

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At their Ninth Ordinary Meeting, held at Barcelona from 5 to 8 June 1995, the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its Protocols (the Barcelona Convention) decided that a Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) should be set up within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.5/16).

2. Subsequently, the Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, held at Montpellier from 1 to 4 July 1996, adopted the terms of the reference of the Commission and decided on the criteria for membership (Annexes V and VI to document UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.8/7 respectively). In particular, it agreed that, in addition to one high-level representative from each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, five representatives from each of the following categories would participate as members on an equal footing: local authorities, socio-economic actors, and environmental non-governmental organizations.

3. The Bureau of the Contracting Parties, at its meeting held at Athens on 4 and 5 November 1996, selected the members representing each of the three categories approved by the Contracting Parties. Considering the limited number of applications received at the time of the selection, the Bureau selected only three members for the local authorities and socio-economic actors categories respectively were selected without alternates, and only two alternates for the environmental NGOs category.

4. The First Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development was held at Rabat (Morocco) from 16 to 18 December 1996, at the kind invitation of the Government of Morocco.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

5. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Nourine Benomar Alami, Minister for the Environment of Morocco, who welcomed participants on behalf of His Majesty King Hassan II, under whose high patronage the Meeting was being held.

6. The opening ceremony was attended by a large number of high-level officials, including several ministers, and ambassadors accredited, as well as representatives of international organizations, in addition to the members of the Commission and observers.

7. Mr. Alami delivering his opening speech on behalf of the Government of Morocco emphasized that sustainable development was a global and ongoing process that called for far-reaching changes in ways of tackling problems and finding solutions. He believed that the Mediterranean basin could provide a model for cooperation between North and South and that the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, as a high-level political forum, could play a leading role in fostering dialogue in the Mediterranean with a view to achieving a consensus on environmental and development issues. The full text of the Minister's statement is attached as Annex I.

8. Mr. Lucien Chabason, Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, welcomed participants on behalf of Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. He stressed that the Commission had an extremely important role to play in making proposals on the regional strategy for sustainable development and

reviewing the progress achieved in implementing Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean. The full text of the Coordinator's statement is attached as Annex II.

Agenda item 2: Rules of procedure

9. The Commission considered that it required its own rules of procedure, in accordance with paragraph B.4 g of its terms of reference (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.8/7, Annex V). The Commission therefore decided to request the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan to draft rules of procedure, which would be reviewed by the first meeting of the Bureau of the Commission (February 1997) and submitted to the next meeting of the Commission with a view to their adoption by the next meeting of the Contracting Parties. The rules of procedure should provide that the Commission adopt its decisions by consensus.

Agenda item 3: Election of the Bureau of the Commission

10. Pending approval of the Commission's rules of procedure and taking into account the specific composition of the Commission, in order to increase participation and improve representativeness, the Commission decided to elect a *bureau composed of eight members* rather than six which would have a duration of at least one year. Consequently, the following bureau was elected:

Chairman:	H.E. Mr. Nourdine Benomar Alami (Morocco)
Vice-Chairmen:	Ms. Maria de Balle (Association of chambers of Commerce of the Mediterranean (ASCAME)) Mr. Jacques Blanc (Centre des Régions Euroméditerranéennes pour l'environnement) Mr. Matija Frankovic (Croatia) Mr. Abdulghafar Aldieb (Egypt) Mr. Fernand Thurmes (European Community) Mr. Mohamed Ennabli (Tunisia)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Rafael Madueno (EcoMediterrania)

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

11. The Meeting adopted its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda contained in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.120/1/Rev.1.

12. The Meeting also approved the organization of work suggested by the Secretariat as it appears in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.120/2/Rev.1.

Participation

13. The Meeting was attended by the following members of the Commission: Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, European Community, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey as Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention; Centre des régions

euroméditerranéennes pour l'environnement (CREE), MEDCITIES Network and the City of Rome, representing local authorities; European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC/EUROCHLOR), Chambers Group for the Development of Greek Islands (EOAEN), and the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the Mediterranean (ASCAME) representing socio-economic actors; Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Foundation for International Studies (FIS), EcoMediterrania, and the Association de protection de la nature et de l'environnement de Kairouan (APNEK) representing environmental non-governmental organizations.

14. The following organizations participated as observers: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), Islamic Development Bank, Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE).

15. The following Regional Activity Centers of MAP also attended the Meeting: Regional Activity Centre for the Blue Plan (BP/RAC), Regional Activity Centre for the Priority Actions Programme (PAP/RAC), Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), Regional Activity Centre for the Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), Regional Activity Centre for Environment Remote Sensing (ERS/RAC). The full list of participants is attached as Annex III.

II. SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS

Agenda item 5: Presentation by the Secretariat, members of the Commission and observers

16. The Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan reviewed the events leading up to the creation of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and its relationship with the existing structures of MAP. He emphasized that its terms of reference covered sustainable development, not simply environmental issues, thereby adding an important dimension to the activities of MAP. It was thus of great importance to ensure that all the Commission's work addressed the combined issues of development and environment.

All speakers who took the floor expressed their gratitude to the Moroccan Government for its warm hospitality.

17. Many members of the Commission reported on the activities undertaken in their countries, or by their authorities or organizations, to promote sustainable development and offered their experience in their own specific fields and areas as a means of enriching the work of the Commission as a whole.

18. All the members of the Commission welcomed its establishment as a very important step forward in the application of the principle of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. Its creation had raised great expectations as to its achievements and the members would have to make every effort to respond to these expectations. In particular, the participation of NGOs, local authorities and socio-economic actors on an equal footing with the other members of the Commission was a very important innovation which would undoubtedly greatly enrich the work of the Commission itself and the proposals it made to both the Contracting Parties and to all the actors involved in the region. The Mediterranean Action Plan had played a pilot role for the past 20 years in the protection of the Mediterranean

Sea and the coastal environment and the members all hoped that the MCSD would build on this experience in playing a similar innovative role on the international scene in promoting sustainable development.

19. The members of the Commission welcomed the introductory report prepared by the MAP Secretariat (UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.120/3). With reference to the section on the historical background to sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, a number of speakers emphasized that the roots of the concern with sustainable development went back as far as the Stockholm Conference on the Environment in 1972 and, indeed the adoption of the Barcelona Convention in 1975. Others pointed to the important role played by the Euromediterranean Conferences held at Nicosia (1990) and at Cairo (1992) Informal Consultative Meeting of Mediterranean Experts on Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean meeting held in Malta in 1993, the Ministerial Conference "Agenda MED 21" on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, held at Tunis in 1994, and the Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Barcelona in 1995.

20. A number of members emphasized that the establishment of the Commission added a very important new dimension to the work of MAP. It was not just another body for the exchange of views and very great care would need to be taken not to duplicate other structures within and outside MAP. The Commission was an advisory body that had the role of feeding the Contracting Parties, their national and local authorities and organizations concerned with development of the Mediterranean with credible and realistic proposals and suggestions, as well as indicating priority areas for support by donors. It was very important for the Commission's success that it should produce products of added value, particularly as regards other current regional activities. Its role was not to deal with individual projects and programmes, but to promote a balanced and integrated approach involving the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The Commission therefore needed to concentrate on processes, policies and strategies, as well as the means for their implementation in order to fulfil this role, it needed to be instrumental in promoting real coherence among the various approaches that could be adopted in order to achieve sustainable development. It would therefore be necessary for the members of the Commission to show vision, imagination, ambition and audacity in inventing and developing a sustainable development strategy for the region. They should recall at all times that the environment in the Mediterranean region was continuing to deteriorate and more effective approaches were required to reverse this trend. In particular, the principle of sustainable development involved recognition that prevention was always more effective than the resolution of problems that had already arisen.

21. In order to be credible in taking up this challenge, the Commission would need to be output-oriented, which meant that it had to produce usable and manageable products and strategies that could be implemented by all the actors in the Mediterranean region. This would require a clear identification of priorities, the concentration of effort on a limited number of areas and the setting of realistic time-frames. Moreover, when putting forward its proposals, it should not confine itself to setting objectives, but should suggest means for their achievement with an indication of their costs and benefits, including new financing mechanisms.

22. Certain members of the Commission, particularly those representing developing countries, pointed to a deficit in cooperation between the countries of the North and South of the Mediterranean region. In this respect, all the members of the Commission hoped that it would serve as a significant stimulus for cooperation within the region with regard to sustainable development. What was required was the promotion of real cooperation and

partnership that could minimize the negative effects of economic systems that were not beneficial to an environment whose constant deterioration might in the long term jeopardize the development process as a whole. One member of the Commission reminded the participants that the terminology North/South did not fit the Mediterranean region since there were a number of developing countries on the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Cooperation among countries could be improved by focusing on capacity-building, the transfer of technology, information activities and training, as well as twinning arrangements to reinforce national initiatives and institutions.

23. Many of the members of the Commission recalled that its work needed to be coordinated not only with that of other MAP structures, but also with the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and other international institutions such as the European Union, the World Bank and other institutions of the United Nations system. In the first place, members should take into consideration the timing of meetings of the Contracting Parties and reflect on the contribution that could be made by the MCSD to the work of the next session of the UNCSD, which was to be held in New York in April 1997, as well as to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly which would review implementation of Agenda 21. In the interests of greater coherence at the international level with regard to the promotion of sustainable development, the Commission needed to emphasize its interface with the UNCSD and take into account any priorities identified by the UNCSD in the near future. Moreover, considering the ministerial interest in the work of the Commission shown by several countries, it was suggested that a special session of the Commission with extensive ministerial participation should be held in the near future.

24. Other speakers emphasized the need for greater public participation in and knowledge of the work of the Commission. An effective participatory approach required information and awareness activities to stimulate a broad reaction to its work. One member suggested in this context that it would also be useful to designate national coordinators on sustainable development, as well as to establish national commissions on sustainable development with a similar composition to the MCSD in terms of the participation of regional and municipal authorities and the appropriate NGOs. These national commissions could be invited to organize meetings among themselves.

25. Some members of the Commission proposed the establishment of institutions to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, such as a Mediterranean development corporation allied to a Mediterranean development bank. Other institutions proposed included a Mediterranean sustainable development fund, a Mediterranean centre for sustainable development, and a liaison office. Offers to host the centre and the liaison office were made by Egypt and Monaco respectively. However, it was noted that the establishment of any new structure would require the approval of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 6: Methods of work of the Commission

26. The Secretary introduced the fourth chapter of the introductory report (UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.120/3) concerning the proposed methods of work of the Commission and he briefly reviewed the methods of work of the UNCSD, including its composition, activities, reporting system, its task managers system (with its emphasis on joint work among members), and inter-agency coordination arrangements. He then proceeded to describe the suggested methods of work of the MCSD, including the role of its Bureau and the designations of task managers and thematic working groups on a limited number of

substantive themes. The Commission's programme of work would be built around short-term and medium-term activities corresponding to some of the priority needs of the Mediterranean area. Two or three subjects would be addressed over a period of one year between two ordinary sessions of the Commission. A flexible programme of work would also be identified for implementation over a number of years with a view to the submission of its results to the meeting of the Contracting Parties to be held in 1999, as well as to subsequent meetings. In conclusion, he noted that the work of the Commission would be more valuable if it concentrated on the production of pragmatic products of real added value.

27. The proposed methods of work described above were approved by all members, who emphasized the value of appointing *task managers* and *thematic working groups*, which would concentrate on a *limited number of subjects* over a specific period of time. Together with the Bureau of the Commission, the existence of these working groups would ensure continuity between its formal sessions. It was emphasized that, when choosing the themes to be covered by working groups and task managers, the Commission should, at first, be careful to *build on work that was already available* so that it could have a rapid impact with appropriate *added value*. The Commission was also urged to *be innovative* in its working methods and to *avoid creating additional administrative structures* and holding too many meetings, which were costly and might not be effective. It was also emphasized that the Commission should be realistic in its programme, without being over-ambitious, and that its work should reflect the Mediterranean character.

28. The view was expressed that the working groups should be of *flexible composition* so as to reflect the diversity of the Commission's membership and that a simplistic division between North and South was not appropriate in the Mediterranean context. Many members indicated their willingness to provide expertise and make their networks available to the working groups. One member (the Foundation for International Studies) offered to fund a full-time post within the Foundation to assist in assessing the impact on the environment of emerging patterns in the economies of the region. On the matter of the size of the working groups, a balance needed to be achieved between the involvement of all the members of the Commission and the need to keep costs as low as possible.

29. The importance of publicizing the work of the Commission and raising public awareness of the importance of sustainable development was underlined. It was important for the Commission to be innovative in this, as in other matters, and to make full use of the available information and communications technology, including Internet. The establishment of an information unit to maintain relations, both among the members of the Commission and with other bodies and the public at large was proposed. The Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan recognized that MAP was still not particularly well known and believed it important to use the new stimulus of the MCSD's establishment to disseminate information on the issues involved to a much broader public.

30. Reference was made to the issue of the financing of the Commission's activities. The Coordinator of MAP reminded the members that the MAP budget for 1997 contained an allocation of \$110,000 for the work of the Commission. For the period 1998-1999, it would be necessary to raise the question of the financing of the Commission's activities with the Contracting Parties. The MAP funds allocated to the MCSD should be considered as seed money since the task managers would be responsible for obtaining the necessary additional human and financial resources and expertise for the activities of the thematic working groups. However, it was expected that the countries involved would be willing to support these activities through the provision of human and financial resources. If the Commission selected priority activities that were sound in their substance and organization, they would raise greater

interest from donors. Moreover, when determining the activities of the Commission, account should be taken of the priorities of donors. It was suggested that the possibility of establishing a regional trust fund should be considered as a long-term objective. It was emphasized that, in its work, the Commission needed to achieve good results at minimum cost. Where necessary and feasible, qualified independent experts would be associated with the activities of the working groups.

31. In a discussion on the role of the Commission in enhancing regional cooperation and rationalizing the intergovernmental decision-making capacity in the Mediterranean basin for the integration of environment and development issues, in accordance with point 2(b) of its terms of reference, reference was made to the lack of any suitable structure such as an inter-agency committee. In this context, the Coordinator of MAP noted that the MCSD was not in the same position as the UNCSD, which worked under the central authority of the United Nations and was in a position to call on the specialized agencies for assistance. The role of the MCSD was of a more *catalytic nature* and it would have to bring its moral and political influence to bear in order to fulfil its role in this respect. However, he suggested that it would be useful for the Commission to call on other intergovernmental organizations (such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO) the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Tourism Organization etc.) active in the field of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region to attend its sessions with a view to seeking assistance in achieving the objectives of the Commission. This suggestion was widely approved, although a number of members cautioned that such *hearings* should take place when the Commission was sufficiently advanced in its work to draw the full benefit from them.

32. With reference to the relationship of the Commission with the *UNCSD* and the *Special Session* of the United Nations General Assembly on the implementation of Agenda 21, it was agreed that *the Commission should submit a report* to the above bodies. *The Secretariat would be requested to draft a short report* to be reviewed by the next meeting of the Bureau of the Commission and *transmitted to the members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties for consideration*. This report would inform the General Assembly and the UNCSD of the establishment of the MCSD, supported by useful background information on the situation as regards sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. Although the Commission had not yet carried out any activities, information on its innovative composition and methods of work would already be of great interest at the global level. While the Commission would need to take account of the work and meetings of the UNCSD in its own activities, it should not feel unduly pressurized to fit its own timetable around that of the United Nations Commission. The date of the next meeting of the MCSD should not therefore be set before that of the special session of the General Assembly or the next meeting of the UNCSD. It was also noted that certain members of the Commission would also be attending the New York meetings and they should use these and other opportunities to report on the establishment and activities of the MCSD.

Agenda item 7: Priority fields of activities for environment and development in the Mediterranean on the basis of Agenda MED 21 and MAP Phase II, as a background for a biennial programme of work

33. The Coordinator introduced the third chapter of document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.120/3, which recalled the priorities adopted by the Contracting Parties as well as the priority action areas for sustainable development adopted by the European Community, the World Bank, and the Mediterranean Environment Technical Assistance

Programme (METAP). The Commission would have to decide upon its own priorities in the light of the working methods decided upon and the timetable proposed. It might wish to separate these priorities into two categories: one category comprising activities to be undertaken in 1997 and another category of activities that could be embarked upon subsequently.

34. After a wide-ranging discussion of many themes of great importance for the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region, *the Commission identified eight subjects on which it would focus its attention*. Two of these themes were identified as being areas for action in the *short term* because sufficient work had already been undertaken to permit the *development of policy and strategy proposals* in time to be submitted to the third meeting of the Commission to be held in France in October 1997. *These two themes were: the sustainable management of coastal zones, with particular reference to strategic and policy-making aspects; and water, with particular attention to the management of demand*. The other themes, identified as *medium-term priority themes*, for which end-products would be planned for submission to the meeting of the Contracting Parties to be held in 1999, were: *indicators of sustainable development; tourism; information, awareness and participation; free trade and the environment; industry, and sustainable development; and the management of urban and rural development*.

35. Members of the Commission volunteered to fulfil the roles of task managers and members of the thematic working groups, as shown in the attached table. The meeting identified the *specific MAP structures that would support the activities of each working group*, although it was emphasized that all MAP structures would participate in the work on each theme as appropriate. The Commission decided that the *task managers for the two themes identified as most suitable for action in the short term would submit a preliminary report*, indicating the intended scope and programme of the working group, *to the meeting of the Bureau of the MCSD planned for February 1997*. They would *then submit a progress report to the second meeting of the MCSD in May 1997*. The *other task managers would submit preliminary reports* indicating the scope and intended programme of their working groups *to the extraordinary meeting of the MCSD in May*. In this context, it was emphasized that all the themes identified by the Commission were of equal importance for the sustainable development of the region and that if the working groups responsible for the themes identified for attention in the medium term were able to achieve results more rapidly, they should go ahead and do so. It was decided that the *task managers, their terms of reference and the composition of the working groups for these latter themes would be reviewed and if necessary completed by the next meeting of the MCSD*.

Agenda item 8: Date, place and Provisional Agenda of the second meeting of the Commission

36. *The Commission accepted the invitation of Spain to host the second meeting of the Commission in early May 1997, with the precise date and place to be decided in consultation between the Secretariat and the Government of Spain.*

37. *A provisional agenda for the next extraordinary meeting of the Commission would be submitted to the Bureau of the Commission at its meeting in February 1997. The agenda would include approval of the draft rules of procedure of the Commission and examination of the progress made by the thematic working groups.*

38. In order to improve coordination among the different plan meetings, the Government of Tunisia was asked to consider the possibility of postponing the meeting of the Contracting Parties until November, 1997.

Agenda item 9: Other matters

39. No other matters were discussed.

Agenda item 10: Adoption of the report of the meeting

40. The meeting unanimously adopted its report on Wednesday, 18 December 1996.

Agenda item 11: Closure of the meeting

41. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chairman declared the Meeting closed on Wednesday, 18 December 1996, at 12.00 hours.

TABLE
THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

Themes	Task managers	Members of the group	Support from MAP ¹
<i>Short-term (until next MCSD regular session)</i>			
- Sustainable management of coastal zones	Morocco and MEDCITIES	CREE, European Community, Greece, City of Rome, Spain, EcoMediterrania, Monaco, WWF, Italy, EOAEN, Cyprus, France, Tunisia, MIO-ECSCDE, Egypt, Malta	RAC/Priority Actions Programme, RAC/Blue Plan, RAC/Environment Remote Sensing and RAC/Specially Protected Areas
- Management of water demand	Tunisia and Morocco	Libya, WWF, APNEK, European Community, Egypt, Italy, France, CEFIC, MIO-ECSCDE, Malta, Spain, EcoMediterrania	RAC/Blue Plan and RAC/Priority Actions Programme
<i>Medium-term (until 1999 Contracting Parties meeting and beyond)</i>			
- Sustainable development indicators	France and Tunisia	European Community, Morocco, EcoMediterranean	RAC/Blue Plan
- (Eco)Tourism	Spain, EOAEN and Egypt	Malta, Monaco, Cyprus, Croatia, European Community, Greece, EcoMediterrania, WWF MIO-ECSCDE	RAC/Blue Plan and RAC/Priority Actions Programme
- Information, awareness and participation	MIO-ECSCDE and CREE	European Community, WWF, France, APNEK, Croatia, Egypt, Morocco, MEDCITIES, EcoMediterrania	MED Coordinating Unit
- Free trade and environment in the Euromediterranean context (strategic impact assessment)	FIS	Tunisia, France, European Community, APNEK, Morocco	MED Coordinating Unit
- Industry and sustainable development (cultural, economic, technical and financial aspects of progressive elimination of land-based pollution)	Italy	WWF, Israel, EOAEN, ASCAME, CEFIC, Spain, European Community	MED POL, RAC/Clean Production
- Management of urban/rural development	Egypt	MEDCITIES, FIS, MIO-ECSCDE, Spain, Morocco, France, Malta (Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina)	RAC/Blue Plan and RAC/Priority Actions Programme

¹ The Coordinating Unit and the Regional Activity Centres will each provide the necessary support to the different working groups according to their expertise.

ANNEX I

**OPENING STATEMENT OF H.E. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT
OF MOROCCO MR NOURDINE BENOMAR ALAMI
AT THE MEETING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD)
(Rabat, 16-18 December 1996)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to deliver this opening statement on this occasion on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the King; may the glory of God be upon him; I would like to welcome you to my country and thank all those who from all around the Mediterranean have come to contribute to the success of this meeting in which His Majesty the King is very interested and which he had the kindness to put under his High Patronage.

It is almost five years that my country, represented by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed, participated in a great event which will doubtless remain an important moment in world history. At Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Summit which brought together the heads of State and Government, delegates, journalists and NGOs from all around the world became the spotlight of the whole planet. It represented not only the official outcome of numerous preparation meetings and the adoption of documents negotiated in every detail, but especially the beginning of a process and the launching of a tremendous effort of international solidarity, equity and sustainable development. What has happened since? Have we made any progress? We must recognize that the needs were so great that despite all the efforts undertaken, a lot still remains to be done. The assessment of the past 5 years which is scheduled for next June at the Extraordinary session of the U.N. General Assembly will certainly give us the opportunity to draw the lessons and devise the means and measures needed to instil a new life to the Rio process. The road taken is irreversible because it is our common future - as we are all aware - that is at stake.

Sustainable development is a global and continuous process which requires a fundamental change in the way we approach the problems and devise solutions. We must find another model and draw away from the traditional sectoral approach in decision taking while adopting a more integrated method which would take in all the parameters of the system. Sustainable development cannot be implemented at the expense of one segment of society or of one region of the world. All levels of society and all the nations of the world are in it together.

Our Mediterranean basin, cradle of cultures and civilisations that shaped the world, can in this case be a model of cooperation between the two shores. Our diversity is our wealth. The things that unite us are stronger than those that divide us. We have very considerable advantages which would enable us to make this region a heaven of peace and development. Deriving strength from this precious heritage we must innovate in our thinking and action for the future. Thus we must build a real partnership and show the way to the rest of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 1975, when MAP was launched, the coastal Mediterranean states have had twenty years of cooperation in the protection of the Mediterranean Sea. The international and regional contexts have changed and MAP must follow suit and integrate the new concepts and principles by adapting them to the Mediterranean context and by reshaping its legal instruments and structures in order that the whole system become an effective tool for bringing about sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

The legal and institutional framework has just been reinforced by the setting up of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development. This forum for debate on policies and strategies for sustainable development in the Mediterranean must become the leader in the field. From now on, the scale of the problems requires a greater effort renewed constantly and a true political will. The Commission must avoid copying other examples and fashion its own Mediterranean character. It must bring together all the actors/partners in sustainable development and become a high level political forum in which global consensus can be reached on the great themes of environment and development.

The implementation of the challenge of sustainable development goes through political dialogue, as well as economic, financial and environmental cooperation. The Euro-Mediterranean Conference at Barcelona stressed its importance for peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean, our common heritage.

We are rather optimistic when we look at the encouraging evolution of our regional cooperation. However, it would be a serious mistake to become complacent and content ourselves with words. It is our responsibility to be creative as well as enthusiastic and to put to practice the ideas that we will have generated.

Good will is present, but often it is the means that are lacking. The Mediterranean genius will overcome this obstacle. The main constraint is time, since action is of the essence.

I thank you very much and wish you success in the work of our Commission which, I am certain, will play an important role in shaping a new approach to the development of our Mediterranean region.

ANNEX II

STATEMENT OF MR. LUCIEN CHABASON, COORDINATOR
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
AT THE MEETING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD)
(Rabat, 16-18 December 1996)

Mr. Minister and President of the Bureau,
Ministers, Ambassadors, Representatives of intergovernmental and non- governmental organisations,
Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of UNEP, please allow me firstly to thank His Majesty the King of Morocco for having placed under His High Patronage this first constitutive session of the Mediterranean Commission on sustainable Development.

I would also like to thank the Moroccan authorities and especially you, Mr Minister who, on behalf of Morocco, extended the invitation and with your collaborators organised this meeting in the best possible circumstances here in Rabat. Moroccan hospitality became apparent once more as we realized the minute we arrived.

Furthermore, I would like to thank France and Spain for their financial contribution to this meeting.

Please allow me to point out that the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development is an essential instrument of the Mediterranean Action Plan in its new configuration adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in June 1995 at Barcelona.

The setting up of this Commission and its integration in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan are a clear expression of several strategic goals, i.e.

The first concerns the areas covered by the Mediterranean Action Plan. For many years, MAP focussed on the protection of the marine environment; with the setting up of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and as a follow-up of the extension of the scope of the Barcelona Convention, it is all the environmental problems, both those of the marine environment and those of the coastal areas that are going to be addressed by MAP action.

The second concerns the themes to be dealt with. Up to now, as the Minister just reminded us, we had tackled environmental problems in the strict sense of the word. The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development has the mandate to extend widely this concept and find ways to link development - economic, social, rural, urban, tourist etc, - to environmental questions and the question of natural resources in the Mediterranean Basin, in the spirit of Agenda 21 which is going to be the basis for our work, especially as was transposed in the Agenda Med 21 programme at the Tunis Conference.

The third concerns the actors. You remember that within the framework of the Rio Conference, to which the Minister referred a little while ago, an important role was assigned to what is called "civil society"; it was stressed that all the actors must participate in the management of development. It is in this spirit that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided to set up a Commission which would bring together not only the representative of the Parties, the States and the European Commission, but also the representatives of civil society. Around the table sit members of the three important groups, local authorities, representatives of socio-economic activities and NGOs and environmental organisations; they all participate on an equal footing.

The fourth is that the Commission must also reinforce regional cooperation which has been substantially promoted in the last 20 years in the field of marine environment protection; it will be extended to fundamental areas and thus become more effective than in the past.

These are the four main ideas behind the creation of this Commission.

The idea to set up a Mediterranean Commission on sustainable Development entrusted with following the implementation of a truly Mediterranean sustainable development strategy was proposed in the Tunis Conference - the ministerial Conference which reviewed the priorities of the Agenda Med 21 - and officially adopted at Barcelona in June 1995. Its mandate was endorsed at the Montpellier meeting in July 1996 and the appointment of its members was completed very recently during this past autumn.

Thus the Commission has a mandate, it has members, it is ready to work and will devote this first meeting especially to define its working method and the issues on which it will focus.

To conclude, Mr. Minister, I would like to point out that under your authority and the authority of the Bureau over which you preside with such effectiveness, MAP has accomplished in the last two years an important transformation. This Commission completes the reforms introduced in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, namely the adoption of a revised Convention, and the adoption of new and extremely important Protocols, one on Biodiversity which is very important and the other, a very recent one, on the control of hazardous wastes in the Mediterranean. We have also set up a new Regional Activity Centre and finally there is this Commission formally constituted today which is going to be an important element of our *armamentarium*.

To prepare this work, Mr Minster, we have drawn up a report of the situation in the Mediterranean which hides nothing of the serious problems to which the authorities and civil society are confronted, problems relating to environment, development and natural resources.

I am convinced that the work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development will fulfill the expectations of the Contracting Parties and meet the needs of the countries and peoples of the Mediterranean.

I thank you.

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