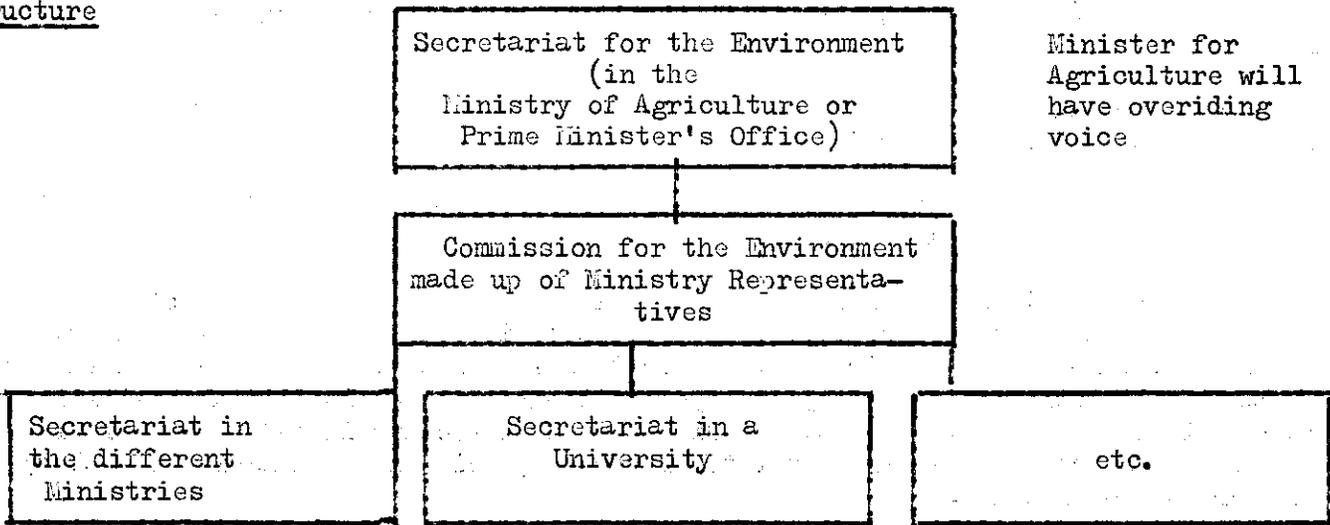
1. Agricultural Production
2. Forestry: Game, Fisheries (inland), Range, National Parks
3. Extension Services
4. Studies on Hydrology and Irrigation
5. Research and Training
6. Marine Fisheries Department
7. Veterinary Services
8. Planning (Agricultural)
9. Land-Use Planning
10. Legislation (Land Problems)
11. Administration
12. (Division for the Environment)

7. Promotion of Environmental Education is accentuated during Environment Day week (5th June) when the Minister gives a statement and the Officer for the Environment in the Ministry of Agriculture organizes a painting competition on various aspects of environmental degradation (health) and sent all over the country. Prizes are given to pupils at national, regional and local levels. "Bird Banding" - bird ringing clubs also consolidate conservation awareness.

8. There are national parks and reserves e.g., Zembra (Marine Park), Zembreta (National Park) under the Forestry Department. Zembra and Zembreta are surrounded by remarkable clear waters and fish of the Mediterranean already "polluted out" elsewhere is found here.

9. The intention is to have in each Ministry, a service for the environment under the Secretariat for the Environment (in the Ministry of Agriculture or in the Prime Minister's Office).

Structure



10. Thus, the Commission for the Environment will be constituted by the Ministers of the different ministries - thus providing a forum for avoiding conflicts.
11. But, the problem of Habitat (Human Settlements) is critical and "primario" because the current picture is marked with congested housing, mixing of industrial installations amidst centres of habitation resulting in pollution nuisances etc. For example, a fertilizer factory (financed by the Government).
12. Eutrophication and Pollution of Lake Tunis as a result of sewerage and pollutants dumped in. There are now effective efforts to clean up the lake and eventually other polluted waters - a considerable measure of national awareness, by the "National Office to Clean Up the Waters".
13. Population control efforts are supported by high national awareness of the problems. The population growth is 2.3 per cent as a result of the extension of the Ministry of Agriculture disseminating family planning education to the farmer population (FAO has inputs in this) - this policy is very aggressive and the Moslem nature of the country calls for balancing family with resources - hence in 1962, the President gave a historic speech on family planning. Urban drift is actively opposed.

Discussions with Members of the Association for Nature Protection

14. The mission held discussions with the members of the Association for Nature Protection. The approach adopted by the Society aims at:

- (1) Creating an awareness in the Government through papers, photographs, talks (in the Cultural house etc.), in contacts with Government officials, the Press, and in schools. In the latter, effects are through drawings, (painting competitions on themes emphasizing the protection of nature).
- (2) Increasing of personal (self) awareness and the environment in Tunisia and elsewhere in the country.
- (3) Teaching by photographs (and other audio-visuals as aid to nature interpretation).
- (4) In talks and exhibitions on bird protection.
- (5) The Association has/(will have) influence on the creation of nature parks through provision of basic information.
- (6) The Association promotes Tunisia's participation in international following.

Résumé

15. The Association makes studies for the Government in order to end the pattern of aggression to nature. The main problem is pollution - of the air by industry, etc., of the sea by oil, industrial construction in the town and pollution of landscape. However, the critical national problems are:

- i. "Soil conservation" and
- ii. Deforestation.

The intention is to promote the establishment of a Secretariat in the Government (under the Ministry of Agriculture or under the Prime Minister's Office) to establish an official external contact and to be the focal point for action on environmental matters. Currently, there is no inter-ministerial co-ordination although this Secretariat represented the government in a quasi-official capacity.

Membership to the Association for Nature Protection is thus:

16. Half are designated representatives of all ministries (at Minister level). Half are elected members. Membership fess is IDN per year - total membership is about 200. Focal points are at Sfax, Bizerte and the future intention is to have regional committees elsewhere to advise the regional administration. Financing is mainly by membership fees. When the association is given official work to do, the department to which the "executing" officer belongs to pays, e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture, Tourism, Foreign Affairs, etc. This is mainly because the society has no substantive sources or revenue.

Critical Conservation Concerns

17. Acacia Radiana - Reserves proposed in Bohedria about 10,000 ha. - 1936 to provide protection for Mouflon. The main problem is how to exclude sheep from grazing in the reserves. "Berbery Deer" - this is the only wild sheep (*ammotragus lervia*) indigenous to Africa. Up to 1954, there were none, but during the Algerian war, some have found safety over 400 ha. in Tunisia. It is intended to offer them protection. "Water buffalo" (*Bablns bubalia*) brought in from Italy in 1961 and crossed. Now they are in Ishkal in good numbers. (But this does not really fall under nature conservation).

Monachus monachus (monk seal) 'Indigenous to the Mediterranean sea) but is threatened by pollution of the Mediterranean.

Cuppressus (cypress). Indigenous - concern is to preserve gene banks.

Forestry

18. Since independence, the hectorage under forest has increased from 25,000 ha. to 200,000 ha. in 1976 - mainly with eucalyptus, pinus, helepenis (indigenous *P. Pinaster*, (*P. pinea*), *E. Camaldulensis*, *E. Spp.* (in range areas), Acacia cyanophylla, Anthriplex Str. Principal species promoted are the same.

19. Whereas plantations are accepted by the local population, natural forests are abused. But in 1972, a seminar on Desertification stressed the role of charcoal burning on desertification. The big consumers, e.g., bakers have been induced to substitute modern fuel, e.g., gas, diesel etc. This has been effective for charcoal. The problem still is that of domestic uses (in the villages and towns) who still use charcoal, optimum efficiency (fuel) burners have been promoted and publicized - bases on studies supported by SIDA. Although oil prices have gone up, "kerosene" remains at the same price - by agreement of the Government to the Forest Departments' request.

20. This price differential will help create new cooking habits in the rural areas - in anticipation of publicizing of gas cookers - Tunisia has discovered vast sources of gas.

21. With regard to cultural heritages and historical monuments such as the ruins of Carthage, it was felt that the Association would have a far-reaching influence on the population and their respect and appreciation for history - through the publicity and "expand to the rural areas strategy".

Discussion with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave the following impressions:

22. There is not yet a secretariat for the Environment in the Government. But the interest of the Government of Tunisia on the environment is certain and the principal organ is the Ministry of Agriculture. New laws concerning water, fisheries, industries, etc., are on the making. The "National Office for Clearing Up" is responsible for clearing waters (waste water - sewage). For the time being, the Tunisian Association for the protection of Nature is centralizing all these things.

LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED

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