

THE
TUNIS NGO DECLARATION
ON
AGENDA MED 21

("hand in hand")

TUNIS
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We, the NGO representatives of 14 mediterranean countries meeting in Tunis on 27 and 28 October 1994 at the invitation of the Committee of the Tunisian NGOs for Agenda MED 21 and of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE),

We, the inheritors of diverse ancient civilizations, sharing a common vision for the future of the Mediterranean in the 21st century and a common commitment to environment protection, biodiversity conservation for sustainable development in the Mediterranean, have unanimously adopted the present declaration.

We welcome the initiative of the Tunisian Government to call upon the Ministerial Meeting for Agenda MED 21 as an important step forward in implementing the commitments undertaken in Rio, 1992.

The serious ecological imbalances and the observed challenges towards development in the Mediterranean region, being of a long standing nature, constitute a serious hindering and threat for its present and future perspectives.

Believing that Sustainable Development should be based on new and innovative approaches to sustainable use of resources and that development should reflect global ethical considerations, taking full account of the ecological dimension of politics, education, the economy and scientific research;

Emphasizing the role of the non governmental organizations (NGOs), as indicators of the consciousness of the society on environmental matters and as promoters of citizen awareness;

We agree on the following:

- Conditions for Sustainable Development:

We believe that the following conditions are essential for sustainable development and the continued enhancement of our natural and cultural heritage:

A) Peace;

As a precondition for a sustainable development, it is important to establish a long lasting peace, implying :

- A1. Resolution of armed conflicts between or within Mediterranean countries.
- A2. Implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions to outstanding political problems in the Mediterranean region.
- A3. Condemning the impact of wars on environment, natural resources, demographic composition and cultural heritage.
- A4. Reduction in arms spending and banning of nuclear weapons and warships.

- A5. Identifying and contributing to the removal of any environmental or developmental causes of conflicts.

B) Human Rights and Democracy

Recognizing the importance of the implementation of Human Rights and the contribution of citizens in defining and implementing environmental policies without discrimination by sex, race and religion, we call for:

- B1 recognition of the right to life, the right to justice, and the right to information and participation.
- B2 expeditious establishment and strengthening of democratic systems in all Mediterranean countries.
- B3 participation of women as equal partners in all political economic and social spheres.
- B4 recognition of the right of youth to effectively participate in determining their present and future.
- B5 the condemnation of all acts of terrorism and intolerance.

We urge the participating Governments to the Agenda Med 21 Ministerial Conference to:

1. address the root causes of Mediterranean environmental problem.
2. promote major changes in production and consumption patterns, particularly as between north and south.
3. alleviate the debt problem by encouraging further remissions of debt for nature.
4. fix clear, quantifiable environmental objectives linked to strict timetables.
5. establish effective National Committees for Sustainable Development with active participation of NGOs and adopt proper instruments to enforce the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Tunis 1994 Declaration.
6. ratify the conventions on Biodiversity, Climatic Changes, Desertification and all other relevant conventions and support preparation of a Convention on forests. Each country should prepare national strategies for each of those conventions and create the necessary infrastructures and means for their proper implementation. In the same way a Mediterranean strategy must be elaborated.
7. implement national and regional regulations dealing with trans-frontier pollution and particularly, the prohibition of international transport of hazardous wastes.
8. adopt a national legislation requiring Environmental Impact Assessment studies and the Freedom of Access to Information on Environmental Matters.
9. reinforce coordination capacities of a restructured UNEP/MAP to optimize exchange of information, expansion of its monitoring to cover atmosphere and land based sources, and sharing financial and human resources between the various actors from governmental, private and non-governmental sectors.
10. monitor and coordinate funds allocated to development and environment by international, multi-lateral and even national agencies, with particular emphasis on their environmental direct and indirect, positive and negative impacts.
11. the establishment of a Mediterranean Commission for a Sustainable Development with full participation of Civil Society to coordinate funding and evaluate the

implementation of the Rio Agreement and the Tunis 1994 Declaration of MED 21 in the Mediterranean Region.

This Commission should not duplicate the role of UNEP/MAP or other initiatives and Bodies but it should coordinate in an efficient and concrete way the activities in the areas of freshwater, energy, renewable resources and technology transfer, in order to facilitate the sustainable development of each one of the Mediterranean countries and of the region as a whole.

NGOs recognise water as the most crucial and vital natural resource of the region and ask that the Commission, or a special body cooperating with it, deal with :

- Waste Resource Management
- Agreed principles of water pricing
- Designing of infrastructures
- Promoting wastewater treatment and economy of water
- Research and technology
- Water data bank

The Commission should supervise the transfer of environmentally sound technology, promote renewable sources of energy; and in particular solar energy.

12. the establishment of a MED 21 Fund which should be in coordination with existing provisions under the Barcelona Convention and Agenda 21, to cope with the environmental damages caused by economic activities in the area, such as the increase of industrialisation, mass tourism, etc.
The fund can be supported by new and innovative sources, such as through the imposition of a levy on polluting activities and/or on every airline ticket and/or the hotel bill of each tourist, etc.
13. the establishment of a Mediterranean Environmental Education Network to draw on and disseminate experiences in the area in cooperation with UNESCO and other competent bodies and develop new means of communication, such as a Mediterranean Environmental TV Channel, schools on board ships etc. and supervise training for all ages.
14. the establishment of a network of pilot areas designated in each Mediterranean country where sustainable development programmes are tested at realistic scales in order to permit to different partners to gain conclusive experiences. In such a network islands should be given a particular attention and priority.
15. NGOs can recognise that the long standing pollution problems of the Mediterranean Sea deriving from oil transport, dumping of solid wastes, inadequate treatment of wastewaters, uncontrolled atmospheric emissions and soil erosion pollution, require urgent and proper action because they present a problem for both ecosystems and the health of Mediterranean citizens.
16. NGOs recognise that the rapid loss of habitats and/or species in the region require a thorough revision of our policy and tools for management of biotopes and for securing the valuable biodiversity of the Mediterranean.