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**Addendum to the
MAIN WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE FOURTH MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COORDINATION PANEL**

**Concept Note on
Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and
sustainable management of natural resources (SMR)**

CHAPTER 5

A crosscutting objective in the Mediterranean and International agendas for Sustainable Development

Today is clear that, in absolute terms, the use of natural resources and land, high levels of pollution, CO₂ emissions and waste, continue to grow despite gains from projects for the remediation and mitigation of pollution and programmes for pollution control and abatement, cleaner production and eco-efficiency.

Facts and figures call for action

Figures on the Mediterranean confirm that trend to be especially critical in this region¹. Statistics show a rapid growth in terms of:

- **GHG emissions** (between 2006 and 2025, CO₂ emissions from energy consumption could rise by 55% in the NMC and by 119% in the SEMC),
- **resource consumption trends** (e.g. electricity consumption in SEMC may triple by 2025),
- **water scarcity** (Mediterranean countries account for 60% of the population of the world's "water-poor" countries),
- **biodiversity loss** and changes in ecosystem services due to habitat degradation, pollution and overexploitation (e.g. over 65% of all fish stocks in the region are outside safe biological limits²) and
- **pollution generation** (e.g. waste generation will triple in SEMC while doubling in NMC). In SEMC pollution risks are expected to increase greatly given the strong industrial growth projected for those countries to meet increasing demands due to population growth and rising living standards (e.g. steel production could reach 50 million tonnes by 2025 and cement production increase by more than 150%).

Moreover those trends on the region's environmental degradation cohabite with other two facts of special concern: the uneven repartition of the natural resources - that is an intrinsic characteristic of the region - and the increasing differences between the Northern and Southern shores in terms of well being. On the one hand, concerning the natural resources distribution, the quality of the region's soil is much unbalanced following a gradient northwest-southeast, and the same situation appears with regards to continental hydric resources³. That natural situation is reflected in the sea, with a much productive northwest basin compared to the south east one, which is much oligotrophic, also influenced by the winds trend which is mostly from northern components along most of the year. That facilitates deep water upwelling in the north face of the Mediterranean, which increases production of life marine resources. On the other hand, as far as Mediterranean's standards of living are concerned, they are still 3-5 times lower in the developing and transition countries with regard to developed ones and the prospect is that social and economic disparity between the two shores will remain wide up to 2025.

Those inconvenient truths call for Mediterranean countries to take action and change a model of socio-economic development based on resource-intensive consumption and production patterns leading towards an increasing environmental degradation and a mounting polarisation between North and South.

¹ Data from *Sustainable Future for the Mediterranean*, Blue Plan, 2005

² European Environment Agency

³ *Environment & development outlook*, Blue Plan, 2006

Strategic framework for SCP and SMR

Aware of that, in 2005 the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention approved the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), which establishes *sustainable consumption and production (SCP)* and *sustainable management of natural resources (SMR)* as major objective to attain sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

Both at regional and global level, SCP and SMR have become a top priority in programmes for environment protection and sustainable development. Accordingly, UNEP has identified it as thematic priority in its Medium -Term Strategy for 2010-2013 while the European Commission has recently adopted an Action Plan on SCP (July 2008). Likewise, key actors to sustainable development as the business sector (e.g. World Business Council for Sustainable Development, BusinessEurope, Businessmed) and civil society (NGO's and consumer organizations) have largely recognized SCP and SMR to be the right approach to encompass the three pillars of sustainability: economy, society and the environment.

On the other hand, several regions of the world - Africa, Asia & the Pacific, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, North America and West Asia – have already joined the “Marrakech Process”, the initiative launched by UNEP and UNDESA to support the elaboration of framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards SCP, as demanded by the WSSD's Johannesburg Plan of Action.

SCP and SMR as a new way of thinking

SCP and SMR involve a turning point in the way to tackle sustainable development. It refuses the erroneous assumption predominating during the last century that environmental problems could be solved by just combining actions mitigating pollution from human activities and making production processes more environmentally-friendly, through technological changes and eco-efficiency.

Indeed, it is broadly recognized that qualitative environmental improvements in terms of production are being offset by the quantitative increase in consumption (UNEP). Therefore, economies can not be sustainable if efforts to make economic sectors more environmentally-friendly are not accompanied by a society-wide shift to sustainable consumption patterns⁴.

The fight against climate change shows a clear example of that. Policies focusing on the energy efficiency of production systems are, in general, contributing to stabilise GHG emissions from developed countries. However, global emissions continue to increase (by 24% between 1990 and 2004, IPCC 2007), since consumption levels and flows of raw materials, energy and products have experienced sustained growth, along with international trade, given that supply chains have become more and more international.

Introducing SCP and SMR in MAP: a crucial element to find the balance between economic and social development and the protection of the Mediterranean environment.

Integrating SCP and SMR in MAP

In the Mediterranean region, for over 30 years, MAP has coordinated the joined efforts of the neighbouring countries to protect the environment's region from the pressure and pollution of human activities. In this sense, many successful projects have been implemented to control

⁴ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *today's consumption is undermining the environmental resource base. It is exacerbating inequalities* (Human Development Report, 1998)

and prevent pollution from urban and industrial development and to protect the region's natural areas and biodiversity.

However, the above mentioned prospects warn on unprecedented environmental economic and social challenges that require MAP to not only just focus on preventing human activities from impacting to the region's environment but also on supporting Mediterranean countries to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production on which those human activities are based.

Tackling SCP and SMR provides MAP with an added value to enhance new patterns of human and institutional behaviour and innovative productive and social practices and values that enable economic development, environmental protection and an equitable distribution of wealth among countries of the region. Likewise, integrating SCP and SMR as component in MAP will set up the appropriate framework of action for the Mediterranean region to join the efforts made by other world's regions within the framework of the Marrakech Process.

The crucial role of MAP components in implementing SCP and SMR in the Mediterranean Region

In doing that, MAP counts on the unique environmental and developmental expertise that each MAP component owns in different fields of work and that is totally indispensable and complementary to successfully apply SCP and SMR according to the Mediterranean needs and circumstances. In this sense, both the mandates of the Regional Activity Centres and of MED POL involve a key role in addressing SCP and SMR from their own fields of work.

Blue Plan's studies and research on Mediterranean Environment and Development trends are valuable tools to understand the links between economic, environmental and social challenges faced by the region and to help countries and decision-makers in reorienting policies towards SCP and SMR. Likewise, the Centre's performs a leading task in the redefinition and adaptation of priority Mediterranean sectors - e.g. Tourism, Transport, etc- to SCP and SMR models driving them to sustainable patterns of development.

RAC/SPA mandate of promoting protected areas, implementing action plans and building national capacities for the conservation of natural sites and threatened species is an essential contribution to the sustainable management of marine and coastal natural resources, a main component for SCP and SMR. Likewise, the Centre's research on marine resources alteration in relation to human exploitation and climate change constitutes a valuable information to raise population's consciousness on how their consumption and production patterns and an unsustainable management of resources influence the vulnerability of marine fauna. Accordingly, RAC/SPA plays a crucial role in promoting SCP and SMR patterns that fit within the Mediterranean marine eco-system's carrying capacity.

PAP/RAC task on a sustainable coastal management provides the Centre with an integrated focus to the environmental and socio-economic development of the Mediterranean littoral. That integrated focus is a cornerstone for the identification of SCP and SMR priorities in human activities developed in coastal regions. Accordingly the Centre would coordinate the SCP and SMR actions addressed to coastal areas that may be developed by the other MAP components.

CP/RAC mandate on SCP focus on empowering Mediterranean companies, public administrations and civil society. Accordingly, CP/RAC works on boosting green competitiveness and corporate social responsibility among enterprises and fostering mechanisms as eco-labelling and sustainable procurement through which sustainable criteria are progressively introduced within the whole production-consumption system of the region. On the other hand, the Centre is strongly working in creating awareness and promoting

education among Mediterranean population on their role and responsibility as citizens and consumers in driving change towards sustainable development.

Last but not least, the project leaded by **MED POL** for the application of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean will provide a set of indicators identifying the carrying capacity of the region's ecosystems according to which human activities must adapt and therefore change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

Therefore, only the combined and coordinated action among all MAP components will effectively address the need for the Mediterranean region to tackle the necessary changes towards SCP and SMR that will enable countries to attain sustainable development.