

**The paper "Options for the future of the MCSD" has been prepared
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OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MCSD

Preamble

The Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) was established in 1995 in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to assist them in their efforts to integrate environmental issues in their socioeconomic programmes and, in so doing, promote sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean region. The Commission is unique in its composition, in as much as government representatives, local communities, socioeconomic actors and NGOs assemble on equal footing. During its first decade of existence, the MCSD has carried out high quality undertakings, mobilising work on priority themes for the Mediterranean; notably, water resources, integrated coastal zone management, tourism, industry etc., and developing the MSSD.

Ten years after its founding, the MCSD needs to be reformed, taking into account the new international and regional developments (the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals, the MSSD etc.). Whatever the option chosen, better interaction should be sought between the MCSD and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), for instance regarding the choice of themes, which should bring a breath of fresh air to the MCSD and allow its fuller integration into the international actions being carried out in favour of sustainable development. Furthermore, the composition of the Commission should be reviewed to ensure it achieves greater representability and fosters a sense of ownership by the entire Mediterranean community. Furthermore, the role of the Commission should be better clarified in relation to the overall MAP system and to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

Three options are thus proposed:

Option 1

The amendments proposed in the document prepared by the Secretariat UNEP(DEPI)WG.297/6/corr.1 bring minor adjustments to the current version of the MCSD (increase in membership, participation of scientists and of IGOs/NGOs). The proposed reform (see the reference to the MSSD and the MDGs...) would be highly desirable.

Option 2

A restructuring of the Commission as follows:

1- Mandate

The MCSD is an advisory body and represents a forum for debate with essentially the following missions:

- Assist Mediterranean countries and other stakeholders active in the Region in the adoption and implementation of sustainable development policies, including the integration of environmental considerations into other policies
- Ensure the follow-up of MSSD implementation through appropriate tools, mechanisms and criteria that would better enhance an efficient follow up function
- Promote the exchange of experiences and good practices regarding the integration of environmental and socioeconomic policies, as well as examples which show the

application of international sustainable development commitments at suitable scales in different countries

- Identify the obstacles encountered and support regional and sub-regional cooperation for the effective implementation of sustainable development principle.
- Coordinate the periodical drafting of the report on the state of implementation of the MCSD recommendations

2- Composition

The MCSD is a forum for debate and exchange of experiences on sustainable development issues that concern all interested parties in the Mediterranean region. It would therefore be appropriate to involve the greatest possible variety of national actors in the work of the Commission, so as to ensure the greatest possible dissemination of the concepts promoted by the MCSD. For this to be achieved the composition of the Commission should be expanded as follows:

- 22 permanent representatives designated by the competent bodies of the Contracting Parties
- 2- 4 representatives of local authorities
- 2- 4 representatives of civil society
- 2- 4 representatives of socio- economic stakeholders
- 2- 4 representatives of the scientific community

Appropriate geographical representation, and media participation, should be ensured.

3- Periodicity

The Commission will hold an ordinary meeting on a biannual basis and extraordinary sessions on a need be basis.

4- Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission will be under the authority of the MAP Coordination Unit.

5- Functioning

The Commission will hold an ordinary meeting on a biannual basis with a multi-annual planning program. Each session will focus on sectoral issues (MSSD and SDC themes) and on cross-sectoral issues (education, public access to information, financing and cooperation, technology transfer etc.). MCSD recommendations will be presented for adoption to the Contracting Parties, following discussion at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points.

6- Reports

Before each session, each member should provide a concise report focusing on the implementation of MCSD recommendations, following a basic draft prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will then prepare a summary report to be presented at the beginning of each session. The Regional Activity Centres (RACs) should also provide a report on the implementation of MCSD recommendations relevant to their line of work.

Option 3

The Commission, which will be transformed into a « Council of Sages », formed by distinguished Mediterranean personalities.

1- Role

The MCSD continues to serve as an advisory body for the Contracting Parties. As such it should produce opinions of the overall MAP Work Programme and the functioning of the Coordinating Unit and the RACs, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP / Barcelona Convention system as a whole.

2- Composition

The MCSD will be made up of a group of ten well-known personalities coming from different relevant sectors. They will be chosen based on their skills and on selected issues, using the principle of equitable geographical representation. These personalities will be nominated by the Contracting Parties, but will not represent governments or the other sectors from which they come, but rather be nominated on an individual basis so as to stimulate frank debate and new ideas.

3- Meetings

Thematic and biannual and on a need be basis, following recommendations from the Contracting Parties, the RACs or the Coordinating Unit.

The conclusions of the meetings should influence the work programme of the MAP system, and the implementation of the Barcelona Convention in the Contracting Parties.