

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report

Annex I List of Participants

Introduction:

1. The eighth meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), held at Cavtat (Croatia) from 14 to 16 May 2003, elected a new Steering Committee, with the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties (Monaco) as an *ex officio* member. Following that meeting, it was agreed to convene the seventh meeting of the Steering Committee, whose main task would be to consider the following texts, revised in accordance with the guidelines set by the MSCD, with a view to their submission to the Contracting Parties at their meeting to be held in Catania in November 2003: the "Vision for sustainable development in the Mediterranean" and the "Framework orientations for a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development", together with a "road map" proposed by the Secretariat for the purpose of elaborating the aforementioned Strategy.

2. The seventh meeting of the Steering Committee was held at Monaco on 1 October 2003 in the Villa Girasole, Department of Foreign Relations, International Cooperation for Environment and Development, at the kind invitation of the International Chamber of Commerce/Chambers of Economic Development of Monaco (ICC-Monaco).

Participation:

3. The following members of the Steering Committee participated in the meeting: ICC-Monaco, Croatia, France, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Monaco, Municipality of Omisalj, and the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED). The MAP Secretariat was represented by the Coordinator and the Deputy Coordinator, together with the Directors of BP/RAC and PAP/RAC. A UNEP/MAP consultant also attended the meeting.

4. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.

Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting

5. Ms. Margita Mastrovic (Croatia), Chair of the Steering Committee, opened the meeting by thanking the ICC-Monaco and the Monegasque authorities for their hospitality and expressed the hope that the meeting would be a fruitful one in the light of the forthcoming meeting in Catania. For two years, Monaco had been President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and had chaired the outgoing Steering Committee of the MCSD, thereby gaining wide experience of all the issues to be discussed. With a view to continuity, she suggested that the meeting be chaired by H.E. Mr. Bernard Fautrier, Minister Plenipotentiary of Monaco, and the participants endorsed her proposal.

6. H.E. Mr. Bernard Fautrier welcomed participants to Monaco and thanked the Chair of the Steering Committee for her suggestion, recalling the long-standing and close relations between Croatia and Monaco. He was especially grateful for the honour as it would be the last time he would be chairing a meeting of the Steering Committee as President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and in a little over one month the new Bureau would be elected in Catania. The working document prepared by the Secretariat, containing the revised texts, had been sent to the members of the Steering Committee by e-mail so they had had the necessary time to study it.

7. Mr. Lucien Chabason, MAP Coordinator, thanked the ICC-Monaco and the Monegasque authorities for their traditional hospitality and added that, for him, it

would be the last MCSD meeting in which he participated as he would be leaving the MAP after the meeting in Catania. The eighth meeting of the MCSD at Cavtat had been a difficult one and had engendered mixed feelings, particularly regarding the vocation of the Commission. At the recent meeting of the MAP National Focal Points (Athens, 15-18 September 2003), however, a consensus had emerged that, overall, the MCSD had marked an important step forward in the cause of sustainable development in the Mediterranean and consequently, from that standpoint, the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) was a significant challenge. The issue would be discussed at Catania, when the Contracting Parties would be called on to adopt the "Framework orientations" and the operating methodology for the preparation of the MSSD. The present meeting thus had to reach agreement on the documents that had been the subject of comments or criticism at Cavtat and subsequently revised accordingly.

8. Mr. Arab Hoballah, MAP Deputy Coordinator, explained that, as time was short, the Secretariat's report and the annexes containing the texts for consideration had only been submitted in English. The present meeting had been organized by the ICC-Monaco and it was a positive harbinger for the MCSD's future that such an important economic actor was playing an active role in its Steering Committee. The original version of the "Vision" had only been slightly amended and members were urged to bear in mind that its structure and substance had already been approved at Cavtat. The "Orientations", on the other hand, had been substantially revised, taking into account the plan advocated at Cavtat, and the meeting was called on to make any comments required, without turning itself into a drafting group, so that the text could be further refined before its submission to the Parties in Catania.

9. The Chair of the meeting indicated that the Secretariat's explanations clearly outlined the agenda for the meeting's work and participants agreed to focus on consideration of the "Vision", "Orientations" and "road map", with a final agenda item on "Any other business", as was customary.

10. The Vice-Chair representing France, referring to the criticism expressed at Cavtat, stated that the general feeling there had been that a body such as the MCSD could not be reformed from within. Nevertheless, Cavtat belonged to the past and it was now time to view the future with optimism. With regard to the two texts before the Steering Committee, he would simply make some comments that would help the Secretariat to finalize the text and he did not intend to undertake an exhaustive analysis.

Agenda item 2 Consideration of the "Vision for sustainable development in the Mediterranean"

Introductory part

11. The Secretariat briefly recalled the background to the "Vision", a framework document drafted by Mr. Ennabli, who had presented it at Cavtat, and which the MCSD had in general approved. It had been slightly revised and supplemented in order to attenuate certain findings deemed too pessimistic and was now before the Steering Committee.

12. Several participants, noting that the introductory part had been lengthened, expressed the view that that was not the best solution because it diluted the dynamism of the text by adding a number of historical or general considerations that were necessarily over-hasty or academic. Two participants considered that it was important to give the background when referring to the Mediterranean and

addressing oneself to political leaders, but they recognized that retaining such a text would mean expanding it by adding developments that showed the broad long-term trends and the cultural complexity of the Mediterranean Basin; in any event, in view of the urgency of the task, rewriting such a paragraph appeared to be somewhat unrealistic. Another view was expressed to the effect that the historical perspective could not be obfuscated: the Mediterranean had been the most highly developed region in the world until the discovery of the New World and the opening up of new maritime routes. Sustainable development would have to be built on the basis of that long history, which could be an obstacle or represent a temptation to indulge in nostalgia but also gave the Mediterranean its own special features. In conclusion, the meeting considered that, in general, if there was to be reference to the historical background, it should be brief and not be linked to the notion of “decadence”, which had given an over-negative impression in the first version of the text.

13. The reference to an increase in conflict, ethnic and religious tension in the Mediterranean in its most recent past was no doubt an optical illusion that could be attributed to the intensity and immediacy of media coverage of events in the world today.

14. One member of the Committee, while endorsing the above comments, said that the document should underline a fact that had been apparent for over a decade, namely, the Mediterranean’s situation in the context of globalization. All countries were now trying to find their way in the light of that new concept and at Johannesburg it had been recognized that the issues were dealt with more effectively at the regional rather than global level. Another member proposed that the introduction be expanded and explained, but separated from the text and made available to those readers who wished to receive it.

Substance of the “Vision”

15. The sequential order of the six challenges making up the substance of the “Vision” gave rise to several proposals for revision: following the principle of moving from the general to the specific, ethics should occupy first place; the ethics components should be devoted almost entirely to governance, poverty and inequality; development and its impact on the environment should be in second place after peace and security; governance should be moved to implementation; poverty should be in first place, etc. Following an exchange of views on the divergent proposals, the meeting agreed the following: (1) the six challenges should be retained and, as they were each of equal importance, they should be placed in the order of feasibility and not of priority; (2) for this purpose, the first reference should be to “*economic development and its impact on the environment*” and then to “*poverty – innovation and entrepreneurship vis-à-vis globalization – cultural diversity – governance*” – and “*ethics*”, putting peace and security at the end as, depending on the case, they were the result of or the prior condition for dealing with the other issues, and were primarily related to international policy, with which the MCSD could not realistically deal as it had no influence thereon. The problem of peace and security should ultimately be in the form of an appeal to countries (“hymn to peace”).

16. The meeting considered that in the titles above each of the challenges the word “pact” should not appear because it might discourage Parties inasmuch as it implied legal constraints, negotiations and regulation, and it should not be given too much “prominence”. It could be kept in the explanation of each challenge or be given a less rigid meaning such as an “agreement” or “undertaking”.

17. Participants considered that some aspects were not dealt with sufficiently or were even not to be found in the "Vision": education and gender equality, illiteracy (linked to poverty), the role of local authorities, changing patterns of consumption and production, a society-based approach to culture (which was an advantage in globalization). In addition, it was important not to give the impression that it was a document from the South; poverty affected whole sectors of society in countries of the North, as had been stressed in the Millennium objectives. Lastly, one participant pointed out that sustainable development had been the subject of discussion for at least two decades, but there were still no indicators and, using a diagram showing the comparative trend in the use of resources according to the year on both sides of the Mediterranean, he said that the priority was not to increase consumption in the South but to decrease consumption in the North.

Agenda item 3: Consideration of the "Framework orientations for a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development"

18. The Secretariat indicated that, compared with the "Vision", the "Orientations" was an entirely new revised document based on the plan adopted at Cavtat so by its very nature there was some repetition, particularly between parts II, IV and V, which it had been impossible to avoid. Pursuant to the decision taken by the MCSD at Cavtat, two texts on the orientations for the MSSD would be submitted in November 2003 at Catania: a brief text containing the recommendations for adoption and a synthetic report, which was before the Steering Committee and would become an information document.

19. Mr. Georges Corm, UNEP/MAP consultant who has contributed to the new text, provided some indications on the work he had undertaken. Efforts had been made to attenuate the pessimistic outlook in the previous report regarding the Mediterranean and the challenge of globalization, presenting it in a constructive way. Although the form and structure were indeed new, the present document was based on all the relevant findings of the three working groups set up by the Barcelona seminar in March 2003 on the questions of "governance", "economic development and social justice", "environment and natural resources", as well as on the substance of the previous report. Nonetheless, the text conveyed a message that differed from the habitual texts by sounding the alarm so that the region's weaknesses could be overcome, the countries of the South and East could move away from a passive revenue-based and non-competitive economy that had no industrial foundations and excluded them from all the major channels of innovation by confining them in over-protected markets and in a "vicious circle" which they would have to transform into a "virtuous circle".

Introduction

20. Several participants warmly welcomed the new version, which responded fully to the Commission's expectations. The text did indeed stand out from the usual texts on the subject and showed unequivocally that, in order to meet the challenges identified, each country as a whole had to make changes, not just the State. Another participant considered, however, that there was a tendency to refer too often to the "two shores" of the Mediterranean in conceptual and geographical terms, which left out countries in transition (for example, Turkey). It would perhaps be preferable to speak of the "different areas" of the Mediterranean. One participant also noted in that connection that there was discrimination between current and future members of the European Union, members and non-members of the EuroMed Partnership. Belonging to the Mediterranean was situated at different levels and it was important not to give the impression that some countries were being left out.

21. Regarding the definition of sustainable development, without neglecting the historical importance of the Brundtland report, it should be borne in mind that the concept was much older. It had emerged as such on the eve of the 1972 Stockholm Conference and had then slowly and gradually taken shape; its roots could even be found in the concepts and traditions of farmers. It should also be noted that the first future assessment had been made in the Mediterranean (first Blue Plan report) and that in the field the endorsement of the concept of sustainable development in the 1970s and 1980s had taken the form of serious degradation in terms of sustainability (for example, water); there were therefore changes at the base that were extremely worrying and at the same time awareness of those changes.

Part I: analysis of Mediterranean economic and social imbalances

22. Although he agreed that there should be an analysis of the economic imbalances and asymmetry, one member considered that it should not be confined to a somewhat static “photograph” of the present but should focus on trends over the past 20 years, in other words, a dynamic analysis that showed how the gaps between countries were widening to an alarming extent.

23. In response to participants who had drawn attention to the gravity of the analysis, the consultant said that the “worrying weakening” was clearly borne out by the figures: record unemployment rates, the brain drain that was directly related to productivity, revenue-based economy, inconsistent foreign investment, etc. A more rose-tinted picture would not correspond to reality and there was a risk that the incentive to act addressed to political leaders, which was what the Strategy should be, would disappear. If France, Italy and Spain and trade among them were removed, the remaining trade was negligible, and even in the three countries mentioned, the southern parts would have continued to stagnate had it not been for the massive inflows they had received when the common market was established. No significant industrial achievement could be noted in the region (with the exception of some family groups here and there and the development of tourism and construction, which had more to do with a revenue-based economy and were predators as far as the environment was concerned). There was even the paradoxical situation that efforts to provide education were being made in some countries, training experts who then went to Europe or America. In other words, the South was subsidizing the North’s growth! In most of the South and East, the public-private relationship was not transparent. Traditionally, the Mediterranean’s prosperity had been due to the fact that it was a zone of transit and intensive trade. Historians such as Braudel had clearly highlighted the factors that had reversed the process and made it a “generalized trend”. That was the real situation that had to be recognized if the necessary impetus were to be given and the two shores were to face up to global competitiveness together.

24. Some participants added that the decline noted was not simply a decline in trade but was also related to the lack of a Mediterranean technological revolution, even though there were some exceptions such as the dynamism of SMEs and of some regions in Turkey and Spain. Demographic convergence was also an important factor in the Mediterranean’s future. It was agreed that the lack of governance underlined in the report was due to several other factors: over-centralization, the relics of the colonial past. Lastly, one participant considered that the analysis did not lay sufficient emphasis on the social aspect but focused rather on the economic aspect.

Part II: identification of major challenges

25. While expressing some reservations regarding the reference to the need to increase per capita GDP in the poorest areas, contrary to the Johannesburg and Millennium objectives (GDP was not an indicator of living standards but of goods and services, the meeting considered that Part II of the report clearly highlighted the fact that, without economic dynamism and financial resources, there could be no progress in meeting the challenges. One participant requested that a reference to the WTO be included, but it was considered that it might give rise to dispute so there could simply be a reference to the Doha Declaration, which focused more on environment and development and what could be expected in the Mediterranean. Lastly, it was proposed that an “environmental touch” be added to the excellent summary of the economic and financial arguments, laying greater emphasis on the Mediterranean’s advantages for globalization as the real challenge of regionalization was to make globalization more human. It was also proposed that a paragraph be added on “forward thinking and the joint and differential approach”.

Part III: Identification of the actors

26. The meeting endorsed the call made by one member of the Committee to move away from simply identifying the actors and rather lay emphasis on their active involvement in the sustainable development process, for example, using proximity indicators (state of the local environment, waste, pollution of rivers, etc.). The consultant proposed adding professional associations because they were often conservative in nature and pressure should be exerted on them. Another participant wished to see the addition of a short paragraph on gender equality, which had been neglected in the text as a whole. Regarding NGOs, it was suggested that there should be more emphasis on their effective involvement, in addition to their role in promoting awareness. Should there be a reference to specific NGOs, as was the case in the text, or should they remain anonymous? Following a brief exchange of views on the question, the meeting considered that the references should be maintained otherwise the text would be devoid of meaning and too general, particularly as the NGOs were reliable partners of the MAP and mentioning those most active could act as an incentive to others.

27. Concerning the private sector and economic associations, reservations were expressed on the need to mention the “*Global Compact*” initiative proposed at the World Economic Forum in 1999 and launched by the United Nations one year later; two participants considered that the initiative was “window dressing” aimed at multinationals and was removed from the concerns of the Mediterranean. The meeting decided on more general wording “*Global Compact and other initiatives*”, which would no longer be underlined in the text.

Part IV: Areas for priority action

28. With regard to the section on “*energy and atmospheric pollution*”, the meeting requested that the two issues be separated: fossil fuels and motor traffic were not the only source of such pollution, which could be controlled through the proper regulation of industrial enterprises and clean technology. Likewise, attention should be drawn to the inadequate number of instruments used for measuring atmospheric pollution and communicating the results obtained.

29. Two participants drew attention to the absence of the question of “*sustainable agriculture-rural development*”, the reason given by the Secretariat being that it was not included in the guidelines adopted at Cavtat. Nevertheless, nothing prevented

the inclusion of a specific paragraph, particularly since it was an issue for the decade in the UNCSD and had been highlighted in Barcelona (question of increased poverty, desertification and biological diversity). Lastly, bearing in mind the guidelines of the MCSD, the meeting decided to mention in the report of the meeting and in the introductory paragraph to Part IV that the "omission of this issue had been the subject of discussion".

30. Regarding "*sustainable transport*", one participant noted that the paragraph did not reflect the benefits of new technology and new means of transport such as rail-road, and two other participants requested the inclusion of a reference to cabotage for passenger and cargo transport and the appropriate use of telecommunications (teleworking).

31. Two participants wished to see the MAP's coastal area management programmes included under the heading "*Sustainable management of marine and coastal zones*" and natural hazards in the section on "*Sustainable management of urban development*".

Part V: Institutional and financial resources

32. Concerning "*capacity building and promotion of awareness of sustainable development*", the meeting agreed that a special paragraph should lay emphasis on building the capacity of all governmental authorities, expanding the responsibilities of ministries of the environment, which should emerge from their isolation, creating environmental units in every ministry and public body, and that such units already existed in major financing institutions and multinationals. Ministries of the environment had to be strong and independent, capable of conducting inspections, ensuring observance of the regulations, etc., and the environment had to be integrated into all aspects of public and private sectors, along the lines of the European Commission, which had an Environment DG but also an Environment Department in all the other DGs.

33. Regarding the "*institutionalization of sustainable development pacts among various actors and stakeholders and the mobilization of regional partners*", one participant proposed that the word "pacts" be replaced by "agreed objectives", which implied that progress could be measured by using indicators. Another participant preferred the expression "sustainable development mechanisms". A consensus emerged that the fourth paragraph, containing the list of regional and subregional partners, be deleted as it duplicated the actors mentioned in Part III of the document and that the title should be "*Institutionalization of links with the actors identified in Part III*", so as not to have a list that would in any event be incomplete and risky. In the list of realistic objectives for the mobilization of financial resources set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy, it appeared surprising to see suddenly in the first line a mention of "public health", which was not mentioned elsewhere in the "Vision" or the "Orientations" and perhaps deserved greater prominence.

34. In connection with the discussion on the need for the list, one member of the Committee noted that, in general, the reference to EuroMediterranean Ministers and the EuroMediterranean Partnership in all MAP documents could wrongly give the impression that they concerned all Mediterranean countries, whereas they did not include the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya or former Yugoslavia. Wording such as "countries in the EuroMediterranean Partnership" would remove that ambiguity.

35. With regard to the conclusions, it was noted that the reference to performance indicators was somewhat brief and a great deal remained to be done in that respect.

A study recently conducted within the framework of the UNCSD on the 18 Johannesburg objectives had yielded virtually no results and the UNDP Human Development Report for 2003 underlined the impossibility of obtaining such figures or communicating reliable figures in most countries. One participant requested that the text of the conclusions lay emphasis on a commitment to follow up regularly the progress being made in sustainable development.

Agenda item 4: Consideration of the “road map” for the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

36. The Chair asked participants to comment on the “road map” proposed by the Secretariat; he had himself requested clarification concerning the consultation with major groups envisaged in the “*next steps before the 13th Meeting of the Contracting Parties*” so as “*to ensure their commitment*” to the two documents just considered by the Steering Committee.

37. The Secretariat had indicated that it would be an informal process, as requested at Cavtat, so that regional partners and those in civil society could be informed of the process under way and would thus subsequently be more closely involved and become stakeholders.

38. The meeting requested the Secretariat to revise the “road map”, exercising considerable caution in its wording, particularly regarding the structures to be established (advisory committee, scientific committee, etc.), which might unnecessarily dissuade certain countries because of their implications in human and financial terms. Consideration should be given to entrusting issues to members of the MCSD, the resources required should not receive too much emphasis, and the ambitious number of activities and meetings envisaged should be limited, particularly as it was not yet known what would be the attitude and the contribution of the European Union, which, it should not be forgotten, had officially entrusted the MAP and the MCSD with formulating the strategy under the provisions of the Athens Declaration.

39. After taking note of the recommendations, the Secretariat indicated that the Strategy had to be drawn up within 12 to 15 months as of January 2004 in order to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties in 2005, so there would have to be a well-structured mechanism and the needs would have to be clearly specified, notably outside expertise, which would have financial implications. The “road map” was a traditional administrative option that was purely hypothetical bearing in mind the expertise and resources available to the MAP, and it would be combined with other options that called for voluntary financial or in-kind contributions (in the form of seconded personnel), as well as the allocation of certain issues to organizations or countries that had the necessary expertise.

40. The meeting proposed that the options be circulated among potential important partners such as United Nations agencies (METAP, UNDP, etc.) and the European Commission prior to the Catania Meeting so that proposals could already be on the table, or at least indications regarding concrete cooperation, which would reassure Parties when the MSSD was discussed. The Strategy was one of the major and most sensitive issues on the Catania agenda and should be viewed as such. When specifying the requirements, it should be made clear that no commitments had yet been made.

41. The Director of Blue Plan emphasized that the starting point for preparation of the MSSD would not be zero as far as expertise was concerned. There were many

common features between the areas dealt with in the MSSD and the “Environment-Development” report, and the future of the MSSD. Part of the substantive scientific work had already been carried out and could be used, while at the same time the possibility of linking up with the workshops envisaged by the EuroMed Partnership on certain issues could be explored.

Agenda item 5: Any other business

42. Mr. J.-P. Fonteneau, representative of ICC-Monaco, informed the meeting that his organization was desirous of playing an active role in the MCSD and involving the business world more closely in its work. It was therefore launching an initiative for the establishment of a “summer institute” – initially in Croatia and perhaps in rotation subsequently – on the management of coastal resources and coastal sustainable development issues, linking the project to the MCSD’s timetable and providing a mechanism for the active cooperation of national ICC committees in the region. The initiative had already been mentioned at the ICC Conference held in Quebec and it would be presented more concretely to the ICC’s World Congress to be held in Marrakesh in June 2004. Participants had received a summary of the proposal.

43. The Secretariat said that it was planned to organize a course on environmental management, in collaboration with the Euro-Arab Management School, with financial support from the EC, the Arab League, Spain and the Region of Andalusia. In order to evaluate the relevant needs, it had been proposed that the ICC be associated with the action.

44. The Steering Committee welcomed the ICC’s initiative, which would remedy the long-deplored lack of economic actors in the MCSD. The opportunity should not be missed and the proposal should be submitted to the next meeting of the MCSD in 2004 with a view to creating the institute during 2004. The Secretariat undertook to promote the initiative and to bring it to the attention of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 5: Closure of the meeting

45. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 1 October 2003.

ANNEX I
Seventh meeting of the Steering Committee of the MCS D

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