

UNEP/MAP's Participation at CSD-16

Following an absence of a few years, UNEP/MAP was present at this year's Ministerial segment of the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development between 14 and 16 May 2008. The thematic cluster for the 2008/2009 cycle included agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. However, the main purpose of UNEP/MAP's presence was:

- a. to participate in a side event on the NSSD of Montenegro;
- b. to participate in a side event on Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean; and
- c. to seek the support of the UN Division for Sustainable Development (UN DSD) in the organization of the next meeting of the MCSD in 2009.

NSSD of Montenegro

During the side event organized by UN DSD about "National Sustainable Development Strategies: Progress and Prospects", Mr. Predreag Nenezic, Minister of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro made a presentation about the development of Montenegro's NSSD. The NSSD of Montenegro was developed with the technical and financial support of UNEP/MAP within the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The Secretariat of the MCSD is currently supporting other Mediterranean countries (Lebanon, Tunisia, Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina) to develop their NSSD in conformity with Chapter 8 of Agenda 21 which calls on countries to adopt national strategies for sustainable development (NSSD) that should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans in the country. This is also in line with the aims of the MSSD to develop or update national sustainable development strategies giving due consideration to the MSSD vision, orientations and objectives.

Several possibilities of cooperation between the MCSD and the UN DSD about sustainable development initiatives in the Mediterranean region exist and should be explored. This was the objective of my discussions with Ms. Kathleen Abdalla, O-I-C Division for Sustainable Development (UN DSD) of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs.

The UN DSD is willing to consider assisting the Secretariat in the organization of the next MCSD in 2009 given the fact that the topic that will be proposed for discussion is the Introduction of Climate Change Concerns in NSSD. The UN DSD has already addressed this issue and, therefore, the Secretariat could benefit from this experience when it comes to prepare the documents and chose keynote speakers for the meeting of the Commission. It was agreed to continue to work on this idea in the coming months.

Addressing Climate Change Adaptation Challenges in the Mediterranean

UNEP/MAP participated as a panel member during the side event organized jointly with the Hellenic Ministry for the Environment and the European Commission on the theme "Addressing Climate Change Adaptation Challenges in the Mediterranean". High level panelists took part including the Head, Department of International and EU Affairs of the Hellenic Ministry for the

Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, the representative of Slovenia as the representative of the EU Presidency, the Head of the International Relations of the E.C.'s DG ENV, the French Ambassador for the Environment, the representative of the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, the representative of the Tunisian Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development, the representative of UN-ESCWA, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Global Water Partnership and the representative of the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED).

The purpose of the side event was to present and discuss challenges, obstacles and possible solutions for effectively adapting to climate change in the Mediterranean. The MSSD stresses the need for adaptation measures to the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean. Among others it sets the objectives of promoting the rational use of energy, enhancing the potential of renewable energy, reduction of emissions of greenhouse gasses, mainstreaming measures for adaptation to climate change in national development plans as well as strengthening regional cooperation and supporting the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

During the preparations for the next meeting of the MCSD, consideration should be given to the initiatives being promoted by UNEP within the framework of its Climate Change Strategy in view of the fact that all relevant entities of UNEP, not least the Regional Seas Programme, including UNEP/MAP should take ownership of this UNEP-wide initiative. UNEP's Climate Change Unit in Nairobi should also be called upon to provide support to the MCSD in the organization of the meeting in 2009 together with the UN DSD. A lot of ground work by technical experts in the field of climate change, in particular in the mainstreaming of climate concerns in NSSDs, has been covered by both UNEP and UN DSD. Advantage should be taken of this accumulated know how and expertise to ensure a better utilisation of resources and avoid re-inventing the wheel.

UNCSO - 16

The opening session of the Ministerial segment of CSO-16 was addressed by the U N Secretary General who referred to the issues of poverty and the current food crisis compounded by the steep rise in the prices of commodities. The high level segment, which consisted of a dialogue with UN organizations proved to be very interesting especially with the participation of representatives of major groups.

It is a common view that while the overall integration of major groups at the CSO has vastly increased since Johannesburg the interactive dialogues with them have lost much of their effectiveness because the length of the dialogues has been vastly shortened, leaving insufficient time for collaborative and synthetic exchange thus defeating the purpose of the dialogues which is to facilitate interaction between Governments and major groups. The Ministerial segments were mostly monologue sessions with the different delegations making national statements. They were devoid of any real exchange of views even though participants were encouraged to "speak without notes and from the heart" an to really have a lively and open discussion.

This is one lesson learned for future meeting of the MCSD which should provide a structure that encourages discussions and inter-actions focussed on very specific dimensions of the chosen themes. Focussed dialogues will result in elevated quality of discussions.

Following the dismal outcome of CSD 15, the general feeling was that this year's CSD 16 could be considered as having achieved its objective. However, much more is expected from next year's policy session under the Chairmanship of the Netherlands.

CSD-17 will be held on **4-15 May 2009**. Prior to CSD-17 session, an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting will take place on **23-27 February 2009**.

As the Policy Session of the third implementation cycle, CSD-17 will continue to focus on the following thematic issues: agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and Africa