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**Report of the 10th meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee
Athens, Greece, 16 March 2006**

Introduction

1. The 10th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the MCSD was held at the headquarters of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), Athens, Greece, on 16 March 2006.
2. The list of participants is attached to this report as Annex 1.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Meeting was opened by Mr John Vournas, Director General (Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, Greece) at 9.30 a.m.
4. The Meeting adopted the draft Agenda contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED.WG.286/1. The Agenda is attached to this report as Annex 2.

Agenda item 2: Progress report

5. The Report by the Secretariat (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.286/2) was presented by Mr Paul Mifsud, MAP Coordinator, who recalled that the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) had been finalized and approved by the MCSD in Athens in May 2005 and adopted by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Portoroz, Slovenia, in November 2005. The 11th Meeting of the MCSD in Cyprus in June 2006 would therefore be the first after the adoption of the MSSD. He also noted that a number of strong statements endorsing the MSSD had been made at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Barcelona in November 2005 and that a commitment had been expressed at the Summit for the implementation of the MSSD. It was also important to recall that the Contracting Parties had agreed in the Portoroz Declaration that the MSSD constituted a framework strategy to guide countries in the implementation of sustainable development, within the context of which the Secretariat could provide assistance to countries for the development and implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs). The MSSD was of concern to the various stakeholders, as well as regional and international institutions, and was based on synergies, efficient management and cultural diversity for a co-developed eco-region.

6. He recalled that, in addition to adopting the MSSD in Portoroz, the Contracting Parties had decided to go ahead with the development of NSSDs based on the MSSD, which should serve to integrate the principles of sustainable development into national policies and legislation. It would therefore be necessary to mobilize resources, both human and financial, for the implementation of the MSSD and the NSSDs, which should be applied through specific projects, based on broad ownership and strong support from the various stakeholders, in particular NGOs and the private sector. In this respect, he welcomed the active role that NGOs had already played in the development and endorsement of the MSSD. Indicators would be used to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the MSSD and the NSSDs and an overall assessment and review would be carried out after five years. It was of great importance in this respect to persuade funding agencies to give due consideration to the objectives and actions proposed in the MSSD. The Blue Plan, following the important role that it had played in the development of the MSSD,

would continue to be pivotal in its implementation and monitoring, under the coordination of the Secretariat and the involvement of the various MAP components.

7. He added that the *Regional review and assessment report* had been finalized and sent out to the MAP/MCSD Focal Points. The report had been compiled by Mr Philippe Alirol, who was acting in a temporary capacity as MAP's Senior Sustainable Development Officer until such time as a permanent appointment could be made. The report, containing updated national profiles, would be available at the next meeting of the MCSD. He added that the MCSD's programme of work would focus on monitoring the implementation of the MSSD through indicators and the organization of regional workshops on the seven specific fields of action. It was also intended to organize expert meetings on the selected thematic issues. Depending on the amount of support available, in which context he welcomed the offer received from the Azahar Programme in Spain, missions would be carried out to countries to provide advice and assistance, for example for the development of national indicators. It would also be important to continue and expand information and communication activities.

8. Mr Michael Scoullos (MIO-ECSDE) said that, now that the MSSD had been adopted, one of the key roles of the MCSD, in accordance with its mandate, was to monitor the implementation of the MSSD. This monitoring would be carried out on the basis of indicators. Clearly, the Blue Plan had and would continue to play a very important role in the development of indicators of sustainable development at the regional and national levels, and its technical support in this respect was to be fully encouraged. However, it should be recalled that the final responsibility for such monitoring lay with the MCSD itself.

9. Mr Eugene Clancy (Friends of the Earth/MED NET) emphasized the importance of the support expressed by the Euro-Mediterranean Summit for the MSSD. It was now essential to examine ways in which a firm commitment could be obtained within the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for practical action to give effect to the MSSD. Clearly, the representatives of the Governments concerned would have a vital role to play in ensuring that the European Commission followed up the commitments that had been made at the Summit. In addition, the MAP Secretariat should make the best use possible of its Joint Programme of Work with the Commission to achieve these aims.

10. Mr Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia) agreed that the main issue was to turn words into action. As a road map was to be prepared in the coming months for the implementation of the commitments made at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit, including the initiative to depollute the Mediterranean by 2020, every effort should be made to ensure that practical action was specified as precisely as possible in this context, with clear linkages between the actions to be taken, their cost and appropriate financing mechanisms, which should include wherever possible a linkage between European Union and national financing mechanisms. If the action to be taken was not set out clearly, all the efforts made would be wasted. He also indicated that his country was organizing a specific conference for Adriatic countries on the implementation of the MSSD on 5 and 6 June 2006, as an Adriatic Union initiative, with a view to taking practical action for the implementation of the MSSD at the subregional level.

11. In response to the previous speakers, Mr Mifsud confirmed that the work by the Blue Plan for the development and implementation of the MSSD was coordinated by the Secretariat and the various outputs submitted to the MCSD and its Steering Committee. It was important in this respect for MAP to make the optimal use of the limited resources at its disposal. He also expressed agreement with the need to make use of MAP's coordinated work with the European Commission to ensure that action was taken for the

implementation of the MSSD. He had planned a meeting with the E.C., which unfortunately had been postponed, to discuss the action to be taken to follow up the strong commitment to the MSSD made at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Barcelona. He indicated that the Governments of the Mediterranean countries that are also EU members, could play an important role in exerting the necessary pressure for this purpose.

Agenda item 3: MCSD Programme of Work

12. Mr Benoit (Director, Blue Plan) briefed the meeting on the activities that were planned and were being undertaken by the Blue Plan as a follow-up to the MSSD. He recalled that the implementation of the MSSD would have to be reviewed after ten years based on 34 priority indicators, but that additional indicators could be developed in each of the priority areas. The Contracting Parties had requested the Blue Plan to follow the development and use of these indicators. In the first place, Blue Plan's work was focussing on the fields of water and energy, and would then turn to tourism and rural development. As it was not possible to cover all the priority actions at the same time, the Blue Plan would concentrate on activities which offered specific added value and the relevant activities would be carried out in collaboration with appropriate networks and volunteer countries. It was necessary to mobilize experts in the various fields and the competent administrative authorities. In addition, it was important to combine the technical expertise of the Blue Plan with the more political follow-up of the MCSD. By the end of May 2006, documentation on all the 34 indicators would be completed in English and French. The data available at the Mediterranean level for each indicator would be collected to identify trends at the regional level over a five to ten year period. As data for all of the indicators were not available at the regional level, it would be very important for countries to collaborate in this exercise. For this purpose, the Coordinator would be writing to each Contracting Party requesting them to designate a contact person for the indicators.

13. With regard to water, which was one of the two priority themes covered by the Blue Plan in 2006/07 (the other being energy), he recalled that an estimated 60 per cent of the Mediterranean population suffered from water shortages and that most water policies were based on supply, rather than water demand management. Collaboration in this field was being developed with other partners, particularly the Mediterranean Secretariat of the Global Water Partnership, while France and Morocco had made staff available to the Blue Plan. Countries, including local authorities, would be invited to conduct analyses of their water policies and the effective water management measures adopted. It was also intended to organize a third regional workshop on water management in March 2007, following those held in Fréjus (1997) and Fiuggi (2002). No country had yet offered to host the seminar, although it would be appropriate if it could be held in Spain. The outcome of the workshop would be presented to the MCSD meeting in 2007.

14. On the subject of energy, Mr Benoit indicated that contacts had been made to prepare the activity with the principal networks working in this area in the Mediterranean, with particular reference to MEDENER, the Mediterranean Energy Observatory, the MedREP regional project funded by Italy, UMET and the Mediterranean Summer University, which had all agreed to collaborate with the Blue Plan. The Euro-Mediterranean Federation of Economic Science Institutes (FEMISE) was also helping in the compilation of information. Limited financial support had been found to fund activities in this area, although it was hoped to hold a sub-regional seminar in the East Adriatic and possibly a regional workshop at the beginning of 2007.

15. Finally, Mr Benoit indicated that the Blue Plan's principal activities in the fields of tourism and agricultural and rural development would be commenced in 2007. Once again, the Coordinator would be sending out a letter to the Contracting Parties on this subject.

16. Mr Clancy raised a number of questions, including whether MAP and/or Blue Plan were involved in the work of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum, which had been active for a number of years, although it did not have any NGO participation. He noted with regard to water resources that the European Commission continued to lead action on wastewater management through its initiative to depollute the Mediterranean by the year 2020. Finally, he asked for information on the activities carried out to make the Environment and Development Report more visible and to improve its outreach and impact.

17. In response, Mr Benoit agreed that, despite some collaboration with the European Environment Agency (EEA) in relation to indicators, closer links were still needed with the European Commission. He also believed that it would be useful if MAP or the Blue Plan were invited to collaborate with the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum. On the subject of the Environment and Development Report, he noted that a press conference had been held and other activities would be carried out. Brochures were being prepared on each theme and the publication was promoted on the website. In particular, the aim was to encourage the use of the report at the national level and the compilation of national environment and development reports.

18. Mr Drocourt (100 Mediterranean Historical Sites) indicated that a project was being carried out on the reuse of traditional systems of water conservation in the Mediterranean, in the context of which a report would be prepared on how these traditional systems could be adapted for use today.

Activities by the RACs in relation to the implementation of the MSSD and the MCSD Programme of Work

19. Mr Hebert (Director, Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean – REMPEC) recalled that the MSSD called upon REMPEC to implement its Regional Strategy for Prevention and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships. It was doing this by participating in the development of the legal framework at the national level in line with the relevant IMO instruments. It was also continuing to assist countries to strengthen their administrative capacity for the implementation of the related Conventions and to ensure their enforcement. Action was being taken in collaboration with the representatives of maritime transporters in the Mediterranean. REMPEC was also collaborating with SPA/RAC on the scientific aspects of the treatment of ballast waters in relation to the protection of biodiversity. With regard to pollution from pleasure craft, the centre was continuing the process of elaborating guidelines and was engaged in the dissemination of information on this subject in collaboration with partners.

20. Ms Alzina (Director, Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre – CP/RAC) indicated that the programme of CP/RAC for 2006/07 was characterized by a broadening of its activities from the industrial sector so that it would also cover such areas as tourism, agriculture and the services sectors. The Centre was currently working with the Blue Plan in the areas of energy and climate change, and looked forward to closer collaboration in the fields of agriculture and sustainable tourism. Its activities were focussed on cleaner production and sustainable consumption and it looked forward to participating in any working groups related to these themes.

21. Mr Prem (Deputy Director, Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre – PAP/RAC) said that PAP/RAC was the principal support Centre for the implementation of the MSSD in relation to integrated coastal area management (ICAM). It was leading the process of the elaboration and discussion of the draft ICAM Protocol, with a view to its adoption in 2007. The Centre was also active in the implementation of MCSD recommendations in relation to ICAM, particularly through coastal area management projects (CAMPs). PAP/RAC was working in collaboration with the EU/SMAP programme and the new GEF project. One of the key features of CAMPs was to develop awareness and mechanisms for the governance of local area management.

22. Mr Guglielmi (INFO/RAC) emphasized that the focus of INFO/RAC's activities was to make the best possible use of the new energies within the MAP system to raise awareness of the issues covered. New events should be carried out which were designed to draw attention to the MSSD. He noted that a number of working groups had been established within the context of the MCSD to cover specific themes, although the more cross-cutting issues were not taken into account so effectively. It would therefore be necessary to pay greater attention, for example through the establishment of a working group to deal with the issue of education, communication and governance.

23. Mr Drocourt (100 Mediterranean Historic Sites) noted that one of the orientations of the MCSD was cultural heritage and sustainable development. In this context, the 100 Historic Sites programme was carrying out several activities in relation to marine pollution and cultural heritage, for example on the conservation of submerged historical remains, the preservation of the land heritage and the protection of marine sites of archaeological interest from harm by tourists. The programme had been working with the World Bank for two years on related activities, including the training of elected officials. Another area of work focussed on the protection of heritage sites from environmental risks, such as strong winter rains, for example through the use of reservoirs to capture the water before it harmed the sites. A further activity which allied sustainable development and the cultural heritage was to promote the use of existing sources of energy, rather the installation of new equipment, in cities such as Istanbul, Marrakech and Marseilles. A report would be prepared on the lessons learned from these activities.

24. Mr Civili (MEDPOL Coordinator) explained that the adoption of the MSSD had given greater political impetus to the traditional work of MEDPOL, which related to the monitoring and reduction of land-based sources of pollution. In this respect, one of the main recent achievements had been the adoption by all Mediterranean countries of National Action Plans (NAPs) to combat pollution from land-based sources. The NAPs had been formulated as part of a broad participatory process involving NGOs, local authorities, the public and the private sector, and had received political approval. An enormous amount of data had been compiled through national diagnostic analyses and baseline budgets of emissions, which had been prepared by all Mediterranean countries. Two major opportunities had emerged for the provision of assistance for the implementation of the NAPs, namely the GEF Strategic Partnership, which included a regional financing initiative supported by the World Bank, and the European Union's 2020 initiative. He noted that, while MAP was engaged in discussions at a high level with the European Commission to formalize collaboration between the two institutions, it should be recognized that the intention behind the 2020 initiative was that it should be implemented by the countries themselves. This offered an important opportunity for countries to specify that they would implement the 2020 initiative through their NAPs. A forum had been organized in collaboration with MIO-ECSDE to raise the awareness and capacity of NGOs and local authorities to participate in the formulation and implementation of NAPs. He said that MEDPOL was also working with CP/RAC to develop mechanisms for the transfer and flow of technology between countries. The

purpose of the GEF Strategic Partnership was to create a platform and a bridge to facilitate the financing of projects by donors and it was hoped to create a clearing-house of project proposals and prospective donors for this purpose. Finally, he noted that a staff member was being loaned to MEDPOL by Italy for one year to work on energy issues in relation to the implementation of the SAP.

25. Mr Scoullos, while thanking the Directors of the RACS for the information provided, placed emphasis on the need to address the cross-cutting issues covered by the MSSD. In this respect, he drew attention to the final column of Annex II of the Report by the Secretariat, which indicated the relationship between the various specific activities to be carried out by MAP components and the related cross-cutting issues. The incorporation of these cross-cutting issues into the normal work programmes of the Centres formed an important element of the added value of the implementation of the MSSD.

Strategy and plan to implement the MCSD Programme of Work

26. When speaking on the MCSD Programme of Work, Mr Scoullos said that, despite the effective work carried out, the impression was still sometimes given that the implementation of the Programme of Work of the MCSD was something of a burden. In his view, the MCSD should be seen as an asset. No other United Nations body had the same kind of visibility or broad political support. He said that MIO-ECSDE, in its meetings with the European Commission, particularly in the context of the 2020 initiative and SMAP, placed its collaboration with MAP high on its agenda, principally because of the MCSD. He added that the MSSD gave considerable importance to participation and governance and, although there was some progress to be seen in this respect, particularly in relation to the activities of the Blue Plan and MEDPOL, greater efforts still needed to be made, as they did in the field of education. It was still early in the process of the implementation of the MSSD, but he hoped that when the programme of implementation was discussed at the next meeting of the MCSD, each of the MAP components would make specific proposals in this respect. If the MSSD was not implemented effectively, the MCSD would lose credibility. Yet broad support was available from civil society for its implementation.

27. Mr Bricelj emphasized that this was a crucial period for the implementation of the MSSD. It was therefore necessary to be very specific about who did what and to build partnerships involving all the components of MAP, countries, the European Commission and other United Nations bodies. A clear vision was therefore needed, based on a road map, for the implementation of what was after all the first regional sustainable development strategy in the world.

28. Mr Vournas agreed that the Programme of Work was a good basis for the implementation of the MSSD and would provide the framework within which the working groups and MAP components could work. He supported the biennial format of the Programme of Work, which was based on the programme of the UNCSD. However, there were a number of weaknesses, such as the lack of funding for the activities planned and a lack of political will in specific areas. He further agreed that greater attention needed to be given to action on the cross-cutting issues. Finally, he proposed that the Focal Points for the MCSD should be the same as those for the UNCSD, or at least should collaborate with the latter, as the resulting exchange of views and experience would be beneficial for the successful implementation of the MSSD, which could in turn provide an example for action at the global level.

29. Mr Clancy observed that, in addition to giving greater emphasis to the cross-cutting issues, more attention should be paid to synergies, particularly with action that was being

taken in the context of the European Union, such as the European Marine Strategy, EU legislation on chemicals, as well as processes in the Baltic region, which could contribute to the implementation of the MSSD.

30. Mr Benoit commented that, while the implementation of the MCSD Programme of Work involved both vertical and horizontal issues, what was really at stake was the need to reinforce cooperation at the regional level and participation at the national level so that all the available tools could be used to achieve progress in the policies adopted. The implementation of the MSSD therefore needed to focus on the promotion of strategic reflection at the country level through the involvement of high-level experts and all the various stakeholders, with a view to demonstrating that considerable sums would be saved in the long-term through the actions that were proposed.

31. Mr Mifsud concluded that the Programme of Work offered a good basis for the implementation of the MSSD. However, it was necessary to ensure that all the members of the MCSD understood how the Secretariat intended to address all the various issues. The MAP components all had a very valuable contribution to make to the implementation of the MSSD and, when preparing their proposals, should ensure that they adequately addressed the cross-cutting issues identified in the Strategy.

Agenda item 4: National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs)

32. Mr Alirol (MAP Senior Sustainable Development Officer) emphasized that the implementation of the MSSD required action to be taken at the national level, where the principal actors were the countries themselves, with the support of MAP and its components. National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs) were therefore an essential element of the implementation of the MSSD. The Regional Review and Assessment Report on sustainable development initiatives in the Mediterranean, which had originally been published in 2005, had now been updated, based on the information received from countries, and would be presented to the next meeting of the MCSD in Nicosia. Most countries in the region had established an overall policy framework for sustainable development. However, NSSD priorities tended to differ from one country to another and several sustainable development frameworks had been prepared prior to the adoption of the MSSD. As much was happening at the national level in this respect, it was necessary for MAP to take stock of what already existed at the national level, identify entry points in the on-going policy process and foster linkages and coherence between the MSSD and NSSDs. In this respect, Egypt, Morocco, Serbia and Montenegro and the Syrian Arab Republic had been receiving support from MAP since 2005. In Montenegro, the process was very advanced and a national NGO was coordinating the consultation process with stakeholders. A low level of funding had been provided by Italy and the UNDP Small Grant Programme. In the Syrian Arab Republic, a national NGO was managing and coordinating the process and supplementary funding had been made available from the GEF Strategic Partnership. With funding from the Azahar Programme, support would be provided to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Tunisia, based on processes that were similar to those in the other countries to which assistance had been provided. In this respect, consideration should be given to the manner in which further support could be provided in the context of the MCSD Programme of Work for the formulation and strengthening of NSSDs.

Agenda item 5: Information and Communication Strategy for the MSSD

33. Mr Guglielmi (INFO/RAC) introduced an information and communication vision for the MSSD, which had been elaborated as a basis for an information and communication (IC) strategy. The IC strategy should be developed through a participatory process, based on a group of experts, so that it could be as effective as possible in making the MSSD better understood, more widely known and, in particular, closer to specific target audiences, such as high-level decision-makers. Dialogue and cooperation should be enhanced between the key actors in the MCSD through the creation of a permanent Mediterranean communication network based on the use of Internet tools. The Strategy should seek to make the MSSD appealing and provide user-friendly public access to all non-restricted documents. In order to do so, it was important to identify very carefully the messages and target groups, as well as the channels through which such information would be communicated. Among the new communication channels proposed were the online magazine *Campus EcoMed-ia*, which would be presented to the MCSD meeting in Cyprus. Ad hoc visual materials should also be produced on MSSD issues, such as the video on the 30th Anniversary of MAP. Other ideas included the appointment of high-profile ambassadors. INFO/RAC's main activities in 2006/07 would include organizing the participatory process for the finalization of the MSSD IC Strategy, the identification and creation of an MSSD logo, the organization of the Mediterranean Environmental Award and Mediterranean Environment Day 2007. Finally, a first proposed IC action in support of the MSSD could be the organization of a "Blue Week" in Turkey in the first half of September 2006 to coincide with the Meeting of Experts on the Monk Seal, which was being held in accordance with the recommendation of the Contracting Parties. In this respect, it would be appropriate for the Secretariat to seek approval for this initiative from Turkey at the next meeting of the Bureau, of which Turkey was a member.

34. During the discussion which followed this presentation, many of the ideas proposed were welcomed, including the identification of present weaknesses, the specification of the proposed channels of communication, the proposal to develop a logo for the MSSD and to appoint ambassadors. In general terms, MAP was at a turning point in many respects, relating to the implementation of the MSSD and the SAP, and needed a more aggressive and proactive information and communication strategy. However, care should be taken to ensure that civil society was involved as fully as possible and to encourage communication between, for example, the expert groups formed in the context of the MCSD and civil society. Moreover, in view of the new phenomenon of "information fatigue" that was becoming evident with the plethora of information materials now available, it would be very important to ensure that information products were designed bearing closely in mind the related demand for information. The idea of basing communication events and activities on the holding of specific meetings could be extended, for example, to include the two expert workshops to be organized by Blue Plan in 2007, which would help to overcome the main problem encountered by such meetings in the past, namely that their content had been very interesting, but they had not been publicized.

35. Mr Mifsud added that there was indeed a great need to publicize MAP's activities. For example, the EEA had recently issued a publication on pollution in the region, for which the data basically came from MEDPOL. There was a wealth of data available within MAP which should be put to better use.

36. Mr Guglielmi explained that his presentation had covered a preliminary draft version of the IC vision, which almost consisted of a shopping list, that would require much further refinement, for example by an expert working group, and discussion by the MCSD itself. The overall aim was to create a new era of information and technology for MAP and the

MCSO, based on the wealth of information that was already available to be communicated.

Agenda item 6: MCSO new members

37. Mr Mifsud, introducing the proposed new MCSO members representing civil society, as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.286/2 (p. 9), recalled that the terms of reference of the MCSO called for five members each representing local authorities, socio-economic actors and NGOs/IGOs. Although a questionnaire had been sent out to all MAP Partners and to potential interested candidates, there were still only three local authorities and two socio-economic actors proposed for membership, which naturally called into question the credibility and effectiveness of the MCSO. In the absence of sufficient members from these groups, the proposal included increased numbers of NGOs, which continued to show enthusiasm for membership of the MCSO.

38. During the discussion, reference was made to several local authorities and socio-economic actors which might be interested in becoming members of the MCSO, including the Mayor of Marseilles, the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and Sustainable Business Associates. It was agreed that the present members of the MCSO should be more proactive in seeking new members, especially among local authorities and socio-economic actors.

Agenda item 7: Draft Agenda for the 11th MCSO Meeting

39. After considering the draft Agenda for the 11th Meeting of the MCSO, contained in Annex IV to document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.286/2, the Steering Committee agreed to rename item 7 as "Information, Communication and Education for Sustainable Development" and to add the following points to the item: results from the state of the art study on sustainable production and cleaner technologies in Mediterranean countries (CP/RAC); and education for sustainable development. The Agenda for the 11th Meeting of the MCSO is attached to this report as Annex 3.

Agenda item 8: Other issues and conclusions

40. Mr Scoullas informed the Steering Committee that MIO-ECSDE had facilitated the initiative of the Greek Government, in collaboration with UNEP/MAP and UNESCO, to organize a meeting to launch the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. He also recalled that Greece had been given a mandate to set up a task force on the MSSD, on which information would soon be sent out. One of the side effects of the adoption of the MSSD was the fact that other regions were considering following the same path. He therefore welcomed the fact that MIO-ECSDE had been invited to attend a meeting in South-East Asia and the Pacific to provide information on the Mediterranean experience in relation to the MSSD.

41. Mr Vournas reported that, at a recent meeting of the E.P.R.G, criticism had been levelled at the Governments of Mediterranean Member States of the European Union for not being sufficiently active in support of the Commission's Mediterranean environmental policy. It was therefore to be hoped that the countries concerned would start to play a more active role in fostering comprehensive collaboration for the development of environmental policy and action in the region.

43. The Steering Committee considered and adopted the draft conclusions prepared by the Secretariat. The conclusions are attached to this report as Annex 4.

Agenda item 9: Closure of the meeting

44. Mr Mifsud declared the meeting closed at 5.15 p.m.

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ANNEX II

Agenda of the 10th meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee

1. Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting will be opened by the President of the Steering Committee of the MCSD and the Coordinator of UNEP/MAP

2. Progress report

Presentation by the MAP Coordinator of the main activities carried out within the framework of the MCSD since the last meeting of the Commission in June 2005.

3. MCSD Programme of work

On-going and planned activities as outlined in the MCSD Programme of Work

- BP Director will brief the Steering Committee about the activities being planned as a follow-up to the MSSD including the setting up of Expert Working Groups and support missions to the countries for the preparation of the NSSDs, national indicators
- The RACs Directors will present the RACs perspective on implementation of MSSD and MCSD Programme of work
- The strategy and plan to implement the MCSD programme of work will be discussed

4. National Strategies for Sustainable Development

Update on the activities carried out in support of the preparation of NSSDs.

5. Information and Communication Strategy for MSSD

Presentation by the Director of INFO/RAC about a Vision for an Information and Communication Strategy for the MSSD. Discussion

6. MCSD new members

The Steering Committee will be briefed about the selection process of the new MCSD members representing the civil society

7. Draft Agenda for the 11th MCSD meeting

A draft Agenda for the 11th MCSD meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus will be presented to the Steering Committee

8. Other Issues and Conclusions

Other issues that the Steering Committee members may wish to raise
A summary of conclusions will be submitted for approval

9. Closure of the meeting

The meeting will be closed by the Coordinator of UNEP/MAP

ANNEX III

Conclusions of the 10th meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, Athens, 16 March 2006

- The Steering Committee agreed that action at the national level was essential for the next phase of the implementation of the MSSD and called upon the MAP components to provide the necessary support to assist in the development and implementation of NSSDs. In this respect, the BP/RAC was encouraged to go ahead with its plans to provide technical support at the national level, particularly on indicators.
- In view of the strong support for the MSSD expressed by the Euro-Mediterranean Summit, held in Barcelona in November 2005, the Steering Committee emphasized that the road map being developed to follow up the Summit should specify concrete support measures for the implementation of the MSSD. The EC/MAP joint programme of work should also include concrete action and support for the implementation of the MSSD.
- The Steering Committee welcomed the initiative of the organization of a sub-regional conference for Adriatic Countries as a practical step towards the implementation of the MSSD.
- The Steering Committee emphasized the importance of the cross-cutting issues identified in the MCSD programme of work and encouraged all MAP components to continue to give these issues full attention throughout their thematic activities.
- Care should be taken to ensure the involvement of all sectors of the MCSD membership, including the representatives of NGOs, socio-economic actors and local authorities, in all activities for the implementation of the MSSD.
- The Steering Committee agreed that thematic issues would be addressed by expert groups, which would also be open to all categories of the MCSD membership.
- The Steering Committee welcomed the draft vision for an Information and Communication Strategy presented by Info/RAC and encouraged the further definition and refinement of the vision with the view to its submission to the 11th meeting of the MCSD. The importance of an effective Information and Communication Strategy was emphasized for the dissemination of knowledge and awareness of the MSSD. It noted that Info/RAC would set up an advisory group for the development of the Information and Communication Strategy.
- The Steering Committee emphasized the issue of MCSD membership, with particular regard to the representation local authorities and socio-economic actors. Potential members from these categories should be approached.
- The Steering Committee approved the agenda of the 11th meeting of the MCSD.

ANNEX IV**PROPOSED AGENDA FOR THE 11TH MCSD MEETING
Nicosia, Cyprus, 24-26 May 2006**

1. Opening of Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and organization of the meeting
3. National Strategies for Sustainable Development
 - Update of the review of NSSDs
 - Progress in the implementation of NSSD by the countries and new developments
 - Launching of Pilot Actions
4. Implementation of Priority Action 2.7 of the MSSD (Promoting sustainable management of the sea and coastal zones)
 - Strengthening regional cooperation
 - Draft protocol for the integrated management of coastal areas (PAP/RAC)
 - Prevention and reduction of land-based pollution – implementation of SAP and NAPs (MEDPOL) and synergy with the Horizon 2020 EC Initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean
 - Implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (REMPEC)
 - Protection of Marine and coastal biodiversity
5. Follow-up and assessment of progress in implementing the MSSD
 - Indicators and thematic activities (water, energy, tourism and rural development)
 - Participation by Commission members in thematic activities
6. Evaluation of impact of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone
Presentation on the initial results of the Impact Assessment
7. Information, Communication and Education for Sustainable Development
 - Environment and Development Report (BP/RAC)
 - MSSD Information and Communication Strategy (INFO/RAC)
 - Results from state of the art study on sustainable production and cleaner technologies in Med Countries (CP/RAC)
 - Education for Sustainable Development
8. Conclusion and Closure of the meeting