



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**



27 October 1994

---

**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

**STATEMENT**

by

**Mr. IBRAHIM DHARAT  
Senior Programme Officer  
Mediterranean Action Plan**

at

**the NGOs Meeting on Agenda MED 21**

**Tunis, 27-28 October 1994**

Your Excellency, Minister Mlika,  
Mr. Governor,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives great pleasure to address this important gathering and make some remarks on behalf of UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP). But before doing so, let me first of all avail myself of this opportunity to thank most sincerely, the Tunisian NGO Committee for MED 21, and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE), for inviting UNEP/MAP to participate in this meeting of NGOs in the Mediterranean. MAP's collaboration with Professor Scoullos of MIO and with various NGOs in the Mediterranean has been developed and strengthened in the course of the last several years and we are happy to assist, modestly, in the convening of this meeting and the various efforts of Mediterranean NGOs.

UNEP/MAP consider NGOs as an important partners in the fields of environmental awareness, education, assessment and monitoring and have welcomed practical collaboration with them in a variety of environmental/development projects.

It is the general policy of UNEP/MAP to encourage relevant NGOs in the Mediterranean region to cooperate with and participate in the work of UNEP/MAP in carrying out environmental protection and sustainable development activities.

The objectives of this collaboration are to advance the general purposes of UNEP/MAP and to promote the policies, strategies and programmes derived from the Barcelona Convention and its related protocols and the decisions of the Contracting Parties and in particular mobilizing public attention to critical environmental and development issues, in creating a favourable climate for environmental actions, in encouraging public support and monitoring and in promoting the policies of their own organizations in support of UNEP/MAP's goals.

Moreover the purpose of such collaboration is to secure expert information advice and technical cooperation and assistance from NGOs, and to enable organisations which represent important sections of public opinion in the Mediterranean to express the views of their members.

For their part, NGOs have been invaluable allies in drawing public attention to critical issues, creating a climate of increased political and public support for action on the environment, monitoring and promoting the policies of their own countries in support of UNEP/MAP's goals, as well as influencing governments to create and enforce environmental legislation. This stems from the fact that NGOs are an excellent channel for reaching millions of people and for spreading wider knowledge of specific environmental issues and instigating positive action. NGOs provide UNEP/MAP not only with a conduit to the public and decision makers, but, also by mobilizing public

opinion, influencing policy, and building understanding of UNEP's main activities. They also provide UNEP/MAP with advice, information and expertise in fields of mutual interest where they may have special competence and experience.

Moreover, NGOs are also an important community-level resource in both developing and developed countries. They often have first-hand knowledge of local issues and can respond quickly and flexibly to educate, motivate and mobilize community-level action. They can help in attracting more financial resources through the World Bank programme for the Mediterranean (METAP), the EC programme for the Mediterranean and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as well as other sources of finance at the international and national level.

As the catalytic and coordinating body on international environmental matters, UNEP and its Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean have the mandate to consult and cooperate with NGOs in carrying out their work.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Mediterranean States Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution were at the forefront, in actively participating in and the preparation for the UNCED Conference of 1992, in the deliberations of the Conference itself and now in preparing an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean region, as well as in establishing a Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development. The Tunis Ministerial Conference on Agenda MED 21 which will be held in this beautiful city in November 1st will tackle important issues for the benefit of the Mediterranean region. UNEP/MAP welcomed this Tunisian initiative and is cooperating closely with the Tunisian authorities in the preparation of this important event.

NGO's role in this process of preparing and implementing of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean is very crucial. Let me mention just a few of NGO's role vis-à-vis sustainable development and environmental protection in the Mediterranean:

- your role is to influence decision makers and raise public awareness in both developed and developing Mediterranean countries, in favour of protection of the environment and sustainable development;
- your role is to assist Mediterranean developing countries in their efforts to educate and raise environmental awareness in their countries with a view to encouraging public participation in the process of preparation and implementation of Sustainable Development projects;
- your role is to cooperate and coordinate your efforts vis-à-vis the implementation of Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean. NGOs from the Southern and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean should be assisted and supported with a view to upgrading their capabilities in this respect.

- your role is to cooperate and coordinate your efforts vis-à-vis the implementation of Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean. NGOs from the Southern and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean should be assisted and supported with a view to upgrading their capabilities in this respect.

Distinguished Delegates,

From its part UNEP/MAP will spare no efforts in cooperating and coordinating its activities with Mediterranean NGOs. This will be through regular consultations and exchange of information as well as through technical, scientific and limited financial resources. Moreover, NGOs participation in MAP meetings will enable your organisations to be kept regularly updated on Mediterranean efforts towards creating a developed and environmentally safe Mediterranean region.

Thank you for your kind attention.