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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First Meeting of the Bureau of the
Mediterranean Commission on
Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Athens, 20-21 February 1997

**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
BUREAU OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD)**

Introduction

1. At its first meeting, held in Rabat from 16 to 18 December 1996, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) set up a Bureau made up of eight members and chaired by H.E. Mr. Nourdine Benomar Alami, Minister for the Environment of Morocco. The Commission also decided to convene the first meeting of the Bureau in February 1997 in order to review progress accomplished and provide orientation for the various thematic working groups.
2. The first meeting of the Bureau was held in the MAP premises in Athens, Greece, on 20 and 21 February 1997.
3. All Bureau members, some accompanied by advisors, participated in the meeting. The list of participants is included in **Annex I** to this document.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Nourdine Benomar Alami, Minister for Environment of Morocco, who welcomed participants and stated that two important issues were of priority for this meeting, i.e. the preliminary reports of the two task managers and the Rules of procedure of the Commission.
5. Mr. Lucien Chabason, MAP Coordinator welcomed participants on behalf of the Coordinating Unit. He summarized developments since the last Commission meeting.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda

6. The meeting adopted its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda contained in document UNEP/MCSD/BUR/1/1.

Agenda item 3: Rules of procedure

7. The meeting decided that the Rules of procedure adopted for the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its Protocols (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.43/6, Annex XI), as amended by the Eighth Ordinary Meeting, would apply mutatis mutandis to its own deliberations.

Agenda item 4: Progress report of the Secretariat and general discussion

8. The Secretary of the meeting, Mr. A. Hoballah, presented an oral report on activities undertaken since the Rabat meeting which were mainly the following: the finalization of the report of the first meeting of the MCSD, the very wide dissemination of this report and the preparation of the documents presented to this meeting, along with all the contacts that were necessary to carry out these activities. It had become apparent that the Rabat meeting had been a success which was largely due to the dynamic involvement of the Moroccan authorities. However, several fundamental questions remained pending, mainly the Secretariat's role as coordinator and catalyst, the working

methods of the thematic groups and their links with the supporting Regional Activity Centres (RACs), the additional funds needed and effective coordination among the MCSD, UNCSD and the national CSDs.

Agenda item 5: Thematic working groups review - Organisation of work - Participation

After a brief reminder by the Secretariat of the decisions taken at the Rabat meeting on the thematic working groups and the expected output of their work, the task managers presented their respective activities as follows:

- a. Preliminary report on "Management of water demand"
9. The task manager of this group, Mr. M. Ennabli, presented the report UNEP/MCSD/BUR.1/CRP/1, while pointing out that because of the short time available, consultation with group members had been limited. Thus, the present report was based mostly on the work of the Blue Plan and the personal analysis of the task manager. He highlighted the fact that the main point of the report concerned the management of the demand of water resources and not on the management of the resources.
 10. The Bureau members that took the floor congratulated the task manager for the quality of his work while offering their support. The comments made concerned the following points:
 - to pay greater attention to the fundamental issue of the various pressures (demographic, tourist, agricultural, etc);
 - to take into consideration the various types of water demand;
 - to develop performance indicators, including follow-up and assessment, which would be an effective tool;
 - to take into consideration the national on-going experiences, especially the re-use of wastewater for activities, which could be carried out with water of a lower quality;
 - to attribute a priority role to the task of raising public awareness, both before and during the relevant activities, which would mean to establish as soon as possible cooperation links on this issue with the working group specifically entrusted with this task;
 - to take advantage of all relevant occasions in order to make the MCSD activities on this issue known, most especially during the next World Water Forum to be held in Marrakesh from 20 to 25 March 1997;
 - to focus on those regions that face major problems, especially effective or potential scarcity;
 - to update all data and in the future to refer specifically to the new States of the region (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia);
 - to undertake the interpretation and adaptation of international standards with respect to the context to which they apply; and

- to consider that no one is safe from the threat of conflicts springing from use or even water scarcity, both in the North and in the South; demand management (quantity and quality) must remain a standing concern, given all the pressures and their future trends.

b. Preliminary report on "Sustainable Management of Coastal Regions"

11. The task manager for this thematic working group, Ms. B. Layachi presented the activities undertaken to prepare this preliminary report, which could not be finalized before the meeting, for lack of effective consultation within the time allotted among all the group members and the supporting RAC on the contents of this report. In her presentation, Ms. Layachi stressed the complexity of the theme, which was due mainly to the multiplicity of actors, the conflict of interests and the fragile nature of the coastal areas. She stated that the various countries of the region differed a great deal in how far they had progressed in this area. The task manager focused on the following points:

- better distribution of space among the various users and actors;
- links between hinterland and coast;
- certain activities (tourism etc) to become more environment friendly;
- development of methodological tools for planning and control (observatories, impact studies, follow-up, assessment) along with the relevant indicators;
- preparation of adequate legislative and regulatory tools; and
- public awareness activities in order to achieve a common vision.

12. Concerning the working method, some members of the group had met on 18 December 1996, right after the first meeting of the MCSD and had drawn up a workplan which required the appointment of an expert and the convening consecutively of two further meetings. In this connection, mandates had been drawn up both for the expert and the working group, however, consultations with all groups members were needed before a final decision could be taken. Ms. Layachi pointed out that working relations between the task managers, the group members, the supporting RACs and the Coordinating Unit needed to be enhanced.

13. Finally, the task manager stressed that in order to be effective, each member of the group should consider himself as a catalyst and seek the reactions of his national and local partners on the precise theme studied.

14. The members of the Bureau that intervened in the ensuing discussion congratulated Ms. Layachi for her excellent presentation. They made the following comments on the main points of her report:

- the concept of sustainability is fundamental in the context of this group's activities;
- the very large documentation available on this theme should be used as much as possible, while also taking into account the various experiences either past or on-going;

- it would be useful to launch several demonstration projects, on the basis of criteria to be determined by the working group; such projects would require the cooperation of all involved in order to draw useful and practical lessons;
- recommendations for contingency measures (preservation or interim) for the degraded areas and preventive measures (medium and long-term) for the areas still relatively unspoilt; and
- the mandates submitted for the expert and the working group, which had not been the object of full consultation as yet, should take into consideration the abovementioned points.

Agenda item 6: Draft Rules of procedure of the MCSD

15. Mr. E. Raftopoulos, MAP Legal Advisor, presented document UNEP/MCSD/BUR/1/4 "Rules of procedure of the MCSD" - First draft". He stressed that the Rules of procedure of the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties, the Rules of procedure of the ECOSOC, and the Terms of Reference of the MCSD were the main documents which were the base for the drafting of these Rules of procedure.

He provided information on several draft rules contained in the document, which was being reviewed by the meeting.

16. A lengthy discussion ensued, during which several members pointed out that there was no need systematically to refer to or even adhere to similar rules of procedure, but rather to take into consideration the specificity of the Mediterranean and the innovatory character of the Commission and allow for the required flexibility.
17. The discussion centered around the following points mainly:
- Given the MCSD status, it was not necessary to refer to UNEP's Executive Director, since the Coordinator of MAP could fill the necessary functions;
 - Given that the Ordinary Meetings of the MCSD were decided by the Contracting Parties at their meetings, in accordance with the provisions of the mandate of the Commission, the MCSD could decide to hold an extraordinary meeting upon request from at least half of its members within the funds committed by the Contracting Parties in the budget, while additional funds could be sought from other partners;
 - Given that the Commission is not a decision and negotiation body, the members of the Bureau did not think it necessary to adopt an accreditation procedure but considered that a simple procedure of appointment of representatives and their advisors, whose names would be communicated to the Secretariat before the opening session would be sufficient;
 - While the working languages of the Bureau are English and French, it would be desirable - if funds were available - to use the four official languages for the Plenary sessions of the Commission.
18. Taking into consideration the abovementioned points, the draft Rules of procedure was revised and will be submitted for review to the next meeting of the MCSD before it is presented to the Contracting Parties meeting for adoption.

Agenda item 7: Draft report of the MCSD to the UNCSD and Special Session of the General Assembly

19. Mr. L. Chabason presented document UNEP/MCSD/BUR/1/3 "The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development - A tool for Mediterranean Strategy and a Regional Bridge between global and national levels".

He also provided information on the next meeting of the UNCSD (New York, April 1997) and the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (New York, June 1997); he stressed the importance for MCSD to participate in the work of these two bodies entrusted with drawing up the picture of the After Rio and identifying the future perspectives of UNCSD.

20. In this connection, several members stated that it would be useful to lodge an accreditation request with the relevant Organisation, in order that the Commission be fully accredited. They also felt that, to maximise the impact during the fifth session, it would be useful to be in a position to intervene during the period of the ministerial session. The report submitted to the present meeting should be revised and presented in a more attractive way in order to obtain a wider dissemination; the focus should be on the strong points of the MCSD and its work programme, while avoiding to present itself as a model for others.

Agenda item 8: Provisional Agenda for the second meeting of the MCSD

21. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda of the second meeting of the MCSD, which is scheduled to be convened at Palma de Majorca, Spain from 6 to 8 May 1997, contained in **Annex II** to the present document.

Agenda item 9: Provisional agenda, dates and venue of the second meeting of the Bureau of the MCSD

22. The Bureau decided to convene its second meeting in September 1997 at Brussels, if possible, so that the President of the Bureau of the Commission who is also President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, and the Coordinator of MAP would jointly carry out consultations with the European Union while there. The exact dates of the meeting would be decided in consultation with the European Union and the Secretariat. The Meeting asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft agenda for this meeting.

Agenda item 10: Other business

23. The Coordinator raised two issues.

Firstly, he pointed out that, given the fact that the work programme and budget for the 1998-1999 biennium was being prepared, the Secretariat would very much appreciate learning the projected financial requirements of the Commission at the latter's second meeting at the latest (Palma de Majorca, 6-8 May 1997).

Secondly, he informed the Bureau that he had established contacts with some countries on the possibility to host in 1998 two Commission meetings.

Agenda item 11: Adoption of the report of the meeting

24. The meeting unanimously adopted its report on Friday, 21 February 1997.

Agenda item 12: Closure of the meeting

25. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chairman declared the meeting closed on Friday, 21 February 1997 at 12.00 hrs.

ANNEX I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Second Meeting of the
Mediterranean Commission on
Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Palma de Majorca, Spain, 6-8 May, 1997

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ANNEX II

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA
OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD)**

(Palma de Majorca, Spain, 6-8 May 1997)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the provisional Agenda
3. Rules of procedure
4. Progress report by the Secretariat
5. Progress report by the Task Managers for Short-term activities
6. Preliminary reports by Task Managers for Medium-term activities
7. Review of the composition of the working groups
8. Review of the draft Rules of Procedure for the MCSD
9. Provisional Agenda, dates and venue of the Third Meeting of the MCSD
10. Any other matters
11. Adoption of the report of the meeting
12. Closure of the meeting