



United Nations
Environment
Programme



UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/4
15 February 1993

Original: ENGLISH

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Informal Consultation Meeting of Mediterranean
Experts on "Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean"

Malta, 11-13 February 1993

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION MEETING
OF MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS ON
"AGENDA 21 FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN"**

Introduction

1. The decision of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to convene this meeting was the outcome of the unique initiative to set into motion for the Mediterranean a process for the adoption of those principles elaborated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and specified in Agenda 21.

This ad hoc meeting of multi-disciplinary experts, chosen on their individual merits, joined by representatives of a number of international and regional Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, the media and industry, was expected to be of a brainstorming nature. It was anticipated that the proposals and suggestions put forward would form the basis for concrete recommendations and decisions, leading to the formulation of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean.

2. This process would be based on the presentation of informal position papers as subjects for discussion, addressing three main issues:
 - i) **Scientific Assessment of the State of the Mediterranean Environment**, with special attention to the factual and potential contribution of MED POL. Other issues suggested for discussion were atmospheric pollution, energy, drought and desertification, the quality and supply of freshwater resources, conservation of biological diversity, and the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.
 - ii) **Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean**, relating to, inter alia, industry, agriculture and tourism, including implications arising from Agenda 21 together with the appropriate response for the success of sustainable development strategies; Sustainable development country projects within the ambit of the Nicosia Charter and the Cairo Declaration, (Albania, Egypt, Malta and Tunisia).
 - iii) **Institutional Aspects**, including the possible revision of the Barcelona Convention, in view of the emerging geo-political realities and evolving environment/development priorities in the Mediterranean region.

Agenda Item 1 - Opening of the Meeting

3. The Meeting was opened by Rev. Prof. Peter Serracino Inglott, Rector, University of Malta, on behalf of the Foundation for International Studies which hosted the meeting. He welcomed the participants and pointed out that environmental issues were one of the principal fields of work allocated to the Foundation for International Studies (FIS). He reminded the participants of the two concepts developed by Malta on the common heritage of mankind and the rights of future generations which were directly linked to the concept of Sustainable Development.
4. The Hon. Dr. Stanley Zammit, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment for Malta, welcomed the participants and read a message from the Hon. Dr E. Fenech-Adami, Prime Minister of Malta, who was indisposed. In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister, referring to the aftermath of UNCED, which was a beginning and to the (CSCE meeting scheduled to be held in Malta: May 1993) which was a continuation of the process of sustainable development stated that the Agenda 21 meeting prepared

the "ground for realignment, a reassessment of the Barcelona Convention to the agreements reached at UNCED particularly where these concern sustainable development".

Since this exercise entailed new financial and technical resources, he expressed the view that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should "examine and elaborate within the Mediterranean Action Plan framework an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean with a view to act in concert on practical solutions to the new environmental and development priorities".

The Prime Minister continued that the Government of coastal states in the Mediterranean Region should, in formulating an agenda for the Mediterranean, give priority to socio-economic development, even as they protected and preserved the environment.

He concluded by saying: "While the real impact of the Rio Agreements will be felt only gradually as policies by Governments begin to take root, the Mediterranean Action Plan should from now give all of us the opportunity to harmonize between environment and development - creating the ideal setting for implementing the results of UNCED. The regional partnership that has promoted so successfully the cause of environment and development in the Mediterranean region could thus contribute to the global partnership that was delicately interwoven at UNCED.

Whatever strategy is to be adopted, priority must be given to the human dimension. Such an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean must be credible and effective. It must be a human-centred development agenda that will achieve a better world for humankind." The full text of the statement is contained in Annex I to this report.

5. On behalf of the president of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention H.E. Dr Atef Ebeid (Egypt), the Chairman of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, Mr Salah Hafez extended a very special tribute to the Government of Malta and the Foundation for International Studies for hosting and sponsoring this meeting. He pointed out that this meeting was initiated on a decision taken by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties with a view to investigating the possibility of formulating an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean.
6. Mr Hafez gave a historical background of the preparation of Agenda 21 leading to its approval by the Rio Conference last June. He stressed that the Mediterranean should make maximum use of its results.

He further gave a briefing on the efforts of his country in the field of environmental protection, including the identification of problems and their socio-economic impact, the projects required and the hierarchization of priorities for implementation.

7. Finally, he emphasized that the countries of the Mediterranean should agree on the Chapters of Agenda 21 that are pertinent to the Mediterranean region with a view to formulating an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean which should be part of both a national and global agenda.

8. The Head of the Commission of the EC to Malta, H.E. Mr. Gunter Weiss made a brief introductory statement wherein he augured success to the meeting.
9. The Co-ordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), Prof. Salvino Busuttil, referred to the historical background of the Barcelona Convention and the new cooperative exercise between MAP and the EC on the basis of the Nicosia Charter (1990) and the Cairo Declaration (1992). This took the institutional arrangements one step further by providing a simple mechanism (with the EC and MAP as main partners and the World Bank, UNDP and the EIB as main donors) to introduce the development dimension in the process of planning and managing sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

Four countries (Albania, Egypt, Malta and Tunisia) have been identified as areas of concentration for this sustainable development exercise within the Nicosia Charter mechanism.

He enquired whether the time may have come to ask ourselves whether we should update the Barcelona Convention and its protocols bearing in mind:

- i) the requirements of Sustainable Development processes in the aftermath of Rio;
- ii) and the emerging geo-political realities in the contemporary Mediterranean world.

10. Prof. Busuttil pointed out that this ad hoc meeting of multi-disciplinary experts was intended as a brainstorming session, where it was anticipated that the proposals and suggestions put forward would form the basis for concrete recommendations and decisions, leading to the formulation of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean. It was not a meeting of government experts, which could eventually be convened later in accordance with article 16 of the Barcelona Convention if it were decided to seek a revision of the Convention and/or its related Protocols.

This process would be based on the presentation of informal position papers as subjects for discussion, addressing three main issues:

- i) **the Scientific Assessment of the State of the Mediterranean Environment**
- ii) **Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean**
- iii) **Institutional Aspects**

11. He enquired as to what was expected of this meeting. The participants had convened to discuss development and environment issues in a context of free debate and reflection. They were not intrinsically meant to provide recommendations to governments but rather to suggest actions and methods designed to strengthen and update the Convention and its protocols in a manner which would make the Mediterranean Action Plan more effective and conducive to fulfilling the new demands which may be placed on it eventually by the Contracting Parties (when and if they decide that the Barcelona Convention and its protocols require revision).

He pointed out that the scientific and socio-economic issues to be examined could lead to a strengthening of the institutional philosophy on the basis of the Barcelona Convention. He added that the evaluation of the political philosophy and environmental diplomacy inherent in such a process naturally demanded a deeper deliberation beyond what a 3-day meeting could reasonably provide. But he hoped that the Malta

meeting could offer a stimulus to objective reflection and concerted action.

He further pointed out that since the Barcelona Convention had already provided for the last 17 years the appropriate framework, it might well be that rather than seek completely new institutional arrangements, the Contracting Parties might prefer to build on what had so far been achieved.

Prof. Busuttill argued that the contribution of the Consultation Meeting would reinspire the peoples of the Mediterranean with an enduring vision of convergence, despite the misgivings and difficulties existing in the region.

12. The Chairman read a message from Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Executive Director of UNEP, in which she congratulated the Mediterranean experts on their initiative in organising a forum on sustainable development in the Mediterranean. She pointed out that implementation of Agenda 21 would require regional and local efforts and this meeting was an important first regional response. The Executive Director stated that ever since the signing of the Barcelona Convention in 1976, the Mediterranean Action Plan of UNEP had been in the forefront of environmental action. The discussions on sustainable development in the Mediterranean offered to riparian States (in and even beyond the region), further guidance towards the adoption of appropriate development policy options. Undoubtedly, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention would consider carefully the outcome of this meeting.

Finally, she expressed on behalf of UNEP, her thanks to the Government of Malta for kindly hosting this important meeting.

Agenda Item 2 - Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

13. The meeting adopted its agenda as contained in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/1 and the organization of the work as contained in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/2.
14. As proposed by the Secretariat, the Bureau of the meeting was composed of a chairman for each of the following sessions:

Plenary Session:	Mr Salah Hafez, Egypt
Scientific Assessment Session:	Mr Serge Antoine, France
Sustainable Development Session:	Mr Mohamed Ennabli, Tunisia
Institutional Aspects Session:	Prof. David Attard, Malta
Rapporteur for all sessions:	Prof. Edward Scicluna, Malta

Mr Ibrahim Dharat, Senior Programme Officer, MAP served as the technical Secretary of the meeting.

15. The list of participants is attached as Annex II to this report.

Agenda Item 3 - Scientific Assessment of the State of the Mediterranean Environment

16. The chairman of this session Mr Serge Antoine opened the discussion by pointing out that the meeting had before it document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/3 containing the three unofficial papers on the three issues for discussion.

He pointed out that all coastal Mediterranean States should 'read Rio', since it reorients the way we look at environment and development.

He stressed that it was high time for the Mediterranean Action Plan to focus on the concept of sustainable development by linking the environment with aspects such as labour force, poverty waste management, renewable sources of energy, and other development issues.

He pointed out that during the meeting, new elements and perspectives regarding sustainable development had to be introduced. In particular, scientific, political and institutional approaches had to be harmonized and included in the reflection.

The Chairman proposed that the meeting concentrate on the physical components (sea, desert, forest, fresh water), as well as on human activities (population, urbanization, tourism, energy, communication and culture).

The Chairman also pointed out that:

- The commitments of the Rio Conference gave encouragement to the coastal States, their research centres, institutions and cooperation networks to review their scientific approach in order to respond to the new way of looking at the environment, i.e. sustainable development; One example of this new approach was the problem of meeting agricultural needs without destroying the land.
- In this perspective more attention had to be paid to time-frame and policy oriented objectives of scientific research through:
 - priority to trend-monitoring, especially in the area of sources of degradation;
 - more forecasting and prospective studies
 - target oriented programmes with set deadlines.
- In view of the relatively low levels and existing disparities of research expenditures in the region, more solidarity should be shown between North and South.
- Research in the Mediterranean region had to be focused more clearly on the problems of the region, such as:
 - desertification, drought;
 - fresh water resources;
 - management of resources.
- The Mediterranean Basin could serve as a pilot area for the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity.

- Scientific research and assessment should integrate the social, economic and development implications in the spirit of Agenda 21. The various chapters of Agenda 21 on sustainable development explain fully the integrated management approach to resource use including coastal zones.
- The training of scientists, managers and technicians should concern itself not just with the marine and coastal zone assessment but also other multi-disciplinary fields implied in sustainable development.
- Monitoring and assessment could be enriched by the participation of the younger generation in its various projects. The Marevivo experience was one such example. Networks of universities should play an active role in this field.

17. A discussion paper on Scientific Assessment of the Mediterranean was presented by Dr L. Jeftic, Senior Marine Scientist, MAP.
18. Dr Jeftic pointed out that the application of environmentally sound management practices in coastal and maritime activities was now accepted as the key to safeguarding the marine environment.

Regional action plans provide the most suitable framework for an exchange of information and experience, assistance and training, and regional co-operation in environmental management. Any action in a regional sea should be based on sound and reliable environmental assessment. Environmental assessment gives emphasis to activities such as baseline studies; research and monitoring of the sources; levels and effects of marine pollutants; ecosystem studies; studies of coastal and marine activities and social and economic factors that may influence, or may be influenced by, environmental legislation. Scientific research, the collection of data and information and, as needed, the development of comparable data and information on a region was usually a priority task. A great deal of knowledge was needed to assess the effects of pollutants in the sea, and therefore, environmental assessment should include sound monitoring and research programmes.

19. Monitoring was an important component of environmental assessment. All monitoring programmes should have precise and focused objectives but unfortunately they are, he said, too often an end in themselves instead of being a tool and scientific basis for environmental management. Monitoring must be backed by the political will to enforce adequate controls and the legal instruments, either national or international that set acceptable standards of environmental quality, rates of discharge or other agreed targets.
20. Assessment of any of the environmental problems should be approached through the following steps:
 - a/ Identification of causes;
 - b/ Measurements and collection of information;
 - c/ Assessment of effects;
 - d/ Assessment of risks;
 - e/ Measures for the solution of the problem

f/ Implementation of the measures.

Unfortunately, a step which was quite often neglected was the implementation of measures.

21. Coastal States should continue to study the implications of climatic changes on coastal areas in order to apply integrated management approaches and predict the effects of such changes.
22. After the presentation of the paper, a general discussion took place. Among the points raised was the usefulness of scientific research and assessment for the user and the need for it to reflect the dynamic nature of the areas studied.
23. There were differing views as to the shift of attention from sea to land and as to the kind of changes and adjustments required in the present programmes.
24. During the discussion, the calendar of the implementation of the Land-Based Sources Protocol of the Barcelona Convention as well as the List of Common Measures adopted so far by the Contracting Parties were presented.
25. Another subject referred to was the importance of close collaboration between scientists and policy-makers, between national and regional institutions, and between natural and social scientists.
26. Specific problems faced by countries in the South and East of the Mediterranean regarding limitations of resources, institutions, structures, staff, equipment and know-how and the need for greater solidarity between North and South were stressed.
27. The key role of women and other sectors of the population such as young people within the development process was emphasized by some participants.
28. The importance of risk-assessment within the area of scientific assessment was highlighted and the need for training of scientists, technicians, managers and others was underlined.
29. Other areas were also discussed. Some of these formulated as proposals and attached as Annex III to this report.

Agenda Item 4 - Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean

30. The Chairman of the session, Mr. M. Ennabli, opened the discussion on this topic by referring to the development leading to the UNCED Conference in Rio and the international response following that meeting. In this context he considered Agenda 21 as containing all the measures and actions which may allow the countries to start the twenty-first century in such a way as to achieve sustainable development. He said that the task of each country was, at this stage, to translate the meaning and the content of Agenda 21 into practical terms.

31. Prof. E. Scicluna, introduced his paper on the subject, contained in document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/3.

He started by highlighting the many worrying trends regarding the degradation of resources such as water, soil, forests in the Mediterranean due to pressures of development. He indicated the alternative strategies available (such as water saving irrigation, re-use of products, energy efficient technologies and others). In view of the present day realities and the lessons learnt on development and the environment over the last two decades countries need to:

- a/ adopt an integrated approach to the planning and management of their coastal resources;
 - b/ reflect this approach more fully in their legislation, regulations, development planning, and economic and social policies;
 - c/ apply appropriate techniques and procedures for the integrated analyses of data on land and marine resources and uses (remote sensing and GIS);
 - d/ assess economic, social and environmental impacts, risks, costs and benefits through prospective studies, modelling, carrying capacity studies and EIAs;
 - e/ participate in the setting up of networked information systems, such as data banks, monitoring programmes, and environmental data observatories;
 - f/ strengthen and develop the policy making and decision making structures, together with the planning and management procedures and methods, through capacity building;
 - g/ review and, where appropriate, revise the mandates of institutions (national and regional) that deal with coastal land and marine resource management to include explicitly the interdisciplinary integration of environmental, social and economic issues.
32. The experts from the four countries selected as country pilot projects for sustainable development within the framework of the Nicosia Charter programme (Albania, Egypt, Malta and Tunisia) made a brief presentation.
33. Dr Stanley Zammit, Malta's Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, intervened during the general debate describing his country's ideas regarding an "Agenda 21 for Malta". The full text of the statement is contained in Annex IV to this report.
34. There was a discussion about whether concrete actions should supersede the political will or vice-versa. There was agreement, however, as to the need to identify the actions within Agenda 21, after a careful review, so that appropriate actions be taken at regional level.

Some of the points raised during the discussion included the following:

- a/ The creation of regional and national commissions for sustainable development;
- b/ the need to distinguish between inter-generational equity and intra-generational equity;
- c/ the risk to use the term "sustainable development" as a catch-phrase devoid of substance;
- d/ the role of economic instruments within a market-economy;
- e/ the emphasis on capacity-building and the role to be played by MAP in this area;
- f/ the important role of networks;
- g/ the need to become fully conversant with the contents and implications of Agenda 21;
- h/ the need to identify the scientific and technical sub-regions within the Mediterranean, so as to group several countries around a specific entity;
- i/ the need for sustainable development policies to address simultaneously development, sustainable resource management and poverty eradication;
- j/ the need to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in the implementation of their sustainable development policies notably in the transfer of clean technologies and the recycling of the debt in environmental protection projects.

35. Some of the above topics and others have been embodied as proposals which are attached as Annex III to this report.

Agenda Item 5 - Institutional Issues

36. The Chairman of the session Prof. D. Attard, opened the session on this topic by pointing out that the 1976 Barcelona Convention remain a model Convention. It provides a viable legal framework for environmental protection and regional cooperation.
37. Prof. E. Raftopoulos, Legal consultant, MAP, presented a background paper contained in UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.63/3.
38. He pointed out that an important preliminary point was what he would call "the legal deficit" of the Barcelona Convention system. This should be viewed in relation to any attempt at giving effect to the Rio Convention. He explained that by "legal deficit" he meant:
- i/ Lack of appropriate formalization and adequate prescription of the functions of those parts of the institutional structure which are not included in the Barcelona Convention but are functionally developed. These are the Bureau, the Committees and the Regional Centres.
 - ii/ Lack of a comprehensive legal strategy concerning
 - a/ the development of international environmental law governing the Mediterranean through new Protocols on specific resources, through further development and upgrading of "soft law" instruments (e.g. Environmental Codes of Conduct for TNC's) through elaboration and practical application of the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle (PPP), and the principle of differentiated responsibility and the settlement of disputes

- procedures in the Mediterranean context;
- b/ the overall monitoring of the effectiveness of the legal instruments implementing the Barcelona Convention system and of the degree of enforcement;
- c/ authoritative legal advice to the organs, the Meetings of the Contracting Parties and each Contracting Party;
- d/ the offering of legal information, legal assistance and legal training.

iii/ Lack of any institutional mechanism implementing this comprehensive legal strategy.

39. He stated that before we embark on any consideration of implementing Agenda 21 in the context of the Mediterranean we should take into account three things:

First, that the concept of "sustainable development " as well the Precautionary Principle as a common or public interest concept carries with it conflicting claims about its implications. Disputes over its application will arise: State conduct will depend on context and such a dependence, in the very definition of this concept, will require the reinforcement of the legal and institutional component of the MAP.

Second, that the text of the Barcelona Convention does not sufficiently reflect the management component of MAP which concerns its integrated planning of the development and management of the various resources of the Mediterranean - unlike MED POL. Furthermore, that the Barcelona Convention does not adequately cover the present institutional structure since certain organs have their functions very generally prescribed in "soft law" documents.

Third, that the concept of "sustainable development" as a public or common interest concept is naturally vague; it needs specification and clarification. This, however, could be effected 'procedurally' rather than 'substantially'. In point of fact, the Barcelona Convention system itself can always benefit from such an approach. The elaboration and application of 'substantive' principles, concepts and ideas require the development of the proper framework for discussion reflected in a well-defined institutional structure carrying the necessary weight of legitimacy and political support.

40. Prof. Raftopoulos pointed out that the need to pursue the protection and sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment in the context of the Barcelona Convention requires two elements:

First, improving the functions of the present institutional structures (the Bureau, the Scientific and Technical Committee) by formalizing their competence and upgrading their operation, either through an annex to the Barcelona Convention, or through a resolution by the meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Second, representation based on the principles of equitable geographical distribution and personal merits of its members. A Legal Committee should be entrusted with the duty of carrying out the comprehensive legal strategy of the MAP, offering its expert and support services to each Contracting Party and to the organs of the Barcelona Convention on issues concerning the development and implementation of the

Barcelona Convention system integrating the sustainable development objective.

Apart from the Legal Committee, an Arbitration Office for Environmental Disputes within MAP could be established, on the basis of funds available by the Mediterranean Trust Fund, for the facilitation of the implementation of the peaceful settlement of disputes procedure that may become topical if Agenda 21 is to be effectively applied in the Mediterranean.

41. During the general discussion the need for a political will to apply Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean was emphasized. It was further mentioned that actions to demonstrate this political will have to be taken in terms of legislation and the establishment of a legal Committee within the MAP framework. In this connection, Mr. E. Franzi of Monaco informed the meeting that Prince Rainier of Monaco had proposed, on the occasion of the Rio Conference, the establishment of a liaison Bureau entrusted with the coordination and follow-up of the application of the different conventions covering totally or partially the protection of the Mediterranean national heritage which, in fact, in his view, complemented the proposed establishment of a MAP legal Committee.
42. One participant pointed out that UNESCO was intending to set up a "Project for the Mediterranean" of cultural cooperation at the level of the Basin. Once approved, this project of regional cooperation would be implemented during the biennium 1994-1995.
43. Views were expressed to the effect that Mediterranean cooperation could develop more easily if there existed a certain "organic texture" of professional or quasi-professional relations, such as among ports, cities, parks and reserves, national environment agencies, universities, etc. It was felt that relations between 'actors' in these areas were scarce in the region. They had to be encouraged.

Putting into practice the commitments of the Rio Conference would not, entirely, concern the MAP and the riparian States gathered within this framework. But it rests with MAP, and its competent authorities, particularly the Ordinary Meeting to be convened at Antalya in October 1993, to propose measures whereby the region could serve as a pilot region for putting into practice the Convention on bio-diversity. MAP had also to adapt its priorities and structures to introduce more sustainable development in its activities.

MAP must also encourage - or provide an opportunity for other authorities to encourage - activities relevant to sustainable development: U.N. institutions, UNESCO, FAO, WMO, etc. or those created spontaneously in the region, the METAP of the World Bank (better linked to the GEF), Medcites for cities, the network of universities, the Chamber of Commerce network in the Mediterranean (ASCAME), the Mediterranean University which was ready to launch a campaign to save water in 1994, Marevivo which had launched an Annual Day of the Mediterranean. Some universities had plans to set up chairs on Risk Management.

44. The launching of a new structure, that of a Mediterranean Authority, based on the Mediterranean Action Plan, was proposed. While considered a useful concept, some participants felt that further consultations were needed before creating it or any other new institutions. The concept of a Mediterranean Authority might be a starting point,

and should not be intended as a super-structure. However, a reshaped and strengthened MAP could largely serve this purpose.

One participant pointed out that the objective was not to create a new structure within MAP, but to improve the cooperation among Contracting Parties in the technical field. As an illustration, the participant presented the recent initiative of the Minister of Environment of France to convene a meeting of secretariats and experts of the Barcelona Convention and Oslo-Paris Convention to compare actions undertaken for the protection of the Mediterranean and North-East Atlantic from pollution.

45. It was also felt that to implement the recommendations of the Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean Basin, research and training were indispensable. Universities, through their networks, could play a valuable role in bringing about sustainable development for the Mediterranean. UNESCO might be asked to fund at the "Mediterranean University", a chair in "Mediterranean Studies".
46. The Meeting was informed of the Council of Europe project to set up a "European Decentralized Faculty of Risk Sciences" which could be extended to universities of the South through the network of the Mediterranean University.
47. The view was expressed that the development of the Barcelona Convention should be in conformity with the Law of the Sea Convention and that the implementation of Agenda 21 should take into account the legal realities facing the Mediterranean (lack of EEZ). It was also pointed out that the new proposed organs (Legal Committee and the office for Environmental Arbitration) should be independent bodies.
48. One participant stressed that for Agenda 21, we had to accept development as the main goal. Harmonious development for the Mediterranean required the formation of institutions supervising this development, which would include development financing provided by international financial institutions.
49. Another participant stated that we cannot have sustainable development in the Mediterranean without introducing, strengthening and institutionalizing new procedures and mechanisms of conflict resolution and decision-making using participatory processes with direct contacts among various actors (such as industry, universities, NGOs, local authorities, etc.).

He presented a matrix to clarify his statement where "innovative" processes and activities to be carried out at the regional level could be listed so as to facilitate the assignment of each activity to the appropriate existing or new body and/or function. He proposed that MAP should produce such a matrix for future meetings.

50. In concluding the general debate Prof. Raftopoulos pointed out that much still remained to be done for the development of the Barcelona Convention to cover all the concerns expressed and that in fact the Barcelona Convention still lacked the "teeth" to enforce the commitments of the Contracting Parties.

51. In the concluding session, the Co-ordinator, Prof. Busuttil underlined the usefulness of the brainstorming meeting since it provided thoughts and guidelines for an eventual formulation of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean which would be of great assistance for a future meeting of MAP. He stated that the Consultation meeting had fully achieved what it set out to do, that is to provoke informed and enlightened reflection and proposals to improve through appropriate cooperative mechanisms and actions, the quality of life of the people of the Mediterranean.

Agenda Item 6 - Any other matters

52. No other issues were raised under this item.

Agenda Item 7 - Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

53. The meeting adopted its report on Saturday, 13 February 1993.

Agenda Item 8 - Closure of the Meeting

54. The meeting was closed by The Hon. Prof. Guido De Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malta. He referred in particular to the proposal made by Malta at the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe, later adopted by the Conference meeting in Helsinki in 1992. He referred to Chapter IV of the Helsinki Document -The Challenges of Change which states: "The Participating States, reaffirming their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations as subscribed to by them, declare their understanding that the CSCE is a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and as such provides an important link between European and global security".

In this context the Deputy Prime Minister felt that serious thought should be given to creating a regional Mediterranean United Nations entity that could be inspired and regulated, perhaps in its initial phases, from and through an expanded Barcelona Convention with terms of reference encompassing not only environment but social and economic interactions that will promote a process of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

"The political aspects of any decisions taken to strengthen sustainable development in the Mediterranean has also been the subject of consideration by this Meeting. It is true that without the political dimension it is difficult to arrive at long lasting arrangements. Yet many a time the social and economic dimensions tend to have an indelible influence on decisions taken at the political level. It is important to ensure that the messages which come out of this important Meeting reach the different Government, organizations, the media and the private sector which you represent. The commitments and the measures that have to be taken must contribute to resolving the level of disparities which still exist in this region - described by many as the cradle of civilization" (the full text included as Annex V to this report).

55. The meeting was closed at 14.00 hours on Saturday, 13 February 1993.

ANNEX I
SPEECH BY THE HON. EDWARD FENECH ADAMI
PRIME MINISTER OF MALTA
AT THE OPENING SESSION

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to open this meeting of experts to prepare an "Agenda 21" for the Mediterranean as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held last year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

It is also a satisfaction for me and for Malta to note that this meeting will be the first one after Rio to discuss under a regional arrangement - the Mediterranean Action Plan - the regional dimension of the important and far-reaching conclusions of UNCED. This ad-hoc meeting of multi-disciplinary experts and representatives of organisations and non-governmental agencies, the media and industry, has as its main objective the setting in motion of activities for the Mediterranean reflecting a real commitment to sustainable development.

I welcome the presence of the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, HE Dr. M. Atef Ebeid, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention; Prof. S. Busuttii, the MAP Co-ordinator; and Mr. Mohamed A. Nour, Director of the Centre for the Environment for the Arab Region and Europe, all of whom are making a noteworthy contribution to Mediterranean environmental cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 12-day historic Conference, also known as the Earth Summit, adopted and recommended for endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly two major international documents:

- the Rio declaration on Environment and Development which sets out 27 principles to govern the economic and environmental behaviour of individuals and nations in the quest for global sustainability; and
- "Agenda 21", a voluminous programme of action which is a blueprint for action for the sustainable development of the planet into the twenty-first century, covering all areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy.

In addition, the Conference agreed on a non-binding statement of principles on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests which calls for efforts to be undertaken towards the greening of the world.

Two new international Conventions were opened for signature at UNCED - the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change which aims at stabilising emissions of carbon-dioxide and other greenhouse gases to prevent the "greenhouse effect"; and the Convention on Biological Diversity which concerns the conservation and sustainable use of all the earth's species and the ecosystems of which they are part.

The Conference further recommended that a new convention on Desertification be negotiated by 1994.

What happened in Rio in June 1992, can be described as a new awakening to the interlinked problems of environment and development.

UNCED was not an end in itself. It was a beginning, a commitment to go beyond reflection, a commitment to act and mobilise all the people of the world towards a global partnership in effectively approaching the immense challenges that face mankind. Without doubt, UNCED brought a greater awareness to the deteriorating state of our environment and to the critical development situation of the majority of countries.

It is a fact that the level of disparities which existed before the Earth Summit will not be easily eliminated by the delicate compromises reached at Rio. Only the solid foundations to protect the environment and to sustain development were laid down at UNCED. The construction was left to us. The 182 nations that participated in the Conference, were given the responsibility to forge a better world for future generations. Recognition was also given to the fact that the implementation of the series of agreements reached at UNCED require the means, the capacity and the political duty of all Governments to create a balance between overdevelopment and underdevelopment.

It is appropriate here to recall the words of the Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali who in his closing statement to the Conference said that:

"The spirit of Rio must create a new mode of civil conduct. It is not enough for man to love his neighbour: he must also learn to love his world, which he kept destroying."

An important step was taken to concretize the agreements reached at UNCED, when last December the Forty-Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted without a vote no less than seven resolutions. By these resolutions, the General Assembly was mandated to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (Res. 47/188); the convening of the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994 (Res. 47/189); to formally adopt the report of UNCED which endorsed Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and the Forest Principles (Res. 47/190); to declare 22 March as World Water Day (Res. 47/193); and to strengthen capacity-building in developing countries for implementing Agenda 21 (Res. 47/194).

Yet the resolution which generated most attention at the 47th Session was undoubtedly the resolution (Res. 47/191) by which a High-Level Commission on Sustainable Development was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council. The objective of the Commission is to ensure the effective follow-up of Agenda 21 as well as to enhance international cooperation for the integration of environment and development issues - the twin crises of modern history.

While the Commission on Sustainable Development will be the focal point of intergovernmental decision-making, Governments, both at the national and the regional levels, will have to play their part "to intensify the search for long-term solutions to the interrelated issues of poverty, population growth, and environmentally sustainable and human-centred development."

At the national level Governments are expected to redouble their efforts to find new avenues to evolve their own environmental and development policies. As set forth in the Rio Declaration, States have also the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment or areas beyond the limits of their national jurisdiction.

Often Governments are criticised that they are not doing enough to protect the environment or to eliminate the disparities in the standard of living of their population. This criticism might have some truth. Yet, it is also true that responsibility for sustainable development rests also with each and every human being that inhabits our planet Earth. Unfortunately, little has changed since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, which highlighted the fact that "We have forgotten how to be good guests, how to walk lightly on the earth as its other creatures do."

We all know that sustainable development at the national level in turn contributes to the sustainable development at the regional level. It is perhaps here where Mediterranean countries have a head start on other countries. The various components of the Mediterranean Action Plan have for nearly two decades served as a model for the protection of the marine environment and for dealing with socio-economic issues.

The on-going analysis and cooperation in a number of fields should continue to be fed into the global efforts of the United Nations and other organisations. In this regard, the Mediterranean Action Plan can make a very valid contribution to the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development by acting as a catalyst to the regional dimension of socio-economic development of those Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

The rapid changes in the demographic, social, economic and ecological situation in the Mediterranean have for some time now become a major concern for the Mediterranean coastal States. It is enough to look at some statistical data to realise the portent of this concern.

In the last twenty years, the population in the Mediterranean States has increased by 94 million or an increase of 33 per cent while the urban population alone has increased by 48 percent. In the same period (1970-1990), tourism has increased by approximately 20 million to 200 million. This increase in population and in the influx of tourists has been dramatically exerting new pressures on the development capacities of the Mediterranean littoral States highlighting in no small way the relationship which exists between environmental development and social and economic development.

This situation has raised what I feel are legitimate calls for establishment of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean. Already, in January 1991 in Athens, the Mediterranean Coastal States and the European Community, made a valuable contribution to UNCED by adopting a document which besides outlining the results of the cooperation implemented over 15 years, emphasised the relationship between the environment and development while at the same time representing views on Mediterranean perspectives and environmental policy.

I believe that this important contribution could well serve as a basis for the discussions to be held during this three-day meeting. Updated and revised to take account of the decisions reached at UNCED and the 47th Session of the General Assembly, this contribution could indeed be adapted to the new emerging priorities and to the present day realities to form the proposed Mediterranean Agenda for the 21st Century.

The Mediterranean Coastal States together with the European Community have through the Barcelona Convention, the 1985 Genoa Declaration on the Second Mediterranean Decade, the 1990 Nicosia Charter on Euro-Mediterranean Environmental Cooperation, and the 1990 CSCE Palma de Mallorca Document on the Mediterranean, declared their strong determination to protect and enhance the Mediterranean.

In Helsinki in July 1992, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, recognised that "the changes which have taken place in Europe are relevant to the Mediterranean region and that, conversely, economic, social, political and security developments in that region can have a bearing on Europe."

In this context, a CSCE Mediterranean Seminar is being convened in Malta next May, which will consider topics such as the environment, demographic trends or economic development and other areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between CSCE participating States and non-participating Mediterranean States reflecting the general framework of principles of cooperation in the Mediterranean region as provided for in the Final Act and other CSCE meetings. I wish to take this opportunity to encourage participation in this meeting which I am sure would be a prelude to further cooperation.

Coming in the wake of UNCED, the CSCE Meeting in Malta together with the deliberations to take place during this meeting, should lay the ground for a realignment, a reassessment of the Barcelona Convention to the agreements reached at UNCED particularly where these concern sustainable development.

Of course, this exercise entails new financial and technical resources. Therefore, it is important that decisions in this regard are taken at the highest possible level. I therefore agree with the proposal made that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention meet to examine and elaborate within the Mediterranean Action Plan framework an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean with a view to act in concert on practical solutions to the new environmental and development priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the tasks given to Governments before UNCED was to prepare and present National Reports which indicated the line policies which Governments were taking and intended to take in tackling environmental and development sustainability. It is important that the work done on these Reports is not lost or abandoned.

The valuable information contained in these Reports, should be used to develop an on-going exercise that could lead to joint action-oriented programmes. I strongly feel that an opportunity should be found to establish a mechanism under the auspices of the Mediterranean Action Plan whereby Governments, non-governmental agencies, the media and industry could be assisted to monitor, update and refine these Reports on a periodic basis.

The Government of Malta continues to look upon the protection of our environment and measures to sustain the development of future generations as a long-term priority. Through its initiatives relating to the Law of the Sea and Climate Change, Malta has been contributing to strengthening cooperation in finding lasting solutions to issues that are causing harm to the environment and are a threat to sustainable development.

In line with this policy, two other proposals have been put forward by Malta, namely, the appointment of a "Guardian" authorised to appear and make submissions on behalf of future generations that will take into account the responsibilities outlined in the UNCED documents, and the new role to be given to the UN Trusteeship Council that would hold and trust for humanity, its common heritage and its common concern. These two innovative proposals could also be a subject of considerations by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention with a view to submitting a joint position in international fora including at the newly established UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

The United Nations Secretary-General referring to the adaptation of the economic and social functions of the Organisation to the changing times emphasised that: "After UNCED, it is no longer credible to speak of the environment without placing it in the context of economic and social development or to consider approaches to development in isolation of the environment.

Likewise, for the Government of coastal states in the Mediterranean region, the shape to be given to any Agenda for the Mediterranean must give priority to socio-economic development ensuring at the same time, the protection and the preservation of the environment.

While the real impact of the Rio Agreements will be felt only gradually as policies by Governments begin to take root, the Mediterranean Action Plan should from now give all of us the opportunity to harmonise interactions between environment and development - creating the ideal setting for implementing the results of UNCED. The regional partnership that has promoted so successfully the cause of environment and development in the Mediterranean region could thus contribute to the global partnership that was delicately interwoven at UNCED.

Whatever strategy is to be adopted, priority must be given to the human dimension. Such an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean must be credible and effective. It must be a human-centred development agenda that will achieve a better world for humankind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you success in your deliberations.

**ANNEX II
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Annex II

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**ANNEX III
PROPOSALS***

A. SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT:

1. Scientific research and assessment of the Mediterranean environment should be more target-oriented with set deadlines. They should be rendered more dynamic by identifying trends and projections.
2. Monitoring objectives should be reviewed and modified to allow for improved utilization of monitoring results in management and decision-making processes in sustainable development; particular emphasis should be given to sources and trends.
3. The riparian states should extend the benefits of integrated management to sustainable development through the multi-disciplinary training of scientists, managers, technicians and others at all levels. These training activities should appeal to universities, particularly within the framework of networks, such as the Mediterranean University. Particular attention should be paid to the developing countries.
4. Science and technology should improve their tools so as to facilitate their use in integrated coastal zone management.
5. Problem-solving within the concept of sustainable development requires a "lateral thinking" approach, (e.g. meeting agricultural needs without destroying the land; improving transportation with the least use of resources).
6. Coastal States should identify "grey areas" in the Mediterranean region such as those between science and decision-making and other specific areas in the region.
7. The Mediterranean could be used as a pilot area for the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity.
8. The scientific approach should intimately combine both the natural and social sciences and the results of scientific research should be presented in a manner which will facilitate its utilization by the end-user.
9. More solidarity should be shown between the North and South in view of the wide gaps in the expenditure on scientific research and development as a percentage of GNP.

* The numbering of the proposals does not reflect in any way an order of importance.

B. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Agenda 21 is already approved by governments and it is the obligation of the Mediterranean Governments to translate it into specific and concrete actions.
2. At present the basic principles, objectives, approaches, activities and means of implementation are not yet diffused among scientists and policy-makers and the public at large. An effort should be made for Agenda 21 to be widely known and for countries to be familiar with its contents and implications.
3. Mediterranean regional and national institutions should be adjusted whenever necessary so as to reflect the principles and actions enshrined in Agenda 21 and new arrangements might be required so as to promote regional cooperation which will accelerate sustainable development of the region, giving special emphasis to poverty eradication and rational resource management.
4. The institutional framework at the regional, national and local levels should respect the principle of subsidiarity.
5. The Mediterranean Action Plan should proceed to the elaboration of Mediterranean sustainable development strategies, in line with the UNCED decisions, as soon as possible, based on national strategies regarding corresponding fields of common interest.
6. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should, as a foremost priority review systematically the entire document of Agenda 21 in order to identify those parts which apply specifically to the Mediterranean Region as a whole, with a view to drawing up a regional strategy, complementary to the global and national approaches for effective implementation of Agenda 21. It is also suggested the MAP assist in preparing a background document for this purpose.
7. The Mediterranean Action Plan should monitor and report on actions taken by its member countries in connection with their post-Rio national strategies in the area of sustainable development.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

1. Any attempt to give effect to the Rio Declaration Principles and the Agenda 21 in the Mediterranean should take into account the Barcelona Convention system. *Moving from the concept of environmental protection and conservation to the concept of development requires the appropriate adaptation and upgrading of the existing institutional structure of the Barcelona Convention.*
2. The Barcelona Convention system requires formalization of its existing institutional structure (the Bureau, the Committees and Regional Centres); the development of international and national environmental law for the Mediterranean, the monitoring of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention system and the offering of legal assistance, training and information. In this connection, the establishment of a Legal Committee as an independent body of permanent nature could be envisaged in the framework of the Barcelona Convention.
3. Mediterranean countries should facilitate through appropriate institutional arrangements such as those foreseen by the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation of the Nicosia Charter, the various multilateral contributions made by various international organizations (such as EC, EIB, EBRD, World Bank) so as to improve the financing of useful projects in the area of sustainable development.

D. GENERAL

1. In order to implement the recommendations of the Agenda 21 in the Mediterranean, research and training through University networks and NGO's could play an important role for the benefit of the sustainable development of the Mediterranean.
2. MAP should encourage cooperation among regions at all levels (e.g. among cities, parks and reserves, national environmental agencies, etc.) and propose activities to serve as the pilot-region for the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity.

ANNEX IV
SPEECH BY THE HON. STANLEY ZAMMIT
MALTA'S PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
AT THE CLOSING SESSION

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be able to make this short intervention. I will be describing our own ideas regarding "Agenda 21 for Malta" in the hope that our prospected initiative will be of relevance to the wider subject which you are discussing, namely an "Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean".

It is correct to say that Agenda 21 provides a blueprint for action in all areas related to Sustainable Development, from now to the 21st Century. However, it is certainly much more than simply a list of 'things to do'.

It provides within itself a vision of the kind of world we would like to aspire to and it denotes our convictions that this vision depends on our choices and our actions. It is effectively a declaration of our responsibilities.

Implicit in Agenda 21 is a new understanding of the impact of human behaviour on the environment and consequently on the need for a change in the activities of all of us. The essential premise to be made is that Sustainable Development and therefore Environmental Protection is not only concerned with government policy but also with changing lifestyles and individual behaviour and it is this wider perspective which must be applied at all times. A perspective which makes it imperative for us to seek the widest participation possible in our efforts to safeguard the environment. We must aspire to involve all sectors of our economy and to cover all facets of life in Malta. The Agenda 21 requires from us a truly national initiative of which we must be the focal point and prime mover.

I am present here today in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, which post was created less than three years ago. My office is already closely involved in the task of consolidating initiatives emanating from various government departments but the Agenda 21 scenario requires us to spread our net much wider. We must find ways of roping in educational agencies, private enterprise, trade unions, religious institutions and non-governmental organisations - to play their part towards the objectives represented by Agenda 21.

At the present moment, we are still caught up in the task of establishing a new 'Department for the Protection of the Environment', for which we are awaiting the appointment of a director. However, we expect to be in a position, before the end of this year, to concentrate on other priorities including the creation of a 'National Agenda 21 Directorate'.

We still have to develop our plans in detail on this matter but we clearly envisage a coordinating body and a suitable mechanism whereby it would create and maintain links with a wide ranging network of interested parties both outside and inside the Government.

We have purposely decided to use the word Directorate to draw a parallel with another initiative taken by the government a few years ago, even if not directly related. Given Malta's application for membership in the EC, the Government set up an EC Directorate to instigate, explain, plan, coordinate and direct the necessary action towards this particular objective which clearly requires the restructuring and adaptation of all sectors of our economy as well as important changes to the Government's own organisation and functioning.

We want to use this parallel to bring across the full implications of what the Agenda 21 implies. One again in this case, we are speaking of the need for fundamental and wide ranging change which will effect all the spectrum of our society.

We also want to emphasise that Agenda 21 must be looked upon as a very serious commitment which has to given priority at the National level and not merely at the level of our department.

Underlying Agenda 21 is the notion that humanity stands at a critical point, at a defining moment in time when we must take crucial decisions which will determine our future. The first step was to realise this position and this was achieved at the Earth Summit. Our second preoccupation is to deliberate on the course to take and this has been the principal concern of this meeting. Our next preoccupation will be to take concrete action on the basis of our deliberations. This will be our preoccupation and our duty.

I am confident that this meeting in Malta will have helped us all to become more aware of the full implications of this duty and hence also injected us with a new determination to shoulder our responsibility to the full.

ANNEX V
SPEECH BY THE HON. PROFESSOR GUIDO DE MARCO
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALTA
AT THE CLOSING SESSION

Mr. Chairman
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In these last three days you have been meeting to consider an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean, an exercise that has emanated from the results of the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The two subjects which have been receiving careful scrutiny and analysis - environment and development - are the two priority issues that require a special focus not only at the international level but also at the regional and national levels. These are two areas of paramount importance particularly in this modern era where the relatively new phenomenon of sustainable development has become the main theme on the international agenda.

The accomplishments achieved at Rio de Janeiro have started to seep through the interminable labyrinth of bureaucracy and the United Nations Organisation is trying to contribute, with its guiding capabilities, to the challenging tasks that lie ahead in the implementation of the complex plan of action - the so-called Agenda 21.

Thanks to the initiative of UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan, Mediterranean States are being given the opportunity to create new goals and visions that will enhance and strengthen cooperation and understanding in a region that continues to face serious problems. Here it must be recalled the Mediterranean Action Plan is a pioneering regional arrangement that has been contributing to the protection and preservation of our maritime environment while at the same time coordinating other activities and programmes that have been an outstanding example to this cooperation and understanding.

The dialogue started by the Experts' Meeting on matters relating to the environment and sustainable development should continue and be intensified. UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan provides the political precedent while UNCED's Agenda 21 provides the back-drop and the objective for regional cooperation and an innovative arrangement where all littoral States of the Mediterranean could provide their experience and their contribution towards a better future for their peoples.

This thought brings to my mind the proposal made by Malta at the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, later adopted by the Conference meeting in Helsinki in 1992. In Chapter IV of the Helsinki Document - The Challenges of Change - "The Participating States, reaffirming their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations as subscribed to by them, declare their understanding that the CSCE is a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and as such provides an important link between European and global security".

In this regard, it is also interesting to note the comments made on this matter by the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali in his report "An Agenda for Peace" where he states:

"The Charter deliberately provides no precise definition of regional arrangements and agencies, thus allowing useful flexibility for undertakings by a group of States to deal with a matter appropriate for regional action which also could contribute to the maintenance of peace and security".

But you must ask the question why am I highlighting this particular aspect of regional arrangement. I am aware that among the subjects discussed during this Experts' Meeting has been the institutional aspect with ideas being exchanged on how best to revise the Barcelona Convention "in view of the emerging geo-political realities and evolving environment/development priorities in the Mediterranean region".

I feel that in the formulation and in the future implementation of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean, serious thought should be given to creating a regional Mediterranean United Nations entity that could be inspired and regulated, perhaps in its initial phases, from and through an expanded Barcelona Convention with terms of reference encompassing not only environment but social and economic interactions that will promote a process of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

The political aspects of any decisions taken to strengthen sustainable development in the Mediterranean has also been the subject of consideration by this Meeting. It is true that without the political dimension it is difficult to arrive at long lasting arrangements. Yet many a time the social and economic dimensions tend to have an indelible influence on decisions taken at the political level. It is important to ensure that the messages which come out of this important Meeting reach the different Governments, organisations, the media and the private sector which you represent. The commitments and the measures that have to be taken must contribute to resolving the level of disparities which still exist in this region - described by many as the cradle of civilization.

UNCED has thrown us a myriad of challenges that if met will safeguard future generations. By its Rio Declaration that has set the principles on which Agenda 21 has been designed, UNCED has committed the international community with the responsibility to work in a global partnership towards the sustainable development of our planet and of mankind.

As part of this global partnership, Mediterranean States have a crucial role to play in seeing that their marine environment, their social habitats as well as their economic improvement are intertwined so as to provide the much needed sustainability for facing the uncharted challenges to the next century.

Thank you.