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ENGLISH



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Athens, Greece, 29 April 2009

REPORT

Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2009

Introduction

In view of ensuring the smooth transition following the retirement of Mr. Paul Mifsud, the MAP Coordinator, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, DEPI Director, UNEP, called an extraordinary meeting of the ECP which was held on 29 April 2009 at the Coordinating Unit, in Athens, Greece.

The meeting was chaired by the DEPI Director and attended by all the Directors of Regional Activity Centres (RAC), MEDPOL Coordinator, who was appointed by Mr. Thiaw as Officer-in-Charge of MAP, as well as all the Programme Officers of the Coordinating Unit. A list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Agenda items 1 and 2

Mr Thiaw in opening the meeting, recalled Mr. Mifsud's 5-year contribution to the implementation of the programme of work of MAP during his tenure through the Secretariat and the RACs.

The meeting reviewed and adopted the provisional agenda together with the proposed timetable. The agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex II to this report.

Agenda item 3 : **Managing the transition, including the response and implementation of the recommendations of the audit of UNEP/MAP Financial performance**

<u>Key considerations</u>	<u>Actions and Timetables</u>
<p>Mr Thiaw informed the meeting that the Deputy Coordinator will report on duty on 1st June 2009.</p> <p>He requested that, until such time, full support should be given by the MEDU staff and the RACs to F. S. Civili, as the Officer-in-Charge.</p> <p>Mr Thiaw pointed out that until the Deputy Coordinator reports for duty, all communication with her should be done in a coordinated manner.</p>	<p>1) The Officer-in-Charge or an officer designated by him will be responsible with coordinating any necessary communication with the deputy coordinator until she reports on duty</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Audit recommendations</u></p> <p>Mr Thiaw informed the meeting of the response of the Executive Director to the audit of UNEP/MAP Financial performance report.</p> <p>He requested that the implementation of the Audit recommendations should be given due consideration by UNEP/MAP and the Coordinating Unit.</p> <p>Mr. Thiaw highlighted that most of the necessary actions to be taken by UNEP/MAP to implement the audit recommendations are of a short and medium term nature.</p>	<p>2) The meeting agreed on the focal point for each audit recommendation as well as the deadline for their implementation as presented in Annex III to this report.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Next ECP meeting</u></p> <p>Following discussions with regard to the 6th ECP meeting expected to be held on 22 May 2009 in Rome, the MAP components raised the question of the need for the Deputy Coordinator to attend as an important briefing event for her. On the other hand it was pointed out that any postponing of this ECP meeting may raise difficulties in the finalisation in due time of the MAP Focal Points meeting documents.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Other issues</u></p> <p>INFO/RAC presented their financial situation and in particular the difficulties related to the implementation of the programme of work approved in Almeria by the Contracting Parties because of the seriously delayed transfer of the committed funds by the Italian MOE. All the obligations and responsibilities between UNEP/MAP and INFO/RAC (Sicilian Region) with regard to the GEF Project.were also precisely highlighted.</p> <p>The Director of INFO/RAC, referring to the issues mentioned in the auditing report with regard to their Center, clarified that any action taken by INFO/RAC was in full conformity with the HCA signed between UNEP/MAP and Italy on the 19/10/04.</p> <p>INFO/RAC Director urged for the establishment of a small Committee composed of MEDU, DEPI, the Italian Government representatives and the Sicilian Region in order to asses any implications or impact for MAP of the recent decisions taken with regard to INFO/RAC of the Sicilian Region Status.</p>	<p>3) The 6th ECP meeting will be postponed for the 10 June 2009 in order to enable the Deputy Coordinator to lead the work of the Secretariat in the preparation of the meeting and the meeting itself.</p> <p>4) MEDU Programme Officer is to immediately prepare a file with a copy of Host Country Agreement between Italy and UNEP/MAP for Info/RAC as well as other related documents for DEPI's attention.</p>
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Agenda Item 4: Preparation of the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties

<p style="text-align: center;">Key considerations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Main MAP institutional meetings</i></p> <p>The meeting reviewed the calendar of MAP meetings for 2009 that will be taking place up to the meeting of the Contracting Parties. All Directors reported that work for the preparation of their focal points is ongoing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Actions and Timetables</u></p>
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With regard to the preparation of the MAP Focal Points meeting, MEDU programme officer reported that the work is ongoing, however, the preparation of the main documents was slightly behind schedule.

It was pointed out that every effort should be made to meet the deadline fixed by the Coordinator in its MEMO to MAP components with regards to the deadlines for submissions of inputs and documents for the Progress report, Draft decisions and programme of work and budget.

16th Contracting Parties meeting 3-5 November 2009

Mr. Thiaw drew the attention of all MAP components on the necessary actions to be taken for the preparation of the 16th meeting of the CPs. He also pointed out that it is not possible to have the Coordinator on duty by that time, so all efforts should be made to organize and handle a highly successful meeting under the guidance of the Deputy coordinator.

The meeting embarked on a discussion on three main related issues:

- a) Ministerial segment topic
- b) Impact of the freeze on the budget and possibilities for an increase for the next biennium
- c) Access to and participation of all Contracting Parties to the meeting

Ministerial Topic

While discussing the main ministerial topic on "Adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean", Mr. Thiaw, taking advantage of his participation in other international meetings where such a topic was discussed drew the attention of the meeting that, in order to be more balanced, the ministerial topic should also address mitigation together with adaptation in view of ensuring that joint efforts are being made by all developing and developed countries of the Mediterranean to cope with climate change.

Some of the directors took the floor and explained that several internal discussions were held within the ECP on this issue.

In light of Mr. Thiaw suggestion, the ECP agreed that both adaptation and mitigation could be combined and finally it was decided to raise the question at the Bureau meeting.

5) The meeting agreed to use a flexible approach with regard to the ministerial topic by considering adaptation to and mitigation of climate change as parts of the same process and tackle both of them at the ministerial level in an integrated manner.

Budget Freeze

Referring to a decision by the last ECP meeting, with regards to the preparation of the programme budget 2010-2011 on a 0 basis increase, several MAP components wondered if there was still time to preview a slight budget increase for the forthcoming biennium.

Different options were presented and finally it was agreed to go either for a moderate increase as of 2010 in order to unblock the budget freeze in place since 2005 or with 0 increase for this biennium but for a considerable increase on the basis of the ongoing needs with effect as of 2012.

Mr. Thiaw suggested to Mr. Civili, OIC, to informally consult the parties and ask for their opinion on the matter keeping in mind the financial crisis at hand. On this basis the secretariat would be in a position to prepare, with the assistance of an expert, a realistic paper outlining the impact of the 2005 budget freeze on the delivery of the programme of work and present a pragmatic request for the future.

Discussions were also held on the recommendation of the audit on the methodology for prioritising the programme of work activities and determining the level of funding for each of MAP components for approval by the Contracting Parties in line with the corresponding mandate.

Mr. Thiaw informed the meeting of the innovative experience that UNEP had on programme of work prioritising. It enabled UNEP not only to prepare an ambitious and realistic medium term strategy and programme of work but also to look at divisions as administrative structures to serve its effective implementation and in addition, to ensure full support, including an important increase in the budget by the governments.

Mr. Thiaw suggested that MAP should go through this exercise that is somehow painful but effective in view of medium and long term perspectives.

6) Consultation should be undertaken by the Secretariat at the forthcoming Bureau meeting for this purpose.

7) Secretariat to prepare a paper outlining the impact of 2005 budget freeze on delivery of the programme of work for the consideration of the forthcoming Bureau meeting.

8) OIC to informally consult the MAP Focal Points on their views on whether an increase of the budget could be proposed for the forthcoming biennium.

Agenda Item 5: Other matters

<u>Key considerations</u>	<u>Actions and Timetables</u>
<p>Under other matters the meeting agreed to discuss the following issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) New WB/GEF Initiative for sustainable development in the Mediterraneanb) MCSD meeting Preparationc) GEF Projectd) Sustainable Tourism <p><i>New WB/GEF Initiative for sustainable development in the Mediterranean</i></p> <p>The meeting discussed the new initiative as an opportunity for other agencies to join forces with MAP to work together for SD in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, it was also pointed out that this new project could potentially be a risk to MAP in case proliferation of governance structures for SD in the Mediterranean is encouraged.</p> <p>As such, it is imperative for UNEP/MAP and UNEP to have an open mind in view of using this new GEF project as a) an opportunity to better promote MAP, MSSD and MCSD and CP ministerial governing structures with added value and visibility as important forums for cooperation and actions towards sustainable development in the Mediterranean as well as b) to better link MAP with the other economic development sectors on the regional and national level, including the private sector.</p> <p>In his intervention, Mr. Thiaw highlighted the need for making a clear distinction between cooperation at project levels for which most of the RACs are interested and how they should actively participate according to their mandate and field of expertise, and strategic governance positioning that should be dealt with in a prudent and proactive manner by the Coordinating Unit in consultation with the ECP.</p> <p><i>GEF Project</i></p> <p>The meeting decided that the concerned RACs address GEF project bilaterally after the ECP meeting with V. Hart, UNEP/GEF Task manager.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sustainable Tourism</i></p> <p>Mr. Thibault, BP director briefed the meeting on the work of an international group for sustainable tourism that recently had a meeting in Marrakech, Morocco. That meeting decided to transform the work undertaken by this group into a global partnership for sustainable tourism. Mediterranean was present in the work of this group by three states France, Morocco and Croatia and in his view there was room for a more institutionalized representation of the region by MAP through, for example, the MCSD.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MCSD meeting preparation</i></p> <p>The meeting was briefed on the preparation of the MCSD meeting that was planned to be held on 28-30 September 2009 in Cairo, Egypt.</p>	
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Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting

After the usual exchange of courtesy, Mr. Thiaw closed the ECP meeting at 1430.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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<p>INFO/RAC</p>	<p>Mr Sergio Illuminato Director General E-mail: s.illuminato@inforac.org</p> <p>Mr Paolo Guglielmi Deputy Director E-mail: p.guglielmi@inforac.org</p> <p>INFO/RAC Via E. Notarbartolo, 17 90141 Palermo, Italy Tel.: +39 06 85305147 Fax: +39 06 8542475</p>

ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
3. Managing the transition
4. Preparation for the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties
5. Other business
6. Closure of the meeting

Time frame

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| 10.30: | Coffee break |
| 10:30 – 13:30 | Extraordinary ECP Meeting (ECP member +PO Staff as observers) |
| 13:30 – 14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | ECP Meeting and meetings with RAC Directors |