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Introduction

1. In order to assist Mediterranean countries to implement the Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities (SAP MED), adopted by the Contracting Parties at their Tenth Meeting held in Tunis in 1997, a GEF Project entitled "Determination of Priority Actions for the Further Elaboration and Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Mediterranean Sea" has been implemented since January 2001.

2. As part of the GEF Project, a number of activities were conducted between January 2001 and October 2004 such as development and adoption of regional guidelines and plans, organization of training courses in the priority areas identified in the SAP MED. In addition, countries have been helped to prepare pre-investment studies in selected hot spots and have received assistance for the launching of the process of preparation of NAPs after having prepared their sectoral plans, their national diagnostic analyses and their baseline budgets of releases and emissions of SAP-targeted substances, while the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, prepared in 1997, has been completed and updated. Finally, the SAP BIO was prepared and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

3. To enhance the implementation of the SAP MED and also of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO), adopted at the Twelfth Meeting of the Contracting Parties held in Catania in 2003, and to prepare the ground for the future application of the Protocol being prepared on integrated coastal management (the ICM Protocol), the UNEP/GEF and the World Bank proposed to Mediterranean countries, international organizations and financing institutions concerned the establishment of a **GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean**, to be based, *inter alia*, on the model and lessons learned from the Danube/Black Sea Partnership.

4. In order to foster this process by seeking the views of Mediterranean countries before the GEF takes a decision, the MAP Coordinator in consultation with the GEF Secretariat decided to invite all the actors involved to a meeting to review the proposed GEF Strategic Partnership and to make any recommendations on its content and focus. As result of a generous invitation from and with the support of the Italian Government, the meeting was held at the Savoia Excelsior Hotel in Trieste on 11 and 12 October 2004.

Participants

5. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, and the European Union.

6. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations: World Health Organization (WHO//EURO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-IHP), International Centre for Science and High Technology of UNIDO (ICS-UNIDO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/Regional Seas, UNEP/GPA and UNEP/GEF), Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Bank, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE), Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF), and the German Federal Institute for Geoscience and Natural Resources.

7. The MAP Secretariat, through the MED Unit and the MED POL Programme, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), the Regional Activity Centre for the Priority Actions Programme (PAP/RAC), and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), acted as the Secretariat of the meeting.

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

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

9. Mr Paul Mifsud, Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, opened the Meeting and warmly thanked the Italian Ministry of the Environment for the welcome extended and for the invaluable help given for the holding of the meeting. He pointed out that the presence of Mr Corrado Clini, Director General of the International and Regional Conventions Department, Italian Ministry of the Environment and Territory, President of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, bore witness to the interest shown by the Italian authorities in international and regional cooperation in the area of the environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

10. Mr Corrado Clini welcomed participants to Trieste, a city whose geographical situation had made it particularly well suited to act as a link between the North and the South, the East and the West throughout European history. Trieste had been chosen for the meeting precisely because it was a symbol of the integration that it was sought to promote in the Mediterranean. In hosting the meeting, Italy, which chaired the Bureau of the Barcelona Convention, also wished to give a practical demonstration of its commitment to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development currently being elaborated, which should be adopted at the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties in Slovenia in 2005 and until then would be the nexus for all the action taken in the region.

11. Mr Clini underscored the innovative nature of the cooperation programmes initiated by MAP such as the SAP MED and the SAP BIO, whose practical implementation was taking shape day-by-day, and the updating of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) under the MED POL. All those activities had been made possible by the financial support given by the GEF, and MAP was now called upon by the GEF and its associated institutions to embark upon a new ambitious stage in coming years with the Strategic Partnership that would shortly be presented and discussed. He then highlighted three cooperation initiatives in which Italy was participating and to which it attached special importance: (1) integrated coastal zone management programmes based on agreements with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia, which would be extended to other countries; (2) the type II MEDREP Initiative to promote renewable energy in the region, which was now moving into the implementation stage following the start-up of a permanent Centre in Tunisia in 2004 composed of experts from UNEP, Tunisia and Italy responsible for coordinating action; and (3) the Adriatic Initiative under the ADRICOSM Partnership for the management of the Neretva river basin and the bay of Pula in Croatia. Lastly, Italy reaffirmed its willingness to provide financial support for the planned Partnership, as of the preparatory phase, on the understanding that it would not only focus on coordination but also on effective, pragmatic and lasting implementation of the projects.

12. Mr Alfred Duda, Senior Adviser, International Waters, the GEF Secretariat, speaking on behalf of Mr. Len Good, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the GEF, thanked UNEP/MAP for having taken the initiative to hold the meeting. He also thanked the Italian authorities for their spontaneous and efficient support and welcomed the presence of the other institutions involved in the planned Partnership. He pointed out that the International Waters Program of the GEF only dealt with transboundary issues, recommending an

ecosystem approach, and the experience gained with MED POL, the updated TDA and conceptual and programme bases established through the SAP MED and the SAP BIO were decisive factors for the success of the Partnership, as could be seen from similar transboundary efforts already made or under way in some 20 country groups around the world. The strategic partnership formula had been launched and tested for the Danube and the Black Sea for the first time three years previously, bringing together 17 countries in two environmental programmes for the respective basins. The present meeting would hear a detailed presentation on the first Partnership, which would form the model for the Mediterranean Partnership based on two components: a regional project and an investment fund. The GEF, like the World Bank, would respond to any questions that countries might wish to raise and would listen carefully to their comments and recommendations so as to focus on practical implementation, which remained the fundamental objective shared by all.

13. The MAP Coordinator endorsed the need for concrete implementation referred to by the previous speakers. He drew attention to the numerous activities carried out in the Mediterranean since the SAP MED had been adopted in 1997, particularly over the previous three years, under the GEF MED Project, which had enabled countries that lacked resources to build their capacity and to prepare programmes to abate pollution. The GEF had supported many SAP activities: regional guidelines and plans for the major priority areas, preparation of national action plans (NAPs), establishment of interministerial committees, preparation of pre-investment studies, development of economic instruments for the sustainable implementation of SAP MED, capacity-building. At the legal level, the revised Barcelona Convention of 1995 had entered into force with the deposit of 16 instruments of ratification. The SAP BIO had been adopted by the Contracting Parties at their meeting in Catania in 2003. It was expected that the present meeting would see countries make a firm commitment to the proposed Partnership and decide to move ahead, utilizing the financial and institutional mechanisms afforded by the Partnership.

Agenda item 2. Review of major Achievements of the previous GEF Mediterranean Project

14. In introducing the item concerning the previous GEF Project, the Secretariat recalled that CD-ROMs containing the texts of the SASP MED, the SAP BIO and the regional plans and guidelines had been distributed to all participants and informed them that they would be given a CD-ROM with the corresponding presentations and, consequently, the report of the meeting would only provide a brief summary of them. Subsequent presentations directly concerning the Strategic Partnership itself would, however, be reported in greater detail.

15. Mr Ante Baric, Project Manager of the GEF MED Project, underlined the objectives and the corresponding activities of the current GEF Project: revision of the list of priority pollution "hot spots" and "sensitive areas"; preparation of pre-investment studies, a set of nine regional guidelines and six regional plans for the reduction of pollution from land-based activities; revision of the TDA; development of new and adaptation of existing economic instruments for the sustainable implementation of SAP MED; capacity building including regional and national training courses for some 546 trainees. The National Action Plans (NAPs) had been launched including assistance for public participation, and the SAP BIO finalized and adopted. In conclusion, he said that the majority of the Project's objectives had been achieved and a solid basis had been established for the implementation of the SAP MED and the SAP BIO at the regional and national levels. However, countries would need further assistance for the implementation of activities at the national level.

16. Mr Francesco Saverio Civili, Coordinator of the MED POL Programme, explained the process of implementation of the SAP MED, which had marked a turning point in the history of MED POL/MAP by defining concrete and quantified pollution reduction commitments

following the adoption of MED POL-Phase III and the “land-based sources” Protocol amended in 1996. Following the same action-oriented approach, MED POL had prepared an “operational document for the implementation of the SAP”, approved by the Contracting Parties in 2001, which provided, *inter alia*, a method for assessing the progress made in reducing pollution in each country based on a national baseline budget of releases and emissions (NBB). Mr. Civili presented a table showing that the NBB and the national diagnostic analyses (NDA) had been concluded successfully in all eligible Mediterranean countries, which was a positive indicator for preparation of the NAPs to be completed in 2005. In view of those achievements, it was his view that the Strategic Partnership, provided that it received the expected strong support, would be decisive for the successful long-term implementation of the SAP.

17. Ms Zeineb Belkhir, Director of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC, Tunis) described the background to the SAP BIO, whose preparation had been entrusted to the SPA/RAC and supported by financing from the GEF Project. Many actors had been involved in preparing the report itself – countries, intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organizations, individual experts or teams. The preparation methodology had enabled an assessment of the status, threats and trends affecting Mediterranean marine and coastal biological diversity to be made, as well as the identification of priorities for action, coordination among relevant organizations, an investment portfolio and the measures to be taken for the follow-up. It was proposed that the funds be allocated primarily to the conservation of sensitive habitats, species and sites (29 per cent), the inventory, mapping and monitoring of marine and coastal biodiversity (24 per cent), with an investment portfolio totalling US\$39 million for 58 high priority activities envisaged in the national action plans. On the basis of those elements, the SPA/RAC had submitted a proposal to the GEF.

18. Mr Fouad Abousamra, MED POL Programme Officer, outlined the main features of the TDA: objectives, methodology for its preparation under the responsibility of MED POL, major perceived problems and issues, together with an analysis of their causal chain, decline of biological diversity, decline in fisheries, decline in seawater quality, and risks for human health. He also presented maps showing Mediterranean “hot spots”, eutrophication areas and the location of the major industries contributing to the release of toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate pollutants (TPBs). He then described the priority action recommended in the TDA in the light of each problem.

Agenda item 3. The proposed GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean

19. Mr Andrea Merla, Programme Manager, International Waters, GEF Secretariat, said that the GEF had embarked upon a new phase during which action could no longer be envisaged in terms of individual projects but, in view of the multiple and complex actions that needed to be taken in several areas, rather in terms of partnerships that brought together countries, relevant agencies and financing institutions – such as the World Bank – in a position to facilitate the often very heavy investment needed in order to create the climate required for their implementation. The first such action had been taken for the Danube and the Black Sea and to date the results were generally deemed to be positive. It was now time to turn to the Mediterranean, where the context was particularly favourable: a plan of action that had been in effect for almost 30 years, an updated and very comprehensive legal framework in the Convention and its Protocols, a TDA which pinpointed the major problems, their causes and solutions, a SAP MED and a SAP BIO already prepared and ready to be put into effect. The main advantages of such partnerships were to provide a “leveraging or multiplier” effect that yielded from one to three or more times the amount of the original funds invested by the GEF, to achieve better coordination and synergy among the cooperating organizations, donors and other actors and to build the capacity of partner countries so that

they observed their commitments under the SAP and the MAP. If the present meeting managed to reach a consensus on the framework concept for the Strategic Partnership, it would be possible to work seriously and pragmatically: before the end of October 2004 a final project concept could be submitted to the GEF and then several more months would be needed, through the implementation of the PDF-B, to refine the two components, namely, the Regional Component and the Investment Fund, before the Partnership as a whole would be approved by countries and then submitted to the GEF Council for approval. If countries had any comments or recommendations to make, they were requested to do so immediately so that the World Bank and the UNEP could take them into account in the draft framework concept to be submitted.

20. Ms Emilia Battaglini, GEF Regional Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, said that the purpose of the Mediterranean Partnership was to involve actively donor countries, beneficiary countries and organizations concerned with a view to the long term, going beyond the traditional concept of selective operations in favour of a strategic design. The proposed framework concept was the result of a long consultation process among the GEF, the World Bank, the UNEP/MAP, the UNEP/GEF and the other partners. The purpose of the present meeting was to discuss the objectives, the underlying principles, the advantages and the cost, and to seek the approval of countries of the Mediterranean and other partners with a view to moving ahead. After referring to the major environmental problems in the Mediterranean and the response by Mediterranean countries over the past 30 years, she stated that, according to an estimate in 1997, some US\$10 billion would be needed to remedy pollution in the region and US\$140 million to protect its biological diversity. Those were large amounts and went beyond the resources available in the countries, even on the hypothesis that they adopted an activist policy. What was involved in the Partnership? It was intended to establish cooperation among many actors in the Mediterranean, to help countries to carry out reforms and make investments, which had little lasting effect if they were not underpinned by a change in behaviour at the national level. The Partnership would inject start-up capital that would serve as a catalyst to produce the leverage effect already mentioned by Mr Merla: in terms of figures, that meant that an initial grant of US\$70 to 80 million from the GEF should mobilize three times that amount in co-financing from other sources. That was not an impossible hypothesis when seen in the light of the results obtained with the Danube-Black Sea Partnership, which would be described to participants. At the programme level, the Partnership would focus on transboundary pollution of "hot spots" identified in both SAPs by means of a Regional Component for the protection of environmental resources and an Investment Fund for pollution reduction.

21. The MAP Coordinator considered that the above description of the Partnership gave a clear and consistent overall view and called on representatives of countries to speak in turn to give their initial reaction, without eschewing any problems, questions or difficulties they perceived.

22. Representatives of all countries expressed a first very favourable reaction or at least an agreement in principle concerning the framework concept that had just been described by the World Bank. The framework appeared to be attractive and ambitious, giving them the resources which they so badly needed. Some speakers saw it as an opportunity to rationalize projects and outside assistance which they already received or to move further ahead with efforts undertaken under difficult financial conditions. At the same time, however, several representatives queried particular aspects of the Partnership: the difficulty for two or more neighbouring countries to reach agreement on an assessment of transboundary impacts or, more generally, for countries to work together on the same project; the absence of a specific timetable (three, five, ten years?); the inadequate exchange of information; insufficient intersectoral work; the need to find a language and arguments accessible to decision-makers, for example, by laying emphasis on the long-term benefits of a measure that appeared costly in the short term; the interpretation of certain

concepts that could give rise to misunderstandings (for example, the “Mediterranean Sea large marine ecosystem”). One representative said that, although he fully supported the Partnership, implementation in his country would be difficult because of highly complex domestic policy procedures. Another representative pointed out that there had already been GEF-financed partnerships in the Mediterranean that had been more or less successful (date palms, climate change, MedWetCoast projects), and they should be carefully evaluated before gradually and prudently moving forward with such a process, avoiding the danger of applying a well-defined methodology at the outset. Lastly, one representative welcomed the emphasis laid on the ecosystem approach, which was already at the heart of the EU’s sustainable development strategy.

23. As an incidental aspect, one representative expressed surprise that, at a meeting of such importance, the MAP Secretariat had not translated the working documents circulated to participants into French and made them available.

24. Responding to the comments made by certain countries, the representative of the World Bank explained that, although the Partnership provided a regional framework, the GEF and the World Bank were supporting action at the national level. Regarding the language to be found when approaching decision-makers, she agreed that the long-term/short-term comparison of costs was crucial in strategic economic sectors in the Mediterranean such as tourism, where it was absolutely essential not to repeat the errors of the past and the price to be paid today to remedy them. In general, the various aspects of the Partnership should be assessed in comparison with what would happen if the Partnership did not come into being: there would be a return to selective activities in each country with no focus on transboundary priority sectors and without ensuring that there was a proper geographical balance among the activities undertaken in the region. The Partnership would enable a “critical mass” of action to be achieved, it would facilitate dialogue with other donors, once again underlining the decisive concept of a “multiplier effect”.

25. Without wishing to draw any hasty conclusions from the initial discussion, Mr Clini made some comments and suggestions it had stimulated. The GEF Partnership comprised some sectors that had already been included under other programmes and it used or tied in with some existing mechanisms (the Euro-Med Partnership, the GEF, the World Bank, etc.). It therefore had to be seen not as an initiative to be added to others, but as value added, a way of placing in perspective all existing or future measures with a view to greater efficiency because, as had already been seen, counteracting pollution in the Mediterranean required US\$10 billion of investment and it was obviously impossible to envisage obtaining such an amount from any single institution whatsoever. The purpose of the Partnership was therefore to establish the conditions needed to ensure that pollution reduction became “self-financing”, to launch a process that could attract and involve new actors such as the private sector in a better position to manage the amortization of investment by becoming aware of the benefits of integrating the environment in terms of profitability, competitiveness and image. In such a context, in the preparatory phase of the Partnership, the role of governments would be to decide on clear-cut rules so as to create an environment that was favourable to proper management of the resources.

Agenda item 3.1. Regional Project under the Strategic Partnership

26. Mr Civili described the implementation of agreed actions for the protection of the environmental resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas. In other words, the regional component of the GEF MED Strategic Partnership, already mentioned by previous speakers, prepared in close collaboration by the UNEP/GEF, UNEP/MAP, the World Bank, the GEF Secretariat and other partners, with the main objective of implementing policy, legal and institutional reforms aimed at reversing

marine and coastal degradation trends, pursuant to the commitments made by countries when adopting the SAP MED and the SAP BIO. He then reviewed the various components envisaged: (1) facilitation of policy and legislative reform; (2) promotion of replication strategies; (3) technical assistance (implementation of the SAP MED and SAP BIO and related NAPs, regional strategies to manage and protect coastal aquifers); (4) regional integrated water resources and integrated coastal management (ICM) strategies; and (5) overall coordination and monitoring arrangements. During his presentation, Mr Civili drew particular attention to one essential element because it underpinned all the problems of implementing the SAP, namely, the capacity of countries to ensure long-term financing of actions and projects. One of the major objectives of the Partnership would be to build this capacity through environmental economic instruments and innovative financing mechanisms - thereby simultaneously making a sizeable contribution to sustainable development - and also by setting up a regional network on innovative financing practices.

27. Mr Cornelis Klein, UNDP Resident Representative in Croatia, raised some issues concerning the mass of information provided at the meeting. Firstly, when speaking of investment, there needed to be strong coordination capacity on the spot and, in his experience, that was far from being the case in the majority of countries, especially with regard to intersectoral issues. He also wondered how investment at the country level could be intended for transboundary activities because in such cases at least two countries were in principle involved. Finally, the UNDP was preparing a GEF-financed project for the Croatian coast and islands and it comprised almost all the elements previously mentioned in connection with the regional project: how would such a project fit into the overall design of the Partnership?

28. Mr Anders Alm, Environmentalist, Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme (METAP), focussed on the contribution it could make to the Strategic Partnership through the instruments it had been implementing for a long time such as Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA), the cost of environmental degradation (COED), integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), assistance in identifying investment opportunities, feasibility studies and project preparation. He presented a chart showing the cost of environmental degradation as a percentage of GDP (environmental sustainability indicator) for seven of the 13 Mediterranean countries eligible for the METAP.

29. One representative wondered to what extent the cost of environmental degradation was based on a realistic, quantifiable and verifiable basis. He was raising the question as a biologist specializing in nature conservation and not as a decision-maker and it was in any case a much more general question: could a quantifiable value in any currency be placed on the whole of the Mediterranean and its natural resources or, for example, on a given area of desert? How could the inestimable cultural heritage be valued? The only purpose of the question was to express a degree of scepticism regarding the calculations of economists as far as the environment and natural resources were concerned.

30. Mr Pablo Huidobro, representing UNIDO, pointed out that UNIDO was a privileged partner for technical assistance in relation to the impact of industrial activities and cleaner production. UNIDO could give the GEF MED Partnership the benefit of the vast experience it had gained in the private sector with regard to issues of industrial pollution and the transfer of ecologically sound technology. Ms De Palma, UNIDO, then described the tenor of her Organization's proposal for the framework concept for the Mediterranean Partnership. The previous year, UNIDO had developed an initiative entitled TEST MED aimed at replicating an experience of

transfer of ecologically sound technology that it had just completed in the context of the Danube Partnership. The Mediterranean context lent itself ideally to this “replication” with the ongoing SAP MED process and, above all, the existence of a dual network of national cleaner production centres in the region set up under the auspices of UNIDO and UNEP, as well as a network of units to promote investment in order to develop innovative projects in the private sector. The over-riding idea was to link the dual network of cleaner production centres, focusing on technology, processes and capacity building in industry, with the investment promotion network, in order to facilitate the transfer of technology. The TEST MED proposal, for example, had been formulated with the ultimate objective of building capacity in eligible countries, demonstrating this approach by applying it to certain selected industrial “hot spots” and disseminating it throughout the region. The preparatory stage of TEST MED, with financial support from Italy, had been implemented and completed in 2004 in four countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia) and had led to the preparation of a draft plan of implementation and budget, leading to the conclusion that there were substantial financing opportunities in the region but they were not sufficiently rationalized and channeled in order to be exploited. The final proposal had been incorporated into component III, “Technical assistance”, sub-category 1, of the regional project previously presented by the MED POL Coordinator.

31. Mr Duda said that Countries were at the centre of the Partnership and it was therefore their responsibility to decide on the framework concept, the projects proposed by organizations and the opportunities submitted to them. They did not have to do so officially at the present stage. The comments and suggestions they made at the present meeting would, over the following ten days, be taken into account by UNEP/MAP, UNEP/GEF and the World Bank in order to revise the concepts where necessary and it would then be transmitted to the GEF Secretariat, which would assess its eligibility. It was only in the following weeks, at the most one or two months, that countries would be called on to make a commitment to the Partnership. Some might decide to remain outside it, so the total resources available would benefit a smaller number of eligible countries; they might, for instance, not have any industrial pollution problems and not require the assistance of UNIDO or, on the contrary, they might wish to benefit from know-how that presently allowed industry to be profitable and become more competitive while at the same time adopting cleaner production processes and good housekeeping practices.

32. Mr Gennaro Longo, Director, ICS-UNIDO, described a series of activities through which his Organization could assist the Partnership: training courses and seminars, fellowships, capacity building. The Centre was involved in three major areas: advanced system in support of decision making, integrated coastal zone management, and cleaner production, with a focus on capacity building and the transfer of technology. It also cooperated closely with other international organizations: with UNEP/MAP, it had undertaken the pre-investment study on pollution “hot spots” in Croatia; with UNEP/MAP and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, it had initiated the pilot project for a pollution release and transfer register (PRTR) in Egypt, and was preparing to do the same in the Syrian Arab Republic with the Ministry of the Environment and Local Administration. Lastly, it could also be of use to the Partnership by providing expertise on tools in support of decision making: monitoring, Geographic Information System (GIS), remote sensing, image processing, environmental simulation models to study the release of pollutants into certain environments.

33. Mr Jordi Lleonart, Department of Fisheries, FAO, introduced the FAO’s project for the Partnership, mainly dedicated to fisheries, including biodiversity issues as species identification. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

(GFCM), which is in the process of changing its status in 2005 with the entering into force of the autonomous budget, would be a fundamental element of the Partnership. A number of GFCM cooperation projects are currently ongoing in several areas in the Mediterranean. The objectives for the Partnership were the following: in the long term, to increase the taxonomic expertise through species identification tools and to improve fisheries resources protection by setting objectives for catches to ensure their sustainability and, in the immediate, to improve the management of fisheries through the implementation of IPOAs. Among the expected results for the project would be the facilitation of policy and legislative reforms by coordinating the development and implementation of IPOAs and NPOAs. Regarding technical assistance, GFCM would assist the implementation of the SAP BIO regional strategy to reduce the impact of fishing activities on sensitive habitats and species as well as the implementation of the SAP BI-related National Action Plans.

34. One representative acknowledged the benefits of the work carried out by the FAO in the GFCM, but could not see any tangible results in any Mediterranean country whatsoever: in his view, no sustainable and responsible national fisheries programme had yet actually been put into practice. The same remark could apply to other areas such as integrated coastal zone management: a coastal management programme implemented in his country had led to an impressive amount of theoretical work but, after many years, had not led to any concrete and rational measure on coastal management. The basic question was more than ever: where were we at present and where were we going? Another representative strongly supported that position, stating that in his country as well a coastal management programme had not had any follow-up, but that was not the fault of MAP but of the national and local authorities who had not, at the time, taken advantage of the opportunity. The failures noted clearly pointed the direction in which the proposed Partnership should move if the situation was to be truly reversed.

35. Mr Ivica Trumbic, Director of the Regional Activities Centre for the Priority Action Programme (PAP/RAC, Split), described the experience gained by his office over the past 15 years in the area of integrated coastal zone management with the initiation of coastal area programmes (CAMP) in the majority of Mediterranean countries. Undoubtedly the results were uneven and depended on the country, but whenever the government concerned and the national counterpart team had the will to utilize the findings of studies carried out on the spot, the result was a success, as could be seen in the examples of Croatia and Albania. There had been a decisive breakthrough in ICZM in the Mediterranean recently with the adoption of a recommendation on drafting a new Protocol on the issue taken by the Contracting Parties at Catania in 2003. The work was moving ahead and a draft text would be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2005. The legal framework to be adopted would enable ICZM to be more systematically disseminated in the Mediterranean and the Partnership envisaged attributed a central role to the issue alongside the SAP MED and the SAP BIO.

36. Ms Alice Aureli, International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO (UNESCO-IHP), and Mr Bo Appelgren, Principal Consultant, UNESCO, gave a presentation on coastal aquifers in the Mediterranean and the contribution of the IHP to the Partnership through various activities such as demonstration projects (aquifer recharge, for example), inventories of aquifers, mapping of their vulnerability, and a regional plan of action for their management. An addition on this issue had been included in the revised TDA. The problem needed to be addressed as a priority because in all Mediterranean countries there was a scarcity of underground water, with inadequate management of a resource that was so crucial to their economies. The main threats were the sustainability of the flow of underground water, saltwater

intrusion and the salination affecting coastal wetlands, the vulnerability of aquifers to surface pollution, and pressure on resources shared by several countries.

37. Mr Ellik Adler, Regional Seas Coordinator, UNEP, drew the participants' attention to the fact that the "land-based sources" Protocol, revised in 1996, had still not entered into force. Three instruments of ratification were lacking and that was one weak point in the legal system underpinning the SAP MED. Efforts should be made to remedy the situation by promoting awareness and by helping countries that had not yet ratified it to complete the procedure. One other issue in the regional Partnership project that called for urgent treatment was that of coastal litter, which was politically sensitive because of its visibility for local populations and for the millions of tourists on Mediterranean beaches, but above all because of its imminently transboundary scope.

38. The MAP Coordinator replied that the question of non-ratification of new or revised Protocols had long been one of the major concerns of the MAP Secretariat and the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, which had continually urged countries to ratify. Consequently, despite the positive developments in ratification of the revised Convention and the new "prevention and emergency situations" Protocol, the question of ratification of the "land-based sources" Protocol and of other Protocols was the subject of ongoing efforts by the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Bureau and the depositary State (Spain).

39. Mr Paolo Guglielmi, Head of Marine Unit of WWF, and Mr Vangelis Constantianos, Executive Secretary of GWP-Med, expressed the keen interest of their respective organizations in the regional Partnership project, in view of their experience in the region, their work in the field and through networks bringing together NGOs, users, local authorities, professionals and other major actors in society. The question of the role and participation of civil society in the Partnership had not yet been mentioned at the meeting although it was decisive for winning over public opinion and, consequently, for the overall sustainability of the project. Mr Ulrich Dan Weuder, UNEP/GPA, pointed out that, with the assistance of Italy, UNEP/GPA had cooperated with UNEP/MAP on long-term financing and that continuation of those efforts would be beneficial to the GEF Partnership.

Agenda item 3.2. The Investment Fund under the Strategic Partnership

40. Ms Dahlia Lotayef, GEF Regional Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, introduced the second component of the GEF MED Partnership: the Investment Fund for Pollution Reduction in the Mediterranean. The time had come for the practical implementation of the two SAPs and, as already mentioned, the cost of pollution remedial actions had been estimated at some US\$10 billion for SAP MED and US\$110 million for SAP BIO. The Investment Fund would have to provide financing of up to US\$60 to 70 million in several tranches and open to contributions by other donors. It would be a participatory process with information feedback from countries. The eligibility criteria for the resources would focus in particular on pollution "hot spots" and "sensitive areas" listed in the two SAPs, conformity of the projects with the GEF's International Waters Operational Program, the objectives of the SAPs and the commitment made by countries to undertake relevant policy, legal and institutional reforms. No GEF grant would be earmarked in advance for any particular country or project, but financing would be on a case-by-case basis on the principle of "first come, first served", depending on the relevance and admissibility of projects submitted with the objective for the medium and long terms of ensuring a geographical balance in the distribution of resources in the

Mediterranean and achieving leveraging with a co-financing ratio of US\$3 for each US\$1 granted by the Fund.

41. During the discussion following the above presentation, several questions were put to the World Bank and the GEF by country representatives: coordination and consistency with the European Union which, under the Euro-Med Partnership and, more recently, the neighbouring policy, also had a strategy for dialogue and financing with Mediterranean countries for the benefit of the environment; action by the European Investment Bank or other European bodies; assistance to countries for project preparation; whether the US\$60 to 70 million would be available immediately; possibility of loans; need for a counterpart contribution; highly approximate estimate of the amount of the grant a country might receive, even though it was understood that no allocation would be made in advance, possibility of pilot or demonstration projects.

42. With regard to coordination with the European Union, the MAP Coordinator emphasized that the new Strategic Partnership and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, far from being mutually exclusive, could be complementary and benefit the region as a whole. The MAP had previously had very close and constructive cooperation with the European Union that had led to the preparation of a joint programme of work to be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties in Cairo in November 2004 and then submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties in Slovenia in 2005 for adoption. The programme would focus on projects that used all the financing mechanisms of the EU available.

43. The representatives of the World Bank and the GEF endorsed the MAP Coordinator's statement. In their view, the European Union had a catalytic effect in many Mediterranean countries – not to mention in the six countries that were members – and several of its directives, such as that on water, constituted an inescapable point of reference. Considerable importance should therefore be attached to the links between the Partnership and the EU, its partners, its financing institutions, the follow-up to the Declaration and the Athens/Petersberg Process on Transboundary waters as well as the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative. In general, coordination had been weak at several levels – even between the Fund and the regional project – in the Danube/Black Sea Partnership and it was important to ensure that such a problem did not recur in the GEF MED Partnership. In that connection, a mid-term evaluation meeting appeared to be indicated (the mid-term meeting for the Danube/Black Sea Partnership would be held in November 2004) in order to make any necessary corrections and adjustments.

44. With regard to questions raised by several participants on the financing modalities of the Investment Fund, it was explained that: (1) there would be a sharing of responsibilities and close cooperation among countries, organizations and the World Bank regarding the preparation and eligibility of projects, but the final decision on financing lay with the GEF on the basis of agreed criteria; (2) the loans granted to complement the GEF grants for blended operations were fully justified in the case of large-scale projects, so as to have a more integrated and holistic approach, provided that they were in line with the aid strategy between the Bank and the country concerned; (3) the highly approximative amount of grants per country could be between US\$5 to 7 million on the basis of the Danube/Black Sea precedent and the estimated appropriation for the Mediterranean divided by the number of eligible countries, subject to many factors such as the final number of countries in the Partnership, the size and scope of the projects concerned, the possible association of two or more countries in a single project, etc.; (4) the total appropriation, which would

represent a firm commitment by the GEF Council after its approval, could not be disbursed immediately but only in three tranches (amounting to some US\$20 million each), because the GEF was a trust fund replenished every three years and the time taken to prepare projects had to be taken into account, together with the need for follow-up and evaluation of the global trend in the implementation process and effective use of the resources.

45. Concluding the agenda item, an exchange of views took place on the advantages of participation by the private sector, which had already been mentioned in connection with the introduction of cleaner technology in industry. The World Bank referred to several projects it had carried out in the Mediterranean in the tourism sector and under the Danube/Black Sea Partnership through farmers' associations.

Agenda item 4. Experience with the Black Sea/Danube Strategic Partnership

46. Ms Battaglini, GEF Regional Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, presented the Danube/Black Sea Partnership, pointing out that the first lessons drawn from that Partnership had been valuable when preparing the framework concept for the GEF Partnership for the Mediterranean, which replicated the major elements and principles. She described the geographical, political and demographic features of the two basins, the major environmental problems to be resolved (including the vast load of nutrients) and the process of preparing and implementing the Partnership. She introduced a table showing the projects being implemented (four countries) and in preparation (eight countries) financed by the Investment Fund for the Partnership, with the amounts of the GEF grants, the co-financing obtained, and the leverage ratio achieved, which represented an average of 1/4.6. In conclusion, the Partnership had had a clearly marked catalytic effect, and had shown the possibility of introducing innovative technologies, with a concrete number of projects under preparation and a significant trend to a reduction in nutrients found in river and marine waters.

47. Ms De Palma, representing UNIDO, adding to her previous statement on UNIDO's activities in the Danube Basin dealing with industrial "hot spots", described the case of a paper and pulp factory in Romania, which had shown that substantial investment could be obtained from the private sector to replace obsolescent technology when it led to increased profitability and competitiveness by lowering production costs and improving the quality of the product.

48. As practical examples of eligibility for financing by the GEF Partnership Investment Fund, Mr Andreas Rohde, Sanitary Engineer, World Bank, described several projects: protection of water quality in Bosnia and Herzegovina; integrated management of the ecosystem of the Neretva River Basin in Bosnia/Croatia; integrated management of water and ecosystems in Albania; combating pollution in towns on the Croatian coast. Mr Anders Alm, Environmentalist, World Bank, described four projects: integrated coastal zone management in Alexandria (Egypt); integrated management of the ecosystem and abatement of pollution from land-based sources in the Nador lagoon in Morocco; restoration of self-purification capacity in the Bizerta lagoon in Tunisia; and integrated approach to the recovery of the ecosystem in the town of Ghazaouet in Algeria.

49. Drawing lessons from the various presentations, particularly that on the Danube/Black Sea Partnership, the MAP Coordinator said that they were tried and tested methods that had demonstrated their effectiveness and where the catalytic effect was in fact significant enough to gain support. The representatives of countries and other actors concerned by the GEF MED Partnership now had sufficient elements to form an opinion and make comments or suggestions.

50. Ms Belkhir thanked the representatives of the World Bank and the GEF for clarifying the financial aspects and for their presentations, which provided several lessons. She considered, nevertheless, that biological diversity in Program 8 of the GEF's International Waters Programme came a poor second in comparison with the amounts allocated to SAP MED. Biological diversity had been endorsed downstream of the project. Although it was true that combating pollution helped to conserve habitats, that was not one of the priority actions in the SAP BIO. The Contracting Parties had approved the SAP BIO in Catania and they had high hopes of the GEF in regard to its implementation, whose coordination had been entrusted to the SPA/RAC. The latter had sent to the GEF a document on the financing phase - the GEF had from the outset accepted the principle of financing - but no reply had been received. She hoped that the GEF would explain what procedure had to be followed in order to put the two SAPs on an equal footing in the interests of the region and of the sustainability of its resources.

51. Three representatives of countries and one representative of a non-governmental organization spoke strongly in support of the position of the SPA/RAC, pointing out that the intensive, highly serious and comprehensive work that had been carried out during preparation of the SAP BIO must not end in failure because of lack of financing, otherwise it would be a "stillborn project". Since the Meeting of the Contracting Parties held in Catania, however, the process had been at a standstill. One representative considered that the two aspects could be reconciled, while another expressed disagreement with the SPA/RAC because there was overlapping between the two activities and there was indeed a SAP MED upstream and a SAP BIO downstream. Drawing conclusions from the discussion, the MAP Coordinator agreed that there was a need for more effective implementation of the SAP BIO.

52. The representative of the GEF Secretariat said that, first of all, the Partnership framework had been established for the two SAPs, which were both ready to be implemented. Secondly, the response given by countries appeared to be clear and underlined their interest in the SAP BIO. It was therefore necessary to draw the consequences by strengthening that component in the regional project and adapting the Investment Fund so as to allocate resources more directly to action in that area. Little time was left to do so. It was an opportunity for the GEF to undertake a major project for the two focal areas of biological diversity and combating pollution and to decide on eligibility at the end of October. It would therefore be useful if the meeting adopted a recommendation to that effect.

Agenda item 5. Multilateral and bilateral technical assistance

53. Ms Selma Čengić, representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, introduced several projects that had been undertaken in her country including, *inter alia*, the preparation of a plan for the management of the Sava River Basin, transboundary cooperation through the management of shared natural resources (Neretva Delta, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, 2001-2003, within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe) and the integrated management of the ecosystem of the Neretva and Trebisnjica River Basins (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia).

54. Mr Francesco Presicce, Expert, Italian Ministry of the Environment, outlined the assistance given by Italy to other Mediterranean countries. For example, the MEDREP Programme promoted the concept of innovative partnership, bringing together some 20 major actors in the region - ministries, government agencies, scientific institutions, UNEP and the World Bank - in order to supply electricity and provide sustainable energy services, targeting rural populations. One other example: Italy participated in a water programme for Africa with the objective of creating desalination systems, reusing wastewater and plants for

supplying water driven by renewable energy. Through the variety and effectiveness of those cooperation activities, Italy sought to show the vast potential for sustainable growth and the strength of the cultural links uniting the countries of the North and South of the Mediterranean.

Agenda item 6. Follow up actions

55. Mr Merla explained the procedure to be followed in the coming weeks and months. The two organizations responsible for the framework concept of the Partnership, namely, UNEP and the World Bank, would take into account the reactions and recommendations of the countries at the present meeting in order to revise certain parts of the document presented at the Meeting, where needed, within a week or two and submit it in final form to the GEF Secretariat, which would either approve it or request further modifications before the GEF CEO decided to accept it among the projects in the pipeline. The GEF would then be in a position to disburse the funds (up to US\$700,000) for the more detailed design of the project as a whole, and countries would, for their part, jointly provide their co-financing. The period for the detailed formulation of the full-size Project - PDF-B would be approximately one year from the PDF-B approval. The final proposal, which had to be endorsed by the GEF National Focal Points (without countries necessarily having to commit themselves to the Partnership) would then be put before the GEF Council (which could occur within about one year).

Agenda item 7: Conclusions and recommendations

56. Mr Vladimir Mamaev, Task Manager of UNEP/GEF, considered that the meeting had been fruitful: countries had shown their interest and the two organizations responsible for the framework concept could work constructively with them. Three representatives of countries endorsed that view, emphasizing that the Partnership provided a useful opportunity to respond to the need for implementation underlined on several occasions at meetings of the Contracting Parties, even though some questions still had to be settled, timetables fixed and further consultation meetings planned. The representative of the Italian Government emphasized that the purpose of the initiative was to catalyze financing and to ensure the sustainability of the SAPs by utilizing new economic instruments and mobilizing the largest possible number of actors. That had now become a plausible prospect. The GEF Coordinator at the World Bank considered that an important step had been taken. There was a consensus among countries to let UNEP/MAP, the World Bank and the GEF know that it was a project of interest to them and that they should move ahead, which had been the sole purpose for organizing the present initial meeting.

57. The MAP Coordinator said that a draft recommendation had been drawn up by the meeting's Secretariat on the basis of the discussions. After some editorial amendments had been made, the meeting adopted the following text, as a message addressed to the GEF Secretariat to be included in the draft report of the meeting that would shortly be sent to all participants so that they might make their comments:

58. ***“The representatives of Mediterranean countries approved the proposed Strategic Partnership as a whole. They also considered that the effective initiation of the SAP MED activities and the recent adoption of the SAP BIO provided an excellent opportunity to apply the integrated approach involving pollution reduction and biological diversity proposed in the Strategic Partnership.*”**

In addition, the representatives of countries emphasized that, at present, the implementation of the SAP BIO called for additional resources under the “biodiversity” component of the GEF in order to enable practical implementation of the activities at the national and regional levels. Consequently, several representatives considered that the GEF funds for biological diversity should be increased in order to provide a substantial contribution to the launching of the SAP BIO in the region.”

Agenda item 8. Closing of the Meeting

59. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the MAP Coordinator declared the meeting closed at 1.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 October 2004.

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ANNEX II**AGENDA*****Monday, 11 October 2004*****Agenda item 1. Opening (10,00 h.)**

Brief introductory statements will be made by the MAP Coordinator, including objectives of the Stocktaking Meeting, and by the Director General for Environmental Research and Development, Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory.

**Agenda item 2. Review of major Achievements of the previous GEF
Mediterranean Project**

A brief presentation will be made on the major results of the previous Mediterranean GEF Project covering the status of implementation of the SAP MED and SAP BIO and the preparation of the revised TDA.

Agenda item 3. The proposed GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean

The representatives of the GEF Secretariat and of the World Bank will briefly introduce, the overall framework and the proposed modalities of the new GEF Strategic Partnership.

Agenda item 3.1. Regional Project under the Strategic Partnership

Major objectives and components of the Regional Project under the Strategic Partnership will be presented by representatives of UNEP and other co-executing agencies (FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, ICS-UNIDO, METAP). The presentations will be followed by a general discussion.

Tuesday, 12 October 2004**Agenda item 3.2. The Investment Fund under the Strategic Partnership**

The representative of the World Bank will present the proposed establishment of the Investment Fund including its management and operation details and examples of possible projects.

Agenda item 4. Experience with the Black Sea/Danube Strategic Partnership

The GEF Secretariat and the World Bank will review the work carried out in the Black Sea/Danube as a model for the future work in the Mediterranean.

Agenda item 5. Multilateral and bilateral technical assistance

The representatives of the countries/donors and international Institutions will briefly present their experience with other projects of bilateral and multilateral technical assistance in the region.

Agenda item 6. Follow up actions

The representatives of the World Bank, GEF and UNEP will introduce the next steps needed for the launching of the Strategic Partnership including the procedures for the PDF-B and the submission of the Project to the GEF Council.

Agenda item 7. Conclusions and recommendations

Countries representatives are expected to make their statements in relation to their interest in the Partnership. A final declaration will be prepared and endorsed.

Agenda item 8. Closing of the Meeting

The MAP Coordinator will close the Meeting.

