

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report of the Meeting

Annexes

Annex I: List of Participants

Annex II: Agenda of the meeting

Annex III: Conclusions of the 11th MCSD Steering Committee meeting

Report of the 11th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development

Introduction

1. The 11th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the MCSD was held at the offices of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), Athens, Greece, on 9 March 2007.
2. The list of participants is attached to this report as Annex I.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

3. The meeting was opened at 9.30 am by Mr Paul Mifsud (MAP Coordinator). He welcomed Mr Charalambos Hajipakkos (Cyprus) in his capacity as President of the Steering Committee, who would chair the meeting following the retirement of Mr Nicos Georgiades. He added that Mr Magdi Ibrahim (ENDA Maghreb) would act as Rapporteur. Finally, he noted that Mr Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia) representing the President of the Contracting Parties had informed the Secretariat that he would not be able to attend the meeting.
4. The meeting adopted the agenda proposed in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.310/1, which is attached to the present report as Annex II.

Agenda Item 2: Progress report on MCSD activities

5. Mr Mifsud, introducing the "Report by the Secretariat for the 11th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee" (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.310/2), reviewed the important developments since the last meeting of the MCSD in Cyprus in May 2006. These included the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points held in Catania in November 2006 which discussed, among other issues, the future mandate and composition of the MCSD, and the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Environment Ministers Conference (Cairo, November 2006), where a Cairo declaration on the environment and the timetable for the first phase of Horizon 2020 had been adopted, both of which prominently featured the MSSD. He also reviewed the progress made in the formulation and implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs) by two groups of four countries, and the holding of the First Working Session on Challenges and Opportunities of NSSD Formulation. He noted that the MAP Secretariat should be able to provide greater support to countries in the development of NSSDs as the process for the recruitment of a Sustainable Development Officer was nearing completion. He added that, although work had progressed at the level of NSSDs, the implementation of the other aspects of the MSSD itself, such as the proposed pilot projects, still needed to take off. A number of issues would have to be examined in this respect, including the need for a clear implementation strategy and a detailed business plan for MSSD implementation. Consideration should also be given as to whether the MCSD programme of work needed to be reviewed in the light of the experience acquired and whether the role of MAP components as Lead Centres of the Working Groups should be more clearly defined.

6. Mr Magdi Ibrahim (ENDA Maghreb) said that it was important to reflect on the role that MAP and its components should be playing in the implementation of the MSSD. As MAP could not do everything, it would be more effective if it confined its involvement to the role of facilitator for the implementation of the MSSD and the NSSDs. While the regional activity centres provided technical support in their various areas of competence, the MAP Secretariat could facilitate the implementation of NSSDs through the organization of forums for the exchange of experience between countries that were making progress with their NSSDs. He noted differences in the approaches adopted in the various countries in the implementation of NSSDs and emphasized the need to ensure that NSSD implementation was in all cases a fully participative process. In certain cases at least, much still needed to be done to ensure the full participation of all the stakeholders concerned.

7. Mr Saverio Civili (MEDPOL Coordinator) expressed the belief that the experience acquired by MEDPOL in relation to the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and the formulation and application of National Action Programmes (NAPs) could offer a model for a participatory approach in the implementation of NSSDs. He considered that MAP, through MEDPOL, was now in a position in the field of reducing land-based pollution to show what could be its important role at the regional level. Part of this success was due to the emphasis placed on identifying financial instruments and the close partnership developed with financing institutions, and particularly the World Bank and the European Investment Bank, the former through the GEF Strategic Partnership and the latter as part of the implementation of the EC Horizon 2020 Initiative through a detailed and hands-on process of examining project proposals with a view to proposing loans on favourable terms for their implementation.

8. Mr Emilio D'Alessio (Associazione Agende 21 Locali Italiane) asked whether assessment mechanisms had been developed to monitor whether the NSSDs, which were being formulated in different contexts and situations, were indeed comparable in practice and in line with the MSSD. The existence of indicators was important for the assessment of the progress made and the identification of problems.

9. In reply, Mr Mifsud said that substantial progress was being made with the development and implementation of NSSDs in a number of countries in the region. At the regional level, MAP and its components were also playing their part. Excellent work had been carried out, particularly by the Blue Plan in the fields of water and energy and sustainable development, both with the involvement of experts and through the organization of events that brought together a wide range of stakeholders. Nevertheless, greater emphasis still needed to be placed on the involvement of stakeholders in all activities at the national and regional levels in relation to the MSSD. He added that the indicators developed by Blue Plan were intended as tools to measure the progress achieved in relation to sustainable development.

Agenda Item 3: Progress on MCSD related activities by MAP components*Blue Plan*

10. Mr Henri-Luc Thibault (Blue Plan) reviewed the information in the relevant section of document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.310/2, particularly with regard to the activities carried out by Blue Plan in the fields of water and energy. The regional workshop on water management to be held in Zaragoza later in the month would provide an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to examine and comment on the preparatory work carried out by experts with the backing of four volunteer countries (Turkey, France, Tunisia and Morocco) and the main networks engaged in the field of water management in the region. A similar network had been developed in the field of energy, and the concluding seminar would be held in Monaco at the end of the month. Expert meetings had also been held and networks were being developed on the themes of "Quality agriculture and sustainable rural development" and "Sustainable tourism". Another important aspect of Blue Plan's work was related to the development of indicators of sustainable development. Blue Plan had now started collecting and processing international data relating to the 34 priority indicators for the follow-up of the MSSD and was preparing the first report on major trends in sustainable development in the Mediterranean. It was working on improving monitoring methods for sustainable development in the Mediterranean using multicriteria analysis based on rating and benchmarking. Preliminary figures on coastal indicators of sustainable development would also be available by the meeting of the MCSD in Istanbul. Finally, Blue Plan was engaged in preparing its medium-term work programme for 2007-15, which would be available for the MCSD in Istanbul.

11. Mr. Hicham Abou Jaoude, Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE-BUSINESSMED) said that his organization was interested in making its knowledge and experience available to assist the thematic working groups, particularly in the fields of energy and tourism. It was important to ensure that the business perspective was taken into account in these activities. In particular, he wondered why UMCE, which had been included in the thematic group on energy, had not yet been called upon to participate in its activities.

12. Mr Ibrahim observed that it was important to review the functioning of the thematic working groups to ensure that all the various actors were associated with their work. If a process was followed in which the initial stages of the work was confined to experts, there was a risk that by the time the various actors became involved there would be little scope for them to influence the outcome of the work.

13. Mr Thibault indicated that the purpose of the forums that were being organized in Zaragoza and Monaco was precisely to be able to involve all the concerned actors. He emphasized that Blue Plan placed great importance on the involvement of representatives of the private sector in its work.

Marine pollution from ships

14. Mr Frédéric Hebert (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean – REMPEC) considered that the same formula for the involvement of stakeholders might not be appropriate in all cases. For example, the work of REMPEC in

the context of the MSSD was principally related to the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships. What was required was the ratification and implementation of the Strategy by the States concerned, verification that the rules were being applied and that penalties were imposed for violations. While a working group could clearly play a role in the development of such a strategy, its value in the implementation of the strategy was less straightforward. One of the problems faced in the area of marine pollution from ships was that the application of very technical instruments, such as MARPOL, went well beyond the competence of ministries of the environment and required close cooperation with ministries of transport and justice. REMPEC was therefore endeavouring to extend its partnerships to include other ministries, regional authorities and NGOs. In this context, the concept of a traditional thematic working group was not necessarily appropriate, and might even be counterproductive.

15. Mr Izamettin Eker (Turkey) highlighted the problem of the effective dissemination of information between all the various authorities and ministries involved in the implementation of the MSSD, which was by its nature multisectoral.

Sustainable production: Involvement of the private sector

16. Ms Virginia Alzina (Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production – CP/RAC) described the activities carried out by CP/RAC with a view to contributing to the achievement of the MSSD objective of changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly through the involvement of the private sector. The principal means adopted included the development of partnerships with business associations, involvement with the academic sector, joint efforts with other agents promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the region, the monitoring of trends in this respect in Mediterranean countries, disseminating information and leading a working group on sustainable consumption and production. Examples of the partnerships developed in this field included the seminars held in 2007 in collaboration with UNEP/GPA and the European Commission on the ceramic industry in Lebanon, the textile industry in the Syrian Arab Republic and the olive oil industry in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Each biennium, the Centre published its report on the State of the art of sustainable production in Mediterranean countries. In accordance with the timetable set out in the MSSD, the Centre was preparing for the Working Group on Sustainable Production and Consumption, which was scheduled to commence its activities in 2008. Reports were being prepared identifying the state of the art in relation to sustainable production, the principal actors involved and potential fields of action. Links were also being developed with those actors involved in the Marrakech Process, which was the follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit with regard to sustainable production.

17. Mr. Abou Jaoude confirmed that the UMCE-BUSINESSMED would very shortly be signing a memorandum of understanding with CP/RAC covering its involvement in the Working Group on Sustainable Consumption and Production. In particular, UMCE-BUSINESSMED wanted to ensure that adequate attention was paid to economic instruments and that economic rules were duly taken into consideration.

18. Mr Eker pointed out that the three major producers of olive oil in the region in terms of volume were Greece, Italy and Turkey. He therefore proposed that it would be valuable to include those countries in the Centre's activities on olive oil production.

19. Ms Alzina explained that the location of the seminars on olive oil production had up to now been dependent on the countries with which the sponsor, namely SMAP, was working.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

20. Mr Ivica Trumbic (Regional Activity Centre for the Priority Actions Programme – PAP/RAC) recalled that the major activity undertaken by PAP/RAC in relation to the implementation of the MSSD was the development of the ICZM Protocol. For this purpose a group of government-designated experts had been established and had met on three occasions. Although the subject itself was by nature complex, good progress had been made in the negotiations. All of the proposed articles to the draft Protocol had been discussed. It was to be hoped that any remaining difficulties and reservations would be resolved at the next meeting of the group of experts and that it would therefore be possible to sign the Protocol at a meeting of plenipotentiaries to be held alongside the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Spain at the end of the year. In view of the existence of the group of experts, it would appear to be redundant at the present time to establish a thematic working group on the same subject. Nevertheless, such a working group would have a role to play once the negotiating process had been completed and it could be set up at that stage. It would be beneficial if the Steering Committee could discuss the role and functioning of thematic working groups and the manner in which their structure, working methods and composition could be adapted to the specificity of the various different themes.

21. Mr Paolo Guglielmi (INFO/RAC), reviewing the information contained in the relevant section of document UNEP (DEPI)/MED WG.310/2 and referring to the content of the MAP website, recalled that the 11th Meeting of the MCSD in Nicosia had called for the Information and Communication Vision of the MSSD to be further elaborated into an information strategy. He therefore drew the meeting's attention to the document Elements of the Information and Communication (IC) Strategy, which had been prepared by INFO/RAC and which would be finalized on the basis of a process of consultation and input from stakeholders, so that it could be submitted to the next meeting of the MCSD in Istanbul. INFO/RAC had placed the implementation of the MSSD at the centre of its activities and, in preparing its Information and Communication Strategy, had engaged in a broad range of pilot initiatives intended to validate the proposed strategy and increase the visibility of the MSSD. These activities included the preparation of a 40 minute documentary on the Mediterranean and the MSSD, which would be shown in Istanbul. In view of the essential importance of information in raising the profile of MAP and the MCSD and in facilitating the implementation of the MSSD, he called on all those concerned to be involved in the process of finalizing the IC Strategy for submission to the MCSD, the INFO/RAC National Focal Points, the MAP National Focal Points and the Contracting Parties.

22. In response to a question from Ms Luisa Colasimone (MAP Information Officer), Mr Guglielmi explained that the reference to “Score card evaluation” in the section on Monitoring and assessment in the elements of the IC Strategy prepared by INFO/RAC referred to the work that was being carried out by the Blue Plan on indicators of sustainable development, rating and benchmarking.

23. Mr d’Alessio welcomed the document on the IC Strategy. He emphasized the importance of including information on monitoring and assessment on the website and of ensuring that the site became a veritable news channel, through the development of a news section with daily updates. In general terms, in the work of MAP and the MCSD, and particularly the implementation of the MSSD, it was important to follow the model of UNCSO in terms of the involvement of a broad range of interested parties in multistakeholder dialogue.

24. Mr Ibrahim agreed that it was important for INFO/RAC to focus on the MCSD and the MSSD, but warned that it should not neglect other MAP activities and components. He agreed that it was necessary, for example during the annual meetings of the MCSD, to ensure that dialogue was promoted with stakeholders from a broad range of sectors.

25. Mr. Abou Jaoude referred to the issue of the languages in which information was made available and the need to ensure the accuracy of translations and his offered to help in editing all Arabic documents materials.

26. Mr Guglielmi said that information was provided on the MAP site in five languages, including Arabic. He added that INFO/RAC covered the whole range of activities carried out by MAP and its components, and did not only focus on the MSSD. Information was also included on the site on action at the national level and the activities of other stakeholders.

27. Mr Thibault noted that as there were several types of information tools in use within the context of MAP the question arose of the coordination of content and message. In view of the importance of information as a tool, it was important to ensure that the related responsibilities were clearly established.

28. Mr Mifsud said that responsibility for information appearing on behalf of MAP lay with the MAP Secretariat. While all the MAP components had a role to play in the production and dissemination of information, and would clearly maintain their own information activities, where they were speaking on behalf of MAP as a whole it was evident that there would need to be consultation. MAP as a whole had only been dealing seriously with the issue of information for the past year and things were now falling into place. Ms Colasimone added that the Secretariat was not yet signing off on all the articles issued by the various centres, but that ways would be found of doing so. The new Sustainable Development Officer would contribute to this process in matters related to the MCSD.

29. Mr Abdelrahmen Gannoun (Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas – SPA/RAC) noted that no specific thematic working group had been set up yet under the MSSD to cover the area of biodiversity, a theme that had been integrated throughout the implementation of the MSSD. He therefore called for reflection on the

establishment of a specific working group to cover climate change and biodiversity as a means of promoting consultation and focusing expertise on the subject and of contributing to the work of the MCSD on this issue.

30. With regard to the subject of thematic working groups, Mr Mifsud recalled that they had originally been established within the context of the MCSD to focus on areas in which work had not previously been coordinated or concentrated. This mechanism had worked well during the process of the development of the MSSD and the current use of thematic working groups in such areas as water and energy, under the coordination of the Blue Plan, offered a model for their continued relevance. However, valid points had also been raised about whether the model of thematic working groups was adapted to specific situations. For example, the main work on the ICZM Protocol was currently being carried out by a group of government-designated experts, which raised the question of the role that could be played at the present time by a thematic working group in this field. Nor would the formula of a thematic working group appear to be well suited to the technical work of monitoring the application of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships. It would therefore be useful to review the contribution made by thematic working groups, their function and composition. In particular, it was necessary to retain sufficient flexibility so that the work of such groups could combine the need for expert input and for the active participation of as broad a range of the relevant stakeholders as possible. The structures decided upon would clearly have to be adapted to the specific processes involved and the characteristics of each particular MSSD objective. Moreover, all the relevant MAP components should be associated with the activities of each group, as appropriate. Such a review of working methods was all the more important as in future it would be necessary to bear in mind the ecosystem approach, which would require an evolution in working methods and greater coordination between the various sectors and components.

31. Mr Civili agreed that the adoption of the ecosystem approach would require adaptation by all MAP components. With regard to the issue of thematic working groups, he expressed the opinion that, when setting up working groups, it was necessary to ensure that they offered added value and that the timing of their establishment was correct. For example, a working group on ICZM might not be appropriate now that Contracting Parties were working through a formal process to finalize the text of the new Protocol but perhaps after its adoption, in order to assist countries in its implementation. One possible function for a working group within the context of MEDPOL, for example, might be to promote greater involvement by NGOs and other partners in the implementation of the SAP and the NAPs. When reviewing the role of thematic working groups, it might therefore be necessary to review the schedule agreed upon within the context of the MSSD for their establishment and operation.

32. Mr Abdulfatah Boargob (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) emphasized that it was for the Contracting Parties to decide upon the composition and functions of individual thematic working groups.

33. Mr Thibault observed that the issue of the role of thematic working groups could not be reviewed without taking into account the need to reflect on the future of the MCSD as a whole. It was a major shortcoming in the region that there was only one forum involving the 21 coastal States, and that it was essentially environmental. The representatives of many other sectors, such as ministries of agriculture and transport,

would also like to have a similar regional forum in their own fields. There was a great need in the region for a body that could communicate essential policy messages to decision-makers at the highest levels. There was therefore a vital role for a forum such as the MCSD to play. However, the question arose as to whether it was in practice playing this role. Unfortunately, knowledge of the existence of the MCSD among environmental ministries, and even within the latter, was very sparse. It was therefore vital for the MCSD to take on a much higher political profile. Membership of the working groups should be as broad as possible, while also leaving space for essential input by experts.

34. Mr Guglielmi agreed that a radical rethink was required if the MCSD was to fulfill the role originally intended for it of a high-level political advisory commission. At present, it was almost anonymous. When working groups were established, there should be a clear definition of their purpose, the expected outcomes and how they would be followed up. In particular, great thought needed to be given to how each political message could be delivered so that it would have the intended impact.

35. Mr. Abou Jaoude agreed with previous speakers on the importance of the role of MCSD to play in gathering multi-stakeholders and on its role to influence policy makers and this despite the existence of other high-level forums in the region, such as the meeting of Mediterranean Ministers of the Environment, but those are restricted in their composition and do not include permanently other important actors, and here comes the importance of MCSD. With regard to the membership of thematic working groups, while acknowledging the important role of experts in laying the groundwork on specific subjects, he felt that it should also be possible for members of the MCSD to be members of such groups from the beginning of their work, particularly where the MCSD members concerned had the necessary expertise.

36. Mr Ibrahim added that, while working groups needed to include experts within their composition, they should also be open at the appropriate levels to other members, with particular reference to the representatives of civil society and of other sectoral interests. This applied more particularly to cross-cutting subjects, such as climate change.

37. Mr Mifsud recalled that the goalposts for work in the context of the MSSD had already been set through the programme of work adopted by the Contracting Parties, which covered the period up to 2010. The role of the thematic working groups was therefore to contribute as actively as possible to the achievement of the objectives set out in the MSSD, while finding the necessary means of combining the contributions of experts and stakeholders. Nevertheless, there should also be sufficient flexibility to take into account the issues raised by the UNCSD and fundamental emerging issues, such as climate change.

Agenda Item 4: Proposed agenda for the 12th MCSD Meeting

38. Mr Thibault, introducing the draft agenda of the 12th Meeting of the MCSD, as contained in Annex III of document UNEP (DEPI)/MED WG. 310/2 said that the proposal to address the subject of climate change was in line with the call made by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNEP to cover this very

important subject, as well as the recent G8 meeting on climate change. If the MCSD was to fulfill its role as an important advisory body, it had to discuss important topical issues. It would also be desirable to invite a high-level keynote speaker on the subject. Four breakout sessions were proposed on energy, water, rural development and coastal zone management, respectively, as they related to climate change. The Blue Plan would be responsible for producing the background papers for these sessions based on the work that it had undertaken in recent years, particularly in the fields of energy and water. He added that the proposed agenda took into account the comments made during the previous meeting of the MCSD in Nicosia, where emphasis had been placed on the need to: revise the format of the meeting and to take full advantage of the Steering Committee in its preparation; address a limited number of issues; limit the number of presentations; and coordinate the presentations by the RACs into a single presentation.

39. Mr Ibrahim expressed concern about the manner in which the breakout sessions were intended to work. If they were to be productive, they would need to be well-prepared, perhaps in the form of methodological notes indicating the expected outcomes. A keynote speaker with expert knowledge of the subject, such as Faouzi Senhagi, Professor, Hassan II University of Rabat should be invited to address the meeting.

40. Mr Guglielmi agreed that it was very timely for the MCSD to be addressing the vital issue of climate change. However, he warned that the discussion of the subject by the MCSD should offer added value in relation to the work already carried out by other bodies. It would be necessary to involve a well-known person and to define and plan the impact of the event in the media, which would require careful preparation beforehand. In this respect, it was important to aim higher than "business as usual". Even though few resources were available, the minimum aim should be to raise awareness of the issue at both the ministerial level and among the public at large.

41. Mr Abou Jaoude expressed concern in relation to the draft agenda as initially proposed. In his view, in the first place, the various items relating to the work of the MCSD should be combined into a single item and covered on one day, leaving another day to discuss the important theme of climate change. Secondly, greater efforts should be made to ensure that participants at the meetings of the MCSD included persons with a high level of authority, such as ministers, or at least directors of ministries. But if such high-level persons were to be enticed into attending the MCSD, there would have to be some incentive for their presence, such as the attendance by important donors. It would therefore be important to invite such organizations as the European Investment Bank to intervene at the MCSD meeting.

42. Mr Trumbic wondered whether there remained sufficient time before the next meeting of the MCSD to prepare for a discussion of such an important topic as climate change. It might be better to plan the discussion over two meetings of the MCSD, with the meeting in May 2007 being more of a preparatory nature. Moreover, a clear idea was needed of the expected outcome of the meeting, even if the next meeting of the MCSD engaged in an interim discussion of the subject. It was also essential to ensure that there was adequate preparation for the discussions in the breakout sessions.

43. Mr Hebert, recalling that Paris had not been built in a day, said that the MCSD was far from being the body that everybody wanted. It was therefore necessary to plan for the future so that it could fulfill its role as intended. He suggested that one-day should

be devoted to discussing the work of the MCSD, with particular reference to the vision for the future MCSD. The second day should then be used for the discussion on climate change.

44. Mr Gannoun pointed out that climate change was a highly complex subject that could not be dealt with adequately in a single day. Moreover, the discussion in the MCSD should not be restrictive. There were many aspects of climate change of which there was little awareness, such as its potential effect on maritime transport. Therefore, without being over-selective, it was important to choose priority themes on which MAP and its components had worked intensively.

45. Mr Thibault agreed that the objective of discussions in the MCSD was to raise awareness of the subjects discussed, which was a continuous process, and to transmit the concerns of the MCSD and proposals for action to decision-makers. While the discussion should cover the issue of climate change in general, it would also be important to go into specific aspects of the subject in greater detail. He observed that two subjects on which Blue Plan could produce substantive background papers based on the work already carried out were energy and climate change and tourism and climate change. Energy use clearly had an effect on greenhouse gases and modifications would therefore be required in energy policy. A similar argument applied to tourism, for example in relation to the use of transport by the tourism industry, and there would undoubtedly be changes in tourism flows in future related to transport policy. He added that, when the Blue Plan had organized a seminar on water five years ago, of which the Zaragoza seminar was a follow-up, there had been no mention of the words "climate change" in the conclusions of that seminar. The role of the discussion by the MCSD would therefore clearly be to convey the message that climate change was indeed happening. Changes would therefore be needed and they would cost much less if they were adopted now rather than in ten years time. This was the message that needed to be taken to the highest level.

46. Mr Eker expressed a preference, as the host country, for the first day of the MCSD meeting to be devoted to MCSD matters, with the second day focusing on climate change. It was necessary to convey a strong message on what had already been done in relation to climate change, how it would change life in the future and what still remained to be done, so that decision-makers could be in no doubt of the need for action.

47. Mr Mifsud noted that the consensus reached was for the first day of the meeting to cover MCSD matters, with the second day being devoted to climate change, with two breakout sessions on energy and climate change and tourism and climate change, for both of which papers would be prepared and keynote speakers invited. The papers prepared would contain guidance on the expected outcome of the discussions.

Agenda Item 5: MCSD new members

48. Mr Mifsud recalled that the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties had approved two intergovernmental organizations, namely METAP and CEDARE, as members of the MCSD. These two organizations had subsequently requested to be members of the MCSD Steering Committee, but had been informed by the Secretariat that this was not

possible under the present rules relating to the composition of the Steering Committee. This raised the issue of whether intergovernmental organizations could be classified as socio-economic actors in relation to membership of the MCSD Steering Committee.

49. Mr Boargob said that intergovernmental organizations did not belong to the socio-economic categories as defined in the context of the MCSD and were therefore not eligible for membership of the Steering Committee. If an exception were made in their case, the door would be open for other categories.

50. Mr Ibrahim pointed out that the organizations in question could make an important contribution to the work of the MCSD and that it might be interesting to reflect upon the need to change the membership criteria.

51. Mr Mifsud noted that the Secretariat had adopted the correct approach in this respect. However, the issue of the composition of the MCSD and its Steering Committee should be included in the process of reflection on its future role.

Agenda Item 6: MCSD and the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points

52. Mr Mifsud indicated that this item had been included on the agenda so that the members of the Steering Committee could be informed of developments relating to the MAP Evaluation, which also covered the composition and function of the MCSD. One of the concerns was to raise the level of representation of the Contracting Parties at the MCSD with a view to raising the level of the discussions. A drafting committee was currently working on recommendations, following the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points in Catania, and some of the ideas under discussion were quite radical, such as a large increase in the membership of the MCSD. The role of the thematic working groups would also be addressed. The Steering Committee was not being asked to reach conclusions on this subject, as it could not pre-empt the work of the drafting committee of MAP National Focal Points.

53. Mr Abou Jaoude said that countries could not be obliged to raise the level of their representation in the MCSD. It was necessary to reflect on how they could be provided with incentives for doing so. For example, the presence of important donors as active partners in MCSD meetings would tend to attract higher-level decision-makers from countries. He also emphasized that the action of the MCSD was valuable and that lobbying should be undertaken so that its value was more widely known.

54. Mr Ibrahim, emphasizing the need to upscale the role and work of the MCSD, pointed out that the coordination of strategies for sustainable development was now in the hands of prime ministers. In order to upgrade the status of the MCSD, participation would be required from the offices of prime ministers. What was needed was therefore to improve the quality of MCSD membership, not just to increase the number of its members.

Agenda Item 7: Other issues and conclusions

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

Agenda Item 8: Closure of the meeting

56. Mr Hajipakkos declared the meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.

ANNEX I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****MEMBERS OF THE MCSD STEERING COMMITTEE****CYPRUS****MR. CHARALAMBOS HAJIPAKKOS**

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ANNEX II

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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

 The Draft Agenda will be proposed to the meeting for adoption.

2. Progress Report on MCSD Activities:-
 - I National Strategies for Sustainable Development
 - II First Working Session on Challenges and Opportunities of NSSD formulation
 - III MSSD Implementation

Presentation by the MAP Coordinator on the above activities carried out within the framework of the MCSD Programme of Work since the last meeting of the MCSD in May 2006 followed by interventions by the members of the Steering Committee.

3. Progress on MCSD Related Activities by MAP Components
 - I Water Resources; Energy and Climate Change; Quality Agriculture and Sustainable Development; Sustainable Tourism; Sustainable Development Indicators; Coastal Indicators of Sustainable Development.
 - II Marine Pollution from Ships
 - III Sustainable Production – Involvement of the Private Sector
 - IV Information and Communication
 - V Coastal Zone Management

Presentations by MAP Components on the progress achieved by the different working groups with respect to the thematic and cross-cutting issues which they were entrusted to coordinate in line with the MCSD Programme of Work approved by the Contracting Parties in Portoroz in 2005 followed by interventions by the members of the Steering Committee.

4. Proposed Agenda for the 12th MCSD Meeting

 The Secretariat will propose the Draft Agenda for the 12th Meeting of the MCSD for the consideration and approval of the Steering.

5. MCSD New Members

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

6. MCS D and the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points

The Coordinator will brief the Members of the Steering Committee about the discussions during the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points with respect to the MCS D and will up-date the meeting about the work by the Drafting Committee on the MCS D.

7. Other Issues and Conclusions

The meeting will discuss other issues which the Members of the Steering Committee may wish to raise.

A summary of conclusions will be submitted for the consideration and approval by the meeting.

8. Closure of the Meeting

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

Proposed time-table

0930 – 1000 Items 1 – 2

1000 – 1100 Item 3 – I – II – III

1100 – 1130 *Coffee Break*

1130 – 1300 Item 3 – IV – V

1300 – 1430 *Lunch Break*

1430 – 1530 Item 4

1530 – 1600 Item 5

1600 – 1630 *Coffee Break*

1630 – 1730 Item 6

1730 – 1800 Items 7 – 8

ANNEX III

CONCLUSIONS OF THE 11TH MCSD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

1. *MCSD Activities*

In formulating its programme of work, the MCSD should develop a process to follow up the implementation of the MSSD by the MAP components.

In the implementation of the MSSD, including the process of formulating and implementing National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs), on which progress is now being made with the assistance of the Secretariat, continued emphasis needs to be placed on the involvement of stakeholders at all stages and levels.

2. *Role of "thematic working groups" in the work of the MCSD*

The role of the thematic working groups has evolved since they were first set up in the context of the MCSD. It is therefore necessary to review the need for such working groups, their function and composition with a view to optimizing their contribution to the implementation of the objectives established in the MSSD. Reflection on the methods of implementation of the MSSD will need to take into account all relevant findings concerning the political role of the MCSD reached in the MAP Evaluation process.

The thematic working groups were originally set up to cover areas in which little or no work had been carried out and to act as catalysts to focus attention on those areas, such as sustainable development and energy, water and tourism. In many cases, more attention is now focused on those areas and it is therefore necessary to draw together the available knowledge and involve the stakeholders.

The structure within which thematic working groups or similar bodies operate should allow for both work by experts and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, civil society and interested governmental and non-governmental bodies. One possible format for combining these two functions is the holding of preliminary expert groups followed by forums bringing together a broad range of stakeholders. In all such processes, it is important that all those involved can have a real say in the recommendations and findings produced at all stages.

The format of the working groups or similar structures should be adapted to the processes involved and the needs of each MSSD objective.

3. *Information and communication*

Information and communication is a tool for ensuring that the work undertaken in the context of MAP and the MCSD has the widest possible impact. To be effective, close coordination and collaboration is required between all MAP components in this respect. The MAP Secretariat has an important role to play in ensuring that the message conveyed in information materials is coherent and consistent.

Maximum feedback from all concerned is required with a view to reviewing and adapting the Information and Communication (IC) Strategy prepared by INFO/RAC, so that a finalized Strategy can be submitted to the meeting of the MCSD in Istanbul for adoption.

4. *Agenda of the 12th Meeting of the MCSD*

With regard to the organization of the 12th Meeting of the MCSD, it was agreed that the meeting should be of two days duration, that a single presentation should be made on the activities of the MAP components relating to the implementation of the MSSD and that future meetings of the MCSD should serve as occasions to discuss important topical subjects.

The 12th Meeting of the MCSD will discuss the issue of climate change in the Mediterranean, with particular reference to energy and tourism. In addition, it will discuss the role of the MCSD, the implementation of its programme of work and the Information and Communication (IC) Strategy.

5. *Members of the MCSD Steering Committee*

Discussions on the future role and function of the MCSD should cover the issue of its membership, with specific reference to membership of intergovernmental organizations on the Steering Committee, taking into account the contribution that they could make to the achievement of the MCSD's objectives. Under the present criteria, intergovernmental organizations even if they are members of the MCSD may not be considered for membership of the MCSD Steering Committee because they do not fall under anyone of the three specific categories listed under the criteria for the composition of the Commission.

6. *MCSD and the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points*

When reviewing the issue of MCSD membership, in the context of the MAP Evaluation, with a view to upgrading the role and influence of the MCSD, emphasis should be placed on raising the political level of representation of the Contracting Parties. An incentive in this respect would be the inclusion in MCSD meetings of institutions that can provide technical and financial assistance for the achievement of MCSD objectives.