

MedWaves

THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN MAGAZINE

51



13th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Catania

Catania Declaration

Co-operation and partnership

Countdown for reducing industrial pollution and hazardous wastes

Safeguarding biodiversity

Towards a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

Mrs. Asma Al Assad, of Syria, visits the MAP

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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN



A challenging biennium

The biennium 2004-2005 starts on solid ground for UNEP/MAP as the Contracting Parties have clearly expressed their appreciation for its activities and renewed their confidence in future prospects on the occasion of their 13th Ordinary Meeting that took place from 11 to 14 November 2003 in Catania, Italy.:

Under the Italian presidency, an ambitious and challenging programme of work has been adopted. A programme that paves the way for major developments in the years to come; among other important issues, the following could be highlighted:

- Considering the number of ratifications and acceptance of amendments, this biennium will celebrate the entry into force of MAP legal instruments, the revised Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
- The reduction of pollution from land-based sources through the implementation of the related Strategic Action Programme (SAP MED) will take major concrete steps in the fields of industrial bio-chemical oxygen demand and generation of hazardous wastes,
- Concerning Mediterranean biodiversity, the biennium could be an important milestone, with the launching of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the region (SAP BIO), for which a substantial financial support is expected from the Global Environment Facility (GEF),
- In order to improve management and protection of the Mediterranean coastal regions, a determinant asset for the region's sustainable development, a regional protocol on Integrated Coastal Management will be prepared,
- Information on interrelations between environment and development in the region and their prospects will be improved through the publication of a major Mediterranean Environment and Development Report,
- The role and programme of activities of the MAP components, in particular the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC), the Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre (ERS/RAC) and the Programme of Cultural Heritage / Historic Sites, will be reviewed and readapted so as to better cope with the needs of sustainable development,
- Taking into consideration the Vision and the Framework Orientations, a Mediterranean Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development will be prepared during this biennium,

a Strategy that will take up Mediterranean challenges, identify relevant and realistic objectives, and pave the way for achieving them,

- Media participation has been outstanding during the Contracting Parties' 13th meeting, with over 100 journalists from Mediterranean countries following, for the first time ever in the history of the MAP, such an important event for the future of this regional Convention, an initiative, this, that needs to be kept high on the agenda of MAP major meetings,
- Last but not least, from this biennium on, UNEP/MAP will work in Euros. This makes it the first UN Programme with a budget in Euros, most of its income and expenditures being in this currency.

As things always come to an end, Mr. Lucien Chabason has retired from his function as UNEP/MAP Coordinator, after spending almost ten years as head of the Coordinating Unit, a period during which the MAP activities have tremendously improved and expanded.

Finally, this editorial cannot be concluded without referring to a very special visit to the Coordinating Unit: on the 15th of December 2003, in conjunction with the State visit to Greece of the Syrian President Mr. Bashar Al Assad, Mrs Asma Al Assad visited MAP as a gesture of interest for environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, for reducing pollution and for promoting Public Participation.

May the year 2004 be a peaceful and prosperous one for the Mediterranean and all its people.

Arab HOBALLAH
Deputy Co-ordinator
Mediterranean Action Plan



The MAP under the Italian Presidency

“Regional co-operation and partnership”, Matteoli

The following are extracts of the speech by the Minister of the Environment and Territory of Italy, Altero Matteoli, to the CoP13:

“Italy hosts this Conference of the Parties as a Mediterranean country, and as the appointed EU Presidency. In this twofold official capacity we would like to highlight the great international significance of this meeting and the importance that Italy attaches to the Barcelona Convention.

I would like to remind that the UN Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm 1972) indicated the Mediterranean as the region with high priority for the development of an integrated program of environment protection which takes into account economic, social, cultural factors, present in the area.

The Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention (1976) provide the first real example of an agreement of regional co-operation for sustainable development, and represent a tangible implementation of the indications highlighted during the Conference of Stockholm.

A challenging process...

The Action Plan and the Convention represented the beginning of an interesting and challenging process of co-operation and regional integration, which has also favoured the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership among the EU member countries and other countries on the South and East side of the Mediterranean, adopted by the Barcelona Intergovernmental Conference in 1995.

The Partnership aims at identifying and developing common projects, in the perspective of creating a free trade area in the Mediterranean, to be achieved by 2010, financed by the EU programme.

In the framework of MEDA, local and regional plans for the protection of the environment and for sustainable develop-

ment, financed by the Short and Medium - Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP) in the Mediterranean area achieved great importance.

In the context of the Barcelona Convention, the enhancement of links and integration between the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Environmental Action Program, highlighted in the Athens Ministerial Declaration, July 2002, is essential to give concreteness to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, which was approved during the Johannesburg Summit.

... and an opportunity

The Conference of the Parties in Catania represents the opportunity to set up the priorities and the work plan, which we should complete within 2005, in order to allow the approval of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development at the next 14th Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Thus it will be important to consolidate the positive results achieved up to now – thanks to the work carried out by the Secretariat, by the Regional Activity Centres and by the Governments – for the drafting and implementation of the Strategic Action Programmes for the reduction of pollution from land-based sources, and for the protection of Biodiversity, which represent the two guideline tools for reducing pollution in the Mediterranean and for the safeguard of the endemic species, unique in their contribution to the ecosystems.

The need for effective synergy

At the same time it will be necessary to ensure an effective synergy between:



- The institutional levels, thus the Presidency and the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention together with the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development and the European Commission;
- The work programme of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Environmental Action Programme. Moreover, it will be important to consolidate and to enlarge the bilateral and multilateral environmental co-operation in the Mediterranean area.

"I would also like to mention the environmental co-operation programme and the partnerships for renewable resources recently started-up with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia and Montenegro.

These programmes involve the development of integrated coastal management projects, the combat against desertification, the promotion of renewable resources, the disposal and recovery of waste, the promotion of sustainable development, and the strengthening of national and local capabilities for the environmental governance.

These projects also represent an opportunity to favour private investments for the transfer of clean technologies and for the sustainable economic growth of the Southern Mediterranean countries.

For this purpose, a 15 million euro Trust Fund has been deposited to the World Bank, earmarked to co-finance several projects, carried-out by Italian companies, for renewable resources, water protection and preservation, and combating desertification. This represents our effort for the environmental protection of the Mediterranean area and the regional co-operation in this field aiming at the use of the environment as



*Minister Matteoli,
Corrado Clini*

a development opportunity.

I would like to remind that apart from the development of a bilateral and multilateral co-operation programme, Italy is focused on empowering and re-training the ERS/RAC Centre of Palermo, in order to secure a qualified and continuous technical support to coast and sea monitoring and tele-detection activities. The strengthening of the Centre also aims at the establishment of a Regional Centre for Mediterranean Technological Information and Communication.

Further effort to support sustainable development

In short, I would also like to inform you about the further effort by the Ministry of the Environment and Territory in supporting the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. We will fund, in fact, activities of the MAP Secretariat for the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development over the biennium 2004-2005 with 100.000 euro.

Furthermore we offered to host in Italy the next meeting of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development scheduled for April-May 2004. As for the Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean and other important related initiatives, we will have the opportunity to discuss during the International Forum for the Partnership on Sustainable Development that will take place in Rome from the 4th to the 6th of March 2004, at the FAO headquarters.

In conclusion, I hope these three days will allow further and tangible progress towards achieving new models of partnership and co-operation for sustainable development in the Mediterranean".

"UNEP hopes that other regions will follow the MAP lead", Kakakhel

The UNEP Deputy Executive Director, Shafqat Kakakhel, delivered the following speech at the CoP13 in Catania:

"This meeting comes as the current coordinator of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan, Mr. Lucien Chabason, is on the eve of retirement. On behalf of the Executive Director and all of my colleagues at UNEP, I would like to express our admiration and gratitude to Mr. Chabason for his leadership and dedication throughout his tenure in this important post.

I am certain you will all agree that his great vision, professionalism and diplomacy have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the MAP, and will join me in wishing him success in all of his future endeavours. Finding a suitable successor to Mr. Chabason has indeed been a challenge, but we hope we will be able to announce the Secretary's General decision on the appointment in the very near future.

The Mediterranean Action Plan is UNEP's flagship Regional Seas Programme, and provides an excellent example to other regions of how countries can join together to address common environmental challenges. When the MAP was first established, UNEP had to provide the programme with a great deal of support; now, however, it is an independent, strong and vibrant entity.

It has grown in size quite considerably, with significant initiatives such as the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean region

(MED POL), the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, and six Regional Activity Centres being added over the years.

We hope that other regions will be able to follow this lead and develop similar mechanisms and initiatives.

Partnership

The Mediterranean Action Plan also sets a good example in relation to partnerships. The MAP collaborates closely with other members of the UN family, the European Union, and other intergovernmental organizations, in addition to a number of donor agencies such as the Global Environment Facility and the French FFEM (Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial).

Finance is indeed one of the main elements required for the sustainability of the programme, and prospects for new support from the GEF will greatly enhance implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan in the future.

It is also encouraging to note MAP's continued support to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which adds value at both regional and national levels. We anticipate vital contributions from MAP to the process of development of the European Marine Strategy, which will represent an ambitious new approach to protecting and conserving marine ecosystems and to the sustainable use of marine



Key speech

*Left to right: Minister Matteoli,
Shafqat Kakakhel, Corrado Clini,
Lucien Chabason*



resources, all within the framework of the ecosystem approach.

There will of course be strong ties to MED POL, which will complete its third phase in the coming biennium and turn to the formulation of Phase IV. This next phase will focus on achieving sustainable development in implementing activities for the prevention of marine pollution, also through the ecosystem-based approach.

Land-based sources of pollution

I note with pleasure that the Catania Declaration highlights that the Strategic Action Programme adopted under the Land-Based Sources Protocol constitutes a major contribution to sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

This in turn adds value to the adoption of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, an instrument being used to revitalise the Regional Seas. We are pleased to see these synergies.

New Strategy for Regional Seas

During the 22nd session on the UNEP Governing Council, held in February of this year, governments requested the Executive Director to encourage and support regional seas conventions and action plans to incor-

porate new strategic elements into their programmes of work. In response we are revisiting the global direction of our entire Regional Seas Programme.

Our proposed new strategy for an enhanced Regional Seas Programme, which will be discussed at the 5th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November, is intended to build upon existing achievements and to reflect the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

It incorporates a strengthened role for regional seas in promoting the fundamental principles of sustainable development and includes greater outreach to partners and stakeholders. We are pleased that Mr. Chabason will be joining us for this important meeting, and look forward to using the MAP as a model for the further development of other regional seas agreements and initiatives.”



Countdown for reducing industrial pollution and hazardous wastes

The application of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) to address pollution from land-based activities was high on the agenda of the CoP13 in Catania. The Conference discussed and agreed on some concrete proposals aimed at achieving reductions of industrial Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and of the generation of hazardous wastes.

Two proposals have been tabled after a long period of negotiations between MED POL and national authorities and experts, aimed at finding viable but effective pollution control measures.

The proposals were to achieve by the year 2010 a 50 per cent reduction in industrial Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand in each country and, by the same year, a 20 per cent reduction in the generation of hazardous wastes.

Two targets that are as ambitious as solidly based on existing international and regional trends and commitments, adapted to the Mediterranean conditions.

In Catania, the Mediterranean Ministers for the environment agreed on both proposals that represent additional elements for the preparation of National Action Plans to address land-based pollution, due by each country in 2004/2005 as part of the implementation of the SAP.

The discussion that led to the adoption of the targets was characterized by a strong spirit of collaboration but also by marked prudence, that showed the will of the countries to adopt not just good intentions, but only what that can be effectively and concretely achieved.

That is why, parallel to the approval of the proposed reduction principles, the countries insisted on having the

possibility to verify the progress achieved by 2007, in order to be in a position to confirm commitment to the final 2010 targets.

A quite understandable and wise approach that confirms the serious intentions of the Governments to effectively implement the SAP.

With the above targets in mind, countries will now have to enter into the process of preparing National Action Plans. This is probably the most important transition - from intentions to action - that has to be carried-out by the countries within the process of implementation of the SAP.

The National Action Plans will represent, for each country, the road map towards the reduction and elimination of pollution.

Francesco - Saverio CIVILI
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Catania Declaration

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention), meeting in Catania, Italy, from 11 to 14 November 2003 in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP),

Reaffirming their commitment to achieving sustainable development at regional, national and local levels, as well as to the issues agreed upon and the decisions taken in the Mediterranean Declaration for the 2002 Johannesburg Summit and its Plan of Implementation;

Aware that the promotion of sustainable development and the protection of the environment require more effective cooperation with international institutions and major groups, and active participation of NGOs and the private sector;

Recognizing the necessity for coherent sustainable development strategies, integrating economic, social and environmental issues and through adequate governance;

Reaffirming that protecting and enhancing the environment is necessary as well as an opportunity for sustainable social and economic development;

Emphasizing the need to further control and prevent all kinds of pollution affecting the quality of the natural resources and the health of the Mediterranean people;

Underlining the importance of the sustainable management of coastal regions and the need for a strategic approach and a coherent framework in this respect; and

Concerned at the asymmetrical development and technological gap among the Mediterranean coastal States;

Agree that:

1. The Mediterranean Partners and Actors in general and MAP in particular should play an active role in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) at the regional level;
2. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) to be prepared for 2005, the work programme of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) in general, and the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) in particular, should give due consideration to the global issues that are of major concern to the Mediterranean, in particular the JPOI and the UN-CSD programme of work;
3. Additional and more substantial support from the European Union would help the promotion of sustainable development in the Mediterranean, and particularly the preparation of the MSSD, especially for improving convergence, reducing technological gaps and promoting appropriate institutional and capacity building;
4. The Strategic Action Programme (SAP) adopted under the Land-Based Sources Protocol (LBS Protocol) and the Strategic Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP/BIO), which constitute a major contribution to sustainable development in the Mediterranean, should be implemented, as appropriate, and followed up effectively with adequate support and resources; in this context the LBS Protocol should enter into force as soon as possible and the procedures for acceptance of the amendments be urgently finalized by the countries that have not yet done so.
5. Regional strategies for Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) together with an appropriate regional legal framework should be prepared, including guidelines for national strategies; in this context each coastal state should participate actively in implementing sustainable development activities and should encourage multilateral actions and avoid any unilateral action with a negative impact on neighbouring coastal states;
6. All concerned partners should be actively involved in the development and implementation of sustainable development policies and activities, in particular the business sector and NGOs, through a participatory approach and operational partnerships for joint programmes/projects;
7. Cooperation should also be strengthened with the European Commission, League of Arab States, United Nations agencies and programmes and other concerned organizations, such as the RA.MO.GE. Agreement and the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, for the development and implementation of the MSSD and marine strategies with concerned countries.

Moreover,

Considering that the European Community has launched a preparatory process for a European Marine Strategy, taking into account Mediterranean concerns

Emphasizing the strategic importance of the cooperation between MAP and the European Commission, for the MSSD as well as



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for the marine strategy, in particular through strengthening ties between MAP and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as confirmed in the Athens Ministerial Declaration of 10 July 2002; and

Recognizing the necessity for a contribution from the Mediterranean, as one of the Regional Seas lapping the shores of Europe, to the preparation of this marine strategy;

The Contracting Parties agree that:

8. The initiative of the European Community to develop a European Marine Strategy should be encouraged as it will contribute to prevent, abate and combat pollution of the Mediterranean Sea area and to enhance the protection and conservation of the marine environment in that area;
9. The EU should take full account of the specific features of the Mediterranean marine environment and the concerns of the Mediterranean countries, particularly the most vulnerable and threatened ones, in the development and implementation of the European marine strategy, to the preparation of which, UNEP/MAP will be associated;
10. Cooperation with the European Community in its efforts to develop and implement the European Marine Strategy should be strengthened, both as individual sovereign states bordering a regional sea, and as parties to the Barcelona Convention;
11. Co-operation between actors involved in the protection of the marine environment at regional level should be promoted and implemented, with the aim of drawing synergies and of avoiding duplication of efforts;
12. There are concerns of common interest, such as contamination by hazardous substances and nutrients namely those coming from land-based sources, the losses of biological diversity, the unsustainable management of the coastal areas and fisheries resources, illegal discharges, the introduction of non-indigenous species and the risk of maritime accidents;
13. Joint answers should be fully explored, such as, inter alia, improved national enforcement of existing rules and regulations, the of the ecosystem approach, taking into consideration the legislation and capabilities of concerned countries, or the elaboration of a common approach on monitoring and assessment;
14. The outcomes of activities and programmes carried out by the Convention and its Parties should be duly recognized and taken into account in the preparation and the implementation of the Strategy;
15. The MAP Co-ordination Unit and the European Commission will jointly facilitate the participation of the Contracting Parties and civil society in this cooperation process.

Finally,

Concerned at the accidents at sea such as the Erika and Prestige cases and the possible pollution risks and impact of similar accidents on the Mediterranean marine environment, as well as at reducing voluntary acts of pollution, and convinced of the importance of protecting all Contracting Parties from the risk of maritime pollution;

Bearing in mind the legal framework at the global and regional levels for the protection of the marine environment; and

Convinced that the new Prevention and Emergency Protocol represents an efficient tool for strengthening cooperation and protecting the marine environment in the Mediterranean;

Aware that close cooperation between Mediterranean countries is essential for preventing and combating maritime pollution;

The Contracting Parties agree that:

16. Every effort should be done to ratify the protocol concerning cooperation in preventing pollution from ships and, in cases of emergency, combating pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and to act jointly in the implementation of its provisions;
17. MAP will prepare a regional strategy for the prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships in view of its adoption at their 14th meeting in 2005, including precise commitments and deadlines, as appropriate, by addressing the following priorities:
 - a) To ensure that each Contracting Party meets its obligations as a Flag State, Port or Coastal State within the framework of international law and in particular, when it applies and as appropriate, the UNCLOS, to which many Mediterranean countries are Parties, as well as in conformity with relevant rules adopted by IMO;
 - b) To ensure the enforcement of national legislation related to prosecution of offenders illicitly discharging polluting substances. In doing so, due attention should be paid to the need for achieving even-handed treatment of such offenders throughout the Mediterranean region;



- c) To establish and implement at the national level the procedures for monitoring and surveillance of sea areas under their jurisdiction;
 - d) To establish a comprehensive regional network for monitoring, detection and reporting of illicit discharges from ships;
 - e) To strengthen the level of enforcement and the prosecution of illicit discharge offenders;
 - f) To provide all major ports in the Mediterranean with adequate reception facilities for wastes generated on board ships, including ballast waters, according to the provisions of Annex I and Annex V to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as amended by the 1978 Protocol relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78);
 - g) To ensure the coherent implementation of the provisions of Annex I to MARPOL 73/78 related to the carriage of heavy grades of oil in single hull tankers and work within IMO to accelerate the phasing out of single hull tankers;
 - h) To identify appropriate procedures in order to facilitate the decision when designating a place of refuge for a ship in distress;
 - i) To study and identify the areas of the Mediterranean Sea where maritime safety and control of maritime traffic are in need of improvement;
 - j) To propose to IMO the establishment of additional Vessel Traffic Separation Schemes deemed necessary for improving the safety of navigation;
 - k) To set up additional Vessel Traffic Management and Information Systems (VTMIS) considered necessary as a complementary tool for improved control of maritime traffic, where agreed by all parties with a common interest, according to IMO guidelines;
 - l) To promote, develop and implement sub-regional and local contingency plans for preparedness and response to marine pollution by oil and other hazardous and noxious substances as well as arrangements for their enforcement, covering the entire Mediterranean region;
 - m) To adopt Mediterranean guidelines on emergency towing including, if appropriate, agreement on sharing towing capacity between neighboring states;
 - n) To evaluate, in line with the work of relevant protocols of the Barcelona convention, the need for developing Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) in the Mediterranean and to submit subsequent proposals to IMO, as necessary;
 - o) To work for further improvement of the relevant conventions related to liability and compensation for environmental damage caused by accidental pollution from ships, such as the new 2003 Fund Protocol;
18. The EU and other concerned partners, in particular the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, should join in the preparation and implementation of the regional strategy related to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol;
19. In this context, it would be important to provide support to the Contracting Parties that are in need, and where maritime security and the control of maritime traffic requires action, to give them the means to protect themselves against accidents and pollution of the marine environment.

To this end, the Contracting Parties:

20. **Commit** themselves to taking the necessary measures and actions, and providing adequate support for the implementation of the above, either directly or through the Mediterranean Action Plan.

A key step for Mediterranean biodiversity

As far as biodiversity conservation is concerned, the next biennium (2004-2005) is expected to be key, since the Mediterranean countries and the relevant Intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations will start implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the region (SAP BIO).

This Strategic Action Programme is the culmination of a complex process of assessment and consultation, conducted over the last three years, with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to identify, at national and regional level, the harms affecting the biological diversity of the Mediterranean marine and coastal zones as well as the hindrances to its wise and sustainable use.

Overall, the SAP BIO advocates 30 priority actions aimed at ensuring biodiversity conservation and helping rise to the challenge of reconciling the socio-economic development of the Mediterranean coastal area and the vital need to protect the area's biological diversity.

It includes 58 national action plans on specific biodiversity issues and 30 regional priority actions related to the management of living resources, the protection and conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity, the impacts of pollution on biodiversity, and several trans-boundary biodiversity issues.

During their last meeting in Catania, Italy, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted the SAP BIO and recommended the undertaking of immediate actions towards its actual implementation.

To this end, a preliminary phase will begin in the coming weeks with the view of preparing the ground for the smooth launching of the regional and national compo-

nents of SAP BIO.

This preparatory phase will consist of:

- Immediate contacts and preliminary agreements with partners and donors,
- Further reaffirming of the national investment portfolios included in the SAP BIO,
- Definition of funding and implementation of operational strategies,
- Assistance to countries to meet the needed prerequisites,
- Establishment of institutional arrangements at the national and regional levels.

After the end of the preliminary phase, a "Launching Conference" is scheduled to be held in October 2004.

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Towards a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, the Mediterranean Action Plan has been increasingly integrating the sustainable development concept and approach in its strategy and programme of work. The legal framework and major pillars of the programme were revised accordingly, in particular with the establishment of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) that is expected to pave the way for a regional Sustainable Development Strategy.

Following the outcomes of the Strategic Review for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, a “Common Vision” was prepared together with the “Framework Orientations” for a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

Issues related to these important items that will undoubtedly have a great impact on MAP activities, were discussed during the “Ministerial Segment” of the 13th Ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in Catania, Italy.

All Parties and observers insisted on the necessity of having an efficient MCSD and an objective and operational MSSD. In this context, it was highlighted that:

- The MAP is the most adequate framework for the preparation of the MSSD, and that all national and regional partners, as well as actors from the Civil Society should actively contribute to it. The European Commission attached great importance to this Regional Strategy to the preparation of which support will be provided;
- The MCSD is more relevant than ever following the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and its composition, pluralism and participatory approach need to be maintained and strengthened; this would be a major asset in preparing a coherent and realistic Regional Strategy;

- MAP and its MCSD should be considered as the regional implementation forum for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

- Italy, the new President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, will devote great attention to the MCSD and MSSD key issues, providing additional financial resources both to the organization of the next MCSD meeting and to the preparation of the Strategy;

- MAP and its MCSD should give priority to the preparation of the MSSD during the 2004-2005 biennium in view of its adoption in 2005 by the 14th meeting of the Contracting Parties in Slovenia and the 30th anniversary of MAP;

- Throughout the preparatory process, relevant available information from partners and international organizations, as well information from within the MAP, in particular the SAP/LBS, the SAP/BIO, the TDA and the Environment and Development report, will be used;

- Also throughout the preparatory process for the MSSD, and through a large participatory approach, great attention should be devoted to the active participation of regional organizations, NGOs, Local Authorities and the Private Sector, as well as of representatives from ministries concerned with MSSD key issues and priorities.



The “Framework Orientations” were prepared in accordance with the general increasing awareness of the need to change the traditional view on the determinants of economic growth, that affect greatly the environment.

These Orientations give due consideration to global emerging issues, such as poverty, education, culture, consumption and production patterns, and their application at the Mediterranean level, while paying special attention to governance and the necessity for establishing significant levels of coordinated and collective action.

While recognizing that many positive measures and actions have been taken and implemented in the Mediterranean towards the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development, the diagnostic highlights the problems related to the impact of human activities on the environment, with a special focus on the financial distress in various parts of the region, the high level of remittances from migrant workers, the rent economy type and the dependence on exogenous factors.

In this context, sustainable development in the Mediterranean should have to cope with a series of important challenges such as: the wide asymmetry between its sub-regions, the general lack of economic

dynamism and innovation, globalization, poverty and illiteracy, reforming the education sector, competitiveness in the private sector, reducing sources of pollution.

These challenges could be faced through a series of priority actions such as: management of water, energy, tourism, transport, marine and coastal zones, urban development, rural and agricultural development.

The challenges and priority actions will be reviewed during the first semester of 2004, before in-depth strategic analysis is undertaken in view of achieving a certain number of clear and as far as possible measurable objectives that still need to be defined.

Of course, coping with these challenges and promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean would require peace and security; in fact these are mutually supportive.

Arab HOBALLAH
MAP Deputy Coordinator



Restructuring the Environment Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre

Italy introduced in Catania recommendations and a programme budget for 2004-2005 for a restructured Environment Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre (ERS/RAC) that will optimise its information and communication technology and train operators. Other information activities within the MAP would also benefit from the new tasks of the Centre.

The management of the ERS/RAC will now be entirely in public hands, under the responsibility of the Sicilian Region and the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory, with the private company that had previously managed the Centre only providing services.

The total estimated cost for the 2004-2005 biennium will be about 1 800 000 euros.

The Contracting Parties adopted the Italian proposal, considering how the programme was to be sustained in the future. A plan to implement the proposal will be developed with the MAP Secretariat so that the restructuring is completed by 2005.

During the discussions in Catania, it was highlighted that the restructuring should fulfill the three main aims of:

- increasing knowledge and information, on the basis of satellite imaging of the Mediterranean,
- fostering effective communication between countries,
- ensuring that exchanges were based on interoperability.

If the name of the Centre was to be changed to reflect its new activities, it was important that the term 'remote sensing' be retained.

Several Contracting Parties underlined that care should be taken to avoid duplication in MAP's information and communication activities.

It was also emphasized that the Centre should not only carry out monitoring by remote sensing, but should make the resulting database available for use by all Contracting Parties.

The Catania meeting announced its support to the ERS/RAC activities and the new objectives of the Centre towards an ERS/Information and Communications Technologies Regional Activity Centre, to be formally approved by the 14th meeting of Contracting Parties in 2005.

As for the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC), the Contracting Parties decided in Catania to readapt its role as a tool for the achievement of sustainable development by Mediterranean industry, within the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for reducing pollution from land-based sources (SAP).



Special presentations by countries. NGOs and the press. Environment, food, and cinema

Some MAP countries organized special presentations; NGOs expressed their concerns in press conferences; a photo exhibition and a festival on the environment and healthy nutrition took place. These formed the nucleus of a series of side events organized during the CoP13.

On the occasion of the Catania meeting, the MAP held a series of side events and facilitated the organization of others. These ranged from presentations made by some MAP countries, like France, Italy and Spain; to press conferences by NGOs, mainly Greenpeace and WWF.

The series of side-events also included the "Have a look" photo exhibition presenting works by professional photographers, photo amateurs and schools of photography, with focus on food, water and the environment.

The CoP13 also witnessed the launching of the first edition of the International Cinematographic Sasà competition "Environment Safeguard And Healthy Nutrition", aimed at promoting the protection of the Mediterranean ecosystems, its biodiversity and the need for safe and quality food products that are linked to its lands, culture and traditions.

The Sasà festival included 6600 minutes of screening, 310 experimental short films from 46 countries, divided into nine categories, four of which competitive, seven prizes awarded by an international jury, 115 audiovisual debut works, and 185 "premières" in Italy.

Most of these side events were organized jointly with the Italian non-profit organisation Amici per la Vita Onlus, within the activities of the Observatory on the Communication on Environment Safeguard and Healthy Nutrition (OCSASA).

Other organizations supported and patronized this side-event, such as the United Nations Information Centre in

Rome, MAP, UNESCO-Italy, the European Parliament and with the cooperation of the Italian Ministry of the Environment and the Safeguard of the Territory / Global Environment International and Regional Conventions Department, the Sicilian Region, the Municipality of Catania, and the University of Catania.

During the Sasà closing ceremony, a special prize was awarded to Folco Quilici, President of the Central Institute for Applied Marine Research (ICRAM) for his commitment in favour of the Environment during his activity as a journalist, photographer and documentary producer.

The second edition of the Sasà festival is scheduled for 1-6 June this year in the cities of Catania and Rome, and will be followed by events in Barcelona, Beirut, Berlin, and New York, in November (www.amiciperlavita.org).

Left to right: Marina Noè - Councilor of the Region of Sicily, Umberto Scapagnini - Mayor of Catania, Folco Quilici - President of ICRAM



Over 100 journalists cover MAP meeting for the first time ever

Over 100 journalists from Mediterranean countries members of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) covered, for the first time ever so widely, a meeting of the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention. This has been the case on the occasion of the CPs 13th meeting in Catania, Italy.

Television and radio stations, news agencies, daily newspapers, and weekly and monthly magazines, followed the Catania meeting, in particular its two-day Ministerial segment. Journalists accredited interviewed Ministers and delegates participating in the meeting, as well as MAP officers and experts.

Media representatives were also involved in the side events organized on the occasion of what was called “Mediterranean environment summit”, that brought together top officials from the 21 countries and the European Union.

Nearly 250 articles were printed and television and radio programmes were broadcasted, in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey.

The key role of the media

Lastly, the MAP has doubled its efforts to link with media professionals in the region, given their key role in disseminating information and raising awareness on the situation in the Mediterranean as regards pollution from different sources and the present priorities for its reduction and prevention, while focusing on the need for a

more sound and sustainable use of the region’s natural resources.

The coverage of the CoP13 included previous and parallel informational campaigns in the main Italian newspapers and some radio and television stations.

Thematic workshops

The MAP organizes thematic workshops for Mediterranean media and communication professionals. Two are scheduled for the year 2004: one on biodiversity and one on land based sources of pollution.

A similar exercise took place in 2003, with focus on the efforts being made for a sound management of Mediterranean coasts.

Focus was also put on ways to achieve cleaner production in the industrial sector in the region, in order to reduce pollution while cutting down on operational costs.



Mrs. Asma Al Assad visits the MAP and encourages Public Participation

During the State visit to Greece of the Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, Mrs. Asma Al Assad visited the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), as a gesture of interest for activities targeted at reducing pollution while promoting sustainable development in the region. Mrs. Asma Al Assad also witnessed the signature of an agreement between the MAP and the Fund of Integrated Rural Development of Syria (FIRDOS) that she chairs.

During her visit to the MAP premises, Mrs Asma Al Assad met with top MAP officials who briefed her on the ongoing and future efforts to protect the Mediterranean environment and boost the sound and sustainable use of its resources.

Arab Hoballah, Deputy Coordinator, briefed Mrs. Al Assad on the key MAP fields of activity and its readiness to assist countries in moving forward in their development policies and activities. He also highlighted the active role played by Syria within this singular frame for regional cooperation.

Mrs. Asma Al Assad welcomed the efforts of the MAP, as a Syrian citizen and as President of FIRDOS, and showed readiness for further cooperation and also to host MAP related activities. Mrs. Al Assad also met with all MAP staff.

The purpose of the MAP/FIRDOS agreement is to set forth the modalities of assistance and participation of the MAP in covering costs of involving stakeholders, including NGOs and general public, in the process of preparation, adoption and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs), through the Mediterranean Project of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The agreement focuses on the key component of Public Participation, including a set of proposed general guidelines, prepared by the MAP. The guidelines are targeted at ensuring the integration of the public participation component in the preparation, adoption, implementation and fol-



low up of the NAPs within the Strategic Action Programme to address pollution from land-based activities (SAP MED).

The ultimate goal is to facilitate the participation of the concerned stakeholders in all stages of the process, and not limit their role to a mere collaboration in the phases of implementation of such activity or project. By doing so, stakeholders will be increasingly aware and thus more actively involved in the key issues affecting their daily lives. They will have the sense of ownership of decisions related to them and, their contribution will be more efficient.

Information, Awareness and Public Participation are an integral part of the MAP policies and activities.



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