



The **MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION** on **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

MCS**D**

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and the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention
and the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development.*

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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

The MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION on SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The logo for the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCS D), consisting of the letters "MCS D" in a bold, green, sans-serif font, enclosed within a black rectangular border.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - AN INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, sustainable development has been the watchword for anyone concerned with the environment. Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) when the importance of this concept was catapulted into the public arena, it has been stressed that genuine, long lasting respect for the environment in which we live, and in which future generations will live, needs to be part and parcel of economic development, and indeed of all society's activities rather than just a tagged on consideration. A consensus is evolving that the only way to halt environmental degradation and a deteriorating quality of life is to promote sustainable development. This concept may be seen as a way of moving forwards that heeds the long term impact of development on natural resources and that gets broader sections of society routinely cooperating with this aim in mind.

In reality, however, the wish for sustainable development has often remained just that - a good intention. In the Mediterranean region, where rapid development without due regard for natural resources has created a fragile ecosystem, the blame for this lag has been placed on several factors namely limited political will, weak institutional structures, a

lack of public awareness, a rush for fast profits, a lack of funding, rising consumption patterns and difficulties with the assimilation of ecologically sound technologies. This inertia is a pity because the Mediterranean community stands to gain from the implementation of sustainable development strategies, as the potential exists for greater widespread prosperity in the coming decades if development proceeds with respect for the environment. Tourism offers a clear example of why the integration of the environment and development makes sense. As the main earner for most Mediterranean countries and the one which relies on the splendour of the region's natural resources, it soon becomes apparent that the untrammelled development of tourist infrastructures like accommodation complexes, at the expense of the area's natural resources, will only destroy the natural beauty that lures tourists in the first place. The importance of a longer-term view is something many 'mature' Mediterranean tourist destinations are finally realising.

MCS D overview

Set up in 1996, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCS D) exists to bridge the gap between the desire for sustainable development and its realisation in the Mediterranean region. The MCS D is a think-tank on policies for promoting sustainable development in the

Mediterranean Basin and focuses on key issues in its drive for tangible outcomes. Representative of Mediterranean states as a whole and open to the major groups within society as well, it seeks to translate the need to integrate environmental considerations and economic development into practical actions thereby accelerating the realisation of sustainable development throughout the Mediterranean.

The Commission functions by allocating dedicated working groups to look into specific sustainable development issues of Mediterranean interest. In its relatively short life, it has already produced recommendations and proposals for action on water demand management, sustainable development indicators, the sustainable management of coastal areas, tourism and sustainable development, and public participation and awareness-raising. It is soon to issue similar proposals on industry, free trade, and urban development. MCSD possible issues in the pipeline could concern waste management, agriculture, governance, local management and international cooperation.

As part of its intention to encourage national as well as pan-Mediterranean sustainable development strategies, and to foster the fulfilment of the above-mentioned recommendations, the MCSD also plays a nurturing role in the establishment, revision and functioning of active national sustainable development councils or commissions.

“The Mediterranean, the cradle to so many civilisations, was one of the first eco-regions and reputedly still the only one that has realised, at this level, the principles of Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Summit in 1992.

Exchanges within the MCSD forum can be particularly fruitful for all participants, facilitating the development and the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development and an approach to a regional strategy. Thus the Commission will secure the more effective mobilisation and participation of social economic actors and policy-makers.”

**Mr Bernard Fautrier,
Plenipotentiary Minister
in charge of International Cooperation
for Environment and Development, Monaco,
and MCSD President**

The MCSD's pioneering structure embodies the sustainable development outlook that the intermingling of the environment and development requires the participation of society as a whole.

The Commission places 15 representatives of local authorities, business groups and environmental NGOs on an equal footing with 21 representatives of Mediterranean states and the European Union. This emphasis on networking, so crucial to the practical success of all sustainable development endeavours, underpins the MCSD's work and is reflected in the participation of numerous Mediterranean and global partners in all its projects.

The MCSD is part of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme. Twenty Mediterranean countries and the European Union collaborate, through MAP, to protect their shared environment from degradation, and are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, a legal framework that commits them to a dedicated environmental course of action for the benefit of the region. MAP's work focuses on the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources and on integrating the environment into social and economic development and land use policies. The MCSD works closely with MAP's Regional Activity Centres, each offering its own expertise in particular spheres such as the comparative analyses of data on the

fusion of the environment and development and integrated coastal area management to boost regional sustainable development.

The MCSD, as an advisory body, yet an entity in its own right, offers its recommendations to MAP members on future actions related to key Mediterranean issues for the promotion of sustainable development. Its proposals on the formulation and implementation of a regional sustainable development strategy take due account of problems related to the integration of the environment in development policies. All MCSD proposals therefore address the boosting of national capabilities and the identification of innovative technological developments that would further this aim. They also consider fund sourcing options, and the incorporation, by Mediterranean countries, of relevant international environmental conventions.

Today, the Commission is globally regarded as a model actor in the acceleration of sustainable development strategies as it is proving to be a forum for constructive dialogue and the pooling of experiences. It has just brought out its first Strategic Review critically examining the progress made so far to further sustainable development in the region. It continues to strive towards the shared vision of the Mediterranean region as a peaceful, economically vibrant and ecologically healthy one.

DEFINING A MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mediterranean environmental problems today

Both the Mediterranean Sea and the countries fringing it, particularly their coastal areas, face heavy pressures, most of them the result of human activities related to uncontrolled and rapid development. The resident population of the Mediterranean countries has jumped from 246 million in 1960 to 427 million in the year 2000. Urbanisation, overcrowding in coastal regions, evolution of consumption patterns, intensive agriculture, mass tourism, and unrestricted coastal area development combine to assault the natural environment - marine, terrestrial and water resources. These factors interact to cause pollution loads that endanger peoples' quality of life. Pollution hot spots are typically found in coastal areas with semi-enclosed gulfs and bays near important harbours, big cities and industrial areas. They constitute a major Mediterranean problem and a potential threat. Today, still too much untreated wastewater and too many toxic substances are discharged into the semi-enclosed Mediterranean Sea, which cannot absorb pollutants without cost. Transport and industries cause atmospheric pollution that is damaging to human health, nature and archaeological sites. Increasing sea transportation of oil and hazardous materials poses

growing threats of accidental pollution. The delicate Mediterranean ecosystem is disturbed in a variety of ways from the contamination of fish by industrial effluents to the destruction of the habitats of endangered species by tourism.

The MAP response and the rise of the MCSD

Through the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and the European Union have been cooperating since 1975 to improve their common Mediterranean environment. Over the years, MAP has evolved in response to the heightened contemporary understanding of the close relationship between conservation and development. It has expanded its remit, and no longer focuses solely on Mediterranean Sea pollution but also concerns itself with pollution generated on land due to the development process with integrated coastal zone planning and natural resource management as the key tools through which solutions are being sought. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, global developments in environmental approaches confirmed and supported MAP's widening brief, in particular, Agenda 21, a document highlighting the relevance of environmental concerns to all aspects of development, and publicised at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, highlighted the links between the environment and sustainable development. MAP responded in 1994 with the presentation of Agenda

“In spite of the constraints and the many difficulties encountered in the search for a difficult compromise between the legitimate needs of development and the delicate environmental balances in our region, the Commission has managed to produce serious, in-depth analyses and thinking, and operational recommendations and proposals for action on sensitive and crucial Mediterranean issues.”

**Mrs Faiza Kefi,
Ex Minister of Land Use Planning
and the Environment, Tunisia,
and former MCSD President**

MED 21, adapting Agenda 21 to the Mediterranean context, and featuring a chapter dedicated to tourism. It reflects the rising concern for the Mediterranean environment and the allegiance of Mediterranean states to the ideal of sustainable development.

The establishment of the MCSD in 1996 demonstrated the commitment of MAP Contracting Parties to working toward integrating environment and development in the entire region. It was set up as an advisory body, a forum for dialogue and the creation of proposals to the MAP member countries and their partners for the purpose of defining a regional sustainable development strategy in the Mediterranean, taking into account the decisions of the Earth Summit and the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development.

Its official remit is “To identify, evaluate and assess major economic, ecological and social problems set out in Agenda MED 21, make appropriate proposals therein to the meetings of the Contracting Parties [to the Barcelona Convention], evaluate the effectiveness of the follow-up to the decisions of the Contracting Parties and facilitate the exchange of information among the institutions implementing activities related to sustainable development in the Mediterranean”. Significantly too, it exists “To enhance regional cooperation and rationalize the inter-governmental decision-making capacity

in the Mediterranean Basin for the integration of environment and development issues”.

Tailored to Mediterranean needs

The Commission is in tune with a host of uniquely Mediterranean challenges. These include overcrowded coastal areas, water scarcity, soil erosion, fragile ecosystems including those of the region’s many islands, numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with few links between them, and a pan-Mediterranean dependency on tourism. In the course of its work, the MCSD must also engage with the wider social, political and economic particularities of the region. This is one which encompasses developed and developing societies, as well as several making the transition from planned socialist systems, with a number emerging from conflicts. As greater equity is a core concern, the MCSD sets out to strengthen MAP’s cooperation with international institutions present in the Mediterranean and with the European Union.

The MCSD is also keenly aware of emerging Mediterranean-specific problems. Rapid urbanisation in many southern Mediterranean countries, for example, is resulting in the frequent inability to meet basic infrastructure requirements, particularly regarding public transport and waste disposal.

The Commission is attentive to the fact that each of the Mediterranean countries is experiencing a range of unique as well as shared hurdles with regard to seeking a compromise between the legitimate needs of development and the delicate environmental balances in their region. It strives to assist them to surmount these obstacles.

“As a regional forum for dialogue and a think-tank for strategic issues, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development constitutes a bridge between global and regional impetus and decisions and the efforts of countries at national and local levels. It definitely represents a promising framework for the definition of a genuinely Mediterranean sustainable development strategy.”

**Dr. Klaus Töpfer,
UNEP Executive Director**

THE MCSD'S UNIQUE SET-UP

A broader-based membership structure

The MCSD is unique globally due to its innovative structure putting key local development decision-makers such as business groups on a par with state representatives. It is made up of 36 members, consisting of representatives from each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, MAP's legal framework, and 15 representatives of local authorities, socio-economic actors and NGOs working for the environment and sustainable development. Observers from regional and international concerned institutions are also involved. These 15 representatives are rotated, in principle, every two

"The participation of local authorities in the process of sustainable development is a concrete feature of the MCSD - the only Commission at the UN level that also has local authorities as full members. This demonstrates that bodies such as local authorities can play an active role."

Mr Franco La Torre, City of Rome

years. The significance of the inclusion of these three key groups should be emphasised as these help ground the MCSD in the everyday realities of social life.

Local Authorities are set to play an important role as Mediterranean countries follow the global trend for power to be decentralised and increased privatisation. With increasing decision-taking powers, legal authority and resources, they can facilitate positive changes while benefiting from any visible improvement to the environment. They are also essential partners in sustainable development drives because regional and national goals are actualised at the local level.

"The MCSD's composition makes it a unique international institution where the aspirations of sovereign states and civil society converge in pursuit of sustainable development in the Mediterranean. Civil society and its socio-economic milieu, particularly entrepreneurs, look up to the MCSD to add the impetus to ensure their efforts bear fruit."

**Mr Georges Giourgas,
Counsellor of European Affairs, EOAE**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide an energizing, critical and demanding vision that adds to the quality of the regional debate on the environment and sustainable development. They broaden its audience, taking these concerns out to the public upon whom effective sustainable development depends. Recent years have witnessed a proliferation of NGOs with specific concerns as well as pan-Mediterranean NGO networks. In itself, this growth reflects the rising grass-roots concern for the Mediterranean environment. NGOs are key partners both because of their specialist knowledge and due to their outreach potential. They have also proved competent at highlighting examples of good practice.

Business actors are obvious key players in the drive to tie commerce to conservation concerns. It is crucial to mobilise them for long-term sustainable development in the region, as all activities and initiatives depend on the autonomous decisions of economic actors and governments. While some groups are well organised, with a history of taking part in public affairs, the prevalence of SMEs and the strong presence of public sectors and multinationals makes networking harder. Raising awareness among entrepreneurs about the need to integrate environmental concerns into business development is vital, however, to halt economies from expanding without due concern for the environmental repercussions of commercial growth.

“The MCSDD is an example of the participation of sectors which share a common objective: to protect the Mediterranean Basin by means of the application of sustainable development. The MCSDD was the first forum of the United Nations to sit down at the same table and at the same level with representatives of states, NGOs, local government agents and socio-economic organisations. For the future, it is necessary to work in two directions: to ensure that the proposals made are actually taken beyond the talking stage and are applied by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and that the MCSDD proposals are assimilated by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.”

**Mr Rafael Madueño Sedano,
MED Forum**

Work method

The Commission meets annually and allocates thematic groups, with task managers comprised of MCSD members, to follow up specific issues. These groups receive technical support from MAP (Coordinating Unit and concerned Regional Activity Centres) and involve institutions and experts from related (environmental, tourism, finance, development and industry) ministries, at both regional and local levels. These working groups pursue these designated topics through various working sessions and report back to update the whole Commission at the main MCSD meetings. Thematic group meetings involve participants in extended dialogue with key players such as water and tour operators. They are always open to feedback, both positive and critical.

“The organisation of the work of the MCSD in Thematic Groups has effectively promoted cooperation and understanding among the members of the MCSD (governments, NGOs, local authorities, socio-economic actors) with common interests.”

Prof. Michael Scoullos, MIO-ECSDE

These groups go on to submit recommendations and proposals for action to the MCSD and then for adoption by the Contracting Parties.

The MAP Coordinating Unit acts as the Secretariat to the Commission, offering its expertise and organisational skills to the MCSD, compiling and circulating MCSD documents, and publishing and disseminating the Commission’s decisions and analytical reports in close cooperation with concerned Regional Activity Centres and other partners.

Partnerships

Effective sustainable development hinges on the cultivation and maintenance of a web of partnerships. All MAP partners including representatives from UN agencies and other inter-governmental bodies as well as of organisations who are directly concerned with environmental and sustainable development issues, are involved with the MCSD.

The MCSD cooperates with the UNCSD and with national and regional sustainable development commissions. The list of important and active MCSD partners also takes in:

The United Nations through some of its specialised agencies including UNEP and its Regional Offices, WHO, IMO, WMO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO and the World Bank; and regional programmes and bodies such as METAP, CEDARE and the League of Arab States.

MCSO OUTPUT – SIGNPOSTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The wealth of MCSO output spanning in-depth reports, feasibility studies, returned fact-finding questionnaires and other topical publications is the fruit of its collaboration with national, regional and international experts and a testimony to its serious intent to align Mediterranean countries along a more viable development path. Five sets of MCSO recommendations have been issued and adopted to date by the Contracting Parties (on coastal management and on managing water demand in 1997, and on indicators, tourism and information in 1999), printouts of which are readily available, while work is ongoing on industry, urban development and free-trade. Additionally, a report on Mediterranean grass-roots sustainable success stories has been prepared, a meeting about boosting participation in sustainable development realised, and the first MAP/MCSO Strategic Review elaborated. Much of this MCSO output is published in full on the MAP Website: www.unepmap.org.

The sustainable management of coastal zones

The Mediterranean coastal strip is the site of intense competition for space, particularly from urbanisation and tourism, which downgrade the quality of life, outstanding landscapes, historical sites and coastal ecosystems. This degradation

generates stress arising from a deteriorating living environment and results in a range of negative impacts including clogged infrastructures and falling tourist figures for some destinations. More than 35% of total inhabitants in the riparian states live along the relatively narrow Mediterranean coastal strip while their numbers are dramatically amplified by tourists in pursuit of the sea.

Around 145 million people currently make up the permanent population of the relatively narrow coastal regions while this coastal population is forecast to increase by 38% by 2025. Many urban areas, industrial zones and ports whose development has been inadequately controlled, lack adequate waste treatment systems and now constitute environmental hot spots.

Strict land planning policies would open up the possibility of reducing the excessive density of coastal areas. MCSO recommendations aiming for the sustainable management of coastal zones include creating or bolstering inter-ministerial or inter-administrative structures to sharpen the coordination of all actors in coastal development. They also seek to create and tighten legislation and regulatory instruments. These should ensure, for instance, that all coastal management plans are accompanied by environmental impact assessments and that development does not take place too close to the seashore. The development of subsidised practical integrated coastal area management pilot projects, particularly in

coastal areas subject to conflicting uses, and areas such as islands and deltas, is strongly advised as is the effective dissemination of results attained.

The management of water demand

In several Mediterranean countries, the consumption of water is fast approaching the limits of available resources while emerging water shortages are set to intensify. The MCSD recommendations steer Mediterranean countries to approach water management from the other side of the equation - the effective management of water demand. Essentially, Mediterranean people need to see water as a precious natural resource, reducing use and misuse, while regional policies and legislation need to reflect this goal. Controlled demand will be a more efficient route to water management than the sourcing of water through water supply alternatives, particularly when these are non-renewable.

These proposals highlight the fact that ecosystems are water users in their own right and that a great deal of water is lost during irrigation due to leakage and through the cultivation of water-hungry crops. Essentially, the volume of water wasted or misused needs to be seen as an unexploited water bank and the possibility of saving water must be considered at all stages of water management from extraction to eventual disposal of wastewater into the environment.

A league table of potential water savings reveals that after improvements in the irrigation sector, the most substantial savings of this precious commodity stand to be made from better recycling by industry, followed by the reductions of loss through seepage and wastage of drinking water in local communities.

One of the proposals for action urges the inculcation of an awareness of the importance of the loss and wastage of water among the public, economic stakeholders and decision-makers. Sophisticated, graduated charging systems can facilitate this process. Cooperation between riparian states facing common water demand management problems in order to avoid likely future shortages is also encouraged.

Sustainable development indicators

Indicators are extremely useful measuring sticks of progress towards sustainable development. Grounded in the reality of Mediterranean life, they act as pointers, charting and quantifying fine-tuned trends, sharpening the targeting, monitoring and implementation of sustainable development policies while helping create a common vocabulary and reference system for Mediterranean people.

Their primary objective is to give useful indications on: the state of the environment and of the social, economic and ecological components of development and the observed changes; the often significant pressures which threaten an

already degraded status by upsetting the fragile balance between development and the environment, and the economic, political and institutional responses which are aimed at reducing these pressures and improving the situation.

These MCSD recommendations invite MAP Contracting Parties to set up a Mediterranean system of sustainable development indicators. An initial set of 130 pressure, state and response indicators of Mediterranean relevance has been selected. Specific examples are 'number of enterprises engaged in environmental management processes' and 'public expenditure on environmental protection as a percentage of GDP'. This set also features 11 qualitative indicators, an example of which is 'existence of national environmental plans', which will be presented as information sheets.

For an optimal snapshot of trends, these recommendations also invite countries to supply complementary data such as national reports prepared for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and to facilitate comparative studies on Mediterranean issues. These will reveal result-based goals in the medium and long-term as well as examples of good practice.

Tourism and sustainable development

Tourism is crucial to Mediterranean economies, at both national and local levels. However, as the Mediterranean region is the world's primary tourist destination, it is hardly

surprising that many popular destinations within it have been subject to rapid, unregulated development, to their detriment. The 150 million domestic and international tourists converging annually on the region, especially its coastal areas and in the peak summer season, burden built up coastal areas already struggling with the impact of urbanisation, industrialisation and internal migrations of large proportions of inland populations. Tourism, rising by 5% each year, severely overstrains already stretched natural resources namely water, soil and energy and swells pollution loads. Its activities often conflict with the functioning of the local ecosystem - for instance when popular beaches or coastal waters used for jet skiing overlap with the nesting areas of marine turtles - a protected species. It has also triggered a massive growth of transport and traffic congestion.

MCSD recommendations show that solutions need to revolve around greater control of the industry, and the creation of informed and long-sighted tourism strategies involving all the industry's diverse stakeholders to control tourism's territorial and environmental impact. A key recommendation is the diversification of tourism. Year-round and new forms of tourism such as cultural, inland, rural and cultural ones are encouraged. 'Mature' destinations can be at least partially rehabilitated, while more recently popular destinations as well as quasi-greenfield areas can avoid the pitfalls experi-

enced by mature locations via careful forward planning, greater coordination and realistic carrying capacity assessments. Greater respect for Mediterranean destinations needs to be fostered in the tourists' home countries as well.

Other recommendations include identifying the most remarkable coastal sites such as wetlands and sand dunes, for protection, and encouraging voluntary initiatives. Hotels, for instance, can be encouraged to reduce waste consumption and to embark on water purification and recycling programmes - initiatives that can be spurred on through the use of eco-labels and other green quality certification initiatives. The MCSD work on tourism is credited for its work in mobilising the industry's main players such as tour operators and local authorities to focus on the relationship between tourism, the environment and sustainable development.

Information, public awareness, environmental education and participation

The involvement of Mediterranean people in a type of shared vision incorporating sustainable development is essential. As environmental solutions are often long term goals with no overnight panaceas, it is all the more important to build public awareness with staying power. The goal is not only to change attitudes, however, but also to motivate and empower people to act for the environment, and help actualise the par-

ticipatory approach. This explains the need to reach out to broader audiences and extend cooperation with complementary environment and development actors, especially NGOs.

Access to information is a weak point in several Mediterranean countries and this needs to be remedied to provide people with the information they need in order to participate. It is important that citizens are sensitised early in life and that specific groups, such as municipal workers, are targeted and the mass media fully utilised.

MCSD recommendations on heightening public awareness incorporate general guidelines and specific suggestions. National awareness-raising strategies need to be compiled, while as part of a drive to strengthen the Mediterranean network of environmental educators, riparian states are asked to estimate the resources needed to train significant proportions of primary and secondary school teachers. States are also invited to collaborate with local authorities on a series of manuals on participation practices and techniques, and the dissemination of success stories about public mobilisation in sustainable development actions.

Specific ideas include state-of-the-art national exhibitions presenting information from the UNEP and the European Environmental Agency to be jointly organised by governments and NGOs. Work is now in progress on the following three issues, with recommendations due for release in December 2001.

Free trade and the environment in the Euro-Mediterranean context

In the light of international developments in free trade, and its impact on the environment, the MCSD is now looking at the impact of free trade on the environment. This impact is indirect, circulating through the economic system particularly by altering the macro-economic balance (factors such as the balance of trade and government budgets) and the relative pricing of products and services. This transforms volumes of commodities traded, and the composition of production and consumption, which in turn has repercussions on society and the environment.

The documented negative consequences of free trade are many and need to be anticipated. These include the crippling effects on local production thrown open to the full force of foreign competition, which commonly lead to increased trade deficits. Experiences in several countries show, for example, that free trade deepens regional imbalances between urban, coastal and border areas and rural areas. Also noted are substantial overall increases in energy consumption, transport and pollution as well as impacts on SMEs, which aren't able to internalise the environmental costs without supportive policies and assistance with their implementation. Increased consumption heralded by free trade needs to be matched by waste treatment and recycling measures. Poor populations, whose activities have particular repercussions on the environ-

ment, will need special attention, as they will bear the costs of a free trade area. Positively, in the industrial sector, free trade will result in an easier access to clean technologies at lower prices, with greater compliance with environmental standards for certain products.

Industry and sustainable development

This work is focusing on industry outreach approaches. It is developing a dialogue with key industrial associations to encourage their industries, both large companies and SMEs, to adopt pollution prevention and eco-efficiency measures. It is also seeking to facilitate the exchange of information to enhance the implementation of cleaner production and the incorporation of training on sustainable development into engineering teaching programmes and local decision-making processes. It is also looking at the development of a mix of voluntary and regulatory mechanisms.

Practical tools are being elaborated which will serve as the basis for the modernisation of the industrial sector in a sustainable development context, particularly for SMEs. It has also decided to concentrate on sensitising SMEs to the importance of the integration between enterprise and green concerns as a tool of competitiveness and at promoting capacity building and industry outreach activities through specialised institutions operating in the Mediterranean area.

Management of urban development

Key aspects being examined are population growth patterns, forms of migration at national level (rural exodus and intercity movements), the development of infrastructures, land use and intensive building in coastal areas. Issues considered include the excessive pressure on coastal areas caused by the proliferation of polluting industries and tourism facilities that are too built up and close to the shore as well as existing developmental policies.

The working group on this theme is collecting information from almost 100 Mediterranean cities and national authorities concerned with urban policies on MCSD issues and urban management. It will also prepare a position paper to go to municipal and national authorities presenting a first regional vision of urban development and environmental issues in the Mediterranean region. Themed studies on priority issues such as funding urban development, and land-use planning are also underway.

Specific actions and possible new issues

Several Mediterranean experts who are closely involved with the MCSD, helped produce a report entitled Improving the Environment in the Mediterranean: Lessons for Sustainable Development published by UNEP/MAP with the support of the European Union. This is a showcase of Mediterranean sustainable development projects implemented or ongoing, communicating experience gained to date for the benefit of countries

in the region and even further afield. It features almost 100 projects some examples of which are a sustainable tourism training pack for teachers, action for the re-use of rinsing waters in the jewellery industry, the reduction of plastic packaging, the use of innovative technology to make panels from agricultural residues such as straw, and the organisation of dismantling centres for scrap cars.

UNEP/MAP, in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS), the Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) and the regional Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), an umbrella of Arab NGOs, has produced and published a Consolidated Strategy Outline for Information, Awareness and Participation, motivated by the MCSD's related recommendations outlined earlier. This strategy outline arose out of a regional workshop on information, awareness and participation in the field of the Environment and Sustainable Development in the Arab region. Workshop partners may go on to develop this outline into a fully fledged strategy.

Future MCSD issues are likely to include international cooperation, development funding, agriculture and the rural environment (including land use, erosion and desertification) and consumption patterns and waste management. Also on the agenda are local energy and transport, the sustainable management of marine natural resources and local management (including of wetlands, islands, mountainous and desert regions).

MCSO Strategic Review

Assessing the political and institutional progress made towards sustainable development, the recently published Strategic Review represents the first self evaluation for MAP and the MCSO. It offers a frank analysis of teething problems of what is a body with a complex and ambitious remit, and assesses how the measures agreed upon by the Mediterranean community have effectively been implemented. This Review also contains encouraging updates from Mediterranean countries charting the steady permeation of a sustainable development way of thinking into Mediterranean countries. It is hoped that it will inject renewed political impetus into regional sustainable development endeavours. Overall, it lays the ground for the forthcoming sustainable development strategy for the Mediterranean. Its suggestions on optimal future directions are outlined in the next section.

The Strategic Review reflects the feedback to detailed questionnaires sent to MCSO members and concerned partners. It is also informed by three regional studies on Mediterranean regional cooperation, major groups in society and on MAP's relationship to sustainable development. Indicators of human development such as health and educational levels have tended to follow a positive trend throughout the region, however economic disparity has grown between European Union Mediterranean countries and the region's developing states. Among the key stumbling blocks highlighted by the Strategic Review are the fact

that environmental policies still have too little an impact on development policies, remaining too sectorial to address themes constituting integrated policy. Sustainable development policies also depend too exclusively on the public sector, when they need to foster partnerships between the public and private sectors, forming the type of new cooperative decision-making processes themselves increasingly in demand in the spheres of governance and local management. It also draws attention to the need to ensure that dynamic NGO participation becomes a more routine phenomenon.

It also points out that the needs of future generations, and thus a long-term view of development, often fall by the wayside in the drive for the short-term accumulation of wealth and accelerated change. The difficulty, at national level, in giving concrete expression to sustainable development measures decided on by the Mediterranean community, shows that this new concept has not yet managed to mobilise all spheres of society and that states have been slow to implement some of the decisions taken. It therefore encourages the creation of more national commissions for sustainable development, whose representatives could later serve as MCSO members. It additionally identifies a certain ambiguity in the MCSO role, as it is a forum for discussion but sometimes perceived as an operational structure. Also to be consolidated are the best means of tracking the implementation of adopted MCSO recommendations.

The Strategic Review highlights several basic elements that would boost the success of a Mediterranean sustainable development strategy:

- *Allowing states to play their full role and encouraging the emerging role of local authorities*
- *Drawing on all elements of civil society, tourists included, to safeguard natural resources and the vitality of natural ecosystems with the aid of an ambitious public-awareness drive*
- *Working towards economic and social justice and greater democracy and pluralism, while taking into account the ancestral values of communities*
- *Promoting scientific activity and technological achievement*
- *Strengthening human resources*
- *Undertaking any necessary legislative, financial, trade or economic reforms likely to assist in implementing national sustainable development strategies*
- *Improving communications and ensuring that MCSD output is well publicised among the Mediterranean public and concerned institutional bodies as well as the interested international community*
- *Disseminating MCSD proposals to involved institutional structures and authorities and closely monitoring their implementation*
- *Fostering strong north-south and south-south Mediterranean cooperation*

A RATIONAL FUTURE FOR MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a promising concept that presents the environment as a positive, mainstream concern, opening it up to society and human activities. It provides a framework under which communities can use resources efficiently, create capable infrastructures, protect and enhance their quality of life, and create new business to strengthen their economies.

The MCSD has evolved into a point of reference for sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. It paves the way for countries to further integrate environmental concerns with development and thus to implement viable and practical sustainable development measures, by regularly offering proposals for action on Mediterranean-specific issues informed by the latest applied research. It strives to help these states tackle obstacles such as institutional incapacity and to heighten public and commercial sector awareness. Additionally, at a time when decentralisation could jeopardise national abilities to modernise institutions to manage growth and development successfully, it bolsters partnerships to push environmental measures and sustainability higher up the list of national priorities.

Advocates of sustainable development in the Mediterranean agree that the environmental, economic and social

cost to be borne in the short term by certain countries within a context of liberalisation favouring market mechanisms, can only be acceptable if serious accompanying measures are adopted in order to cushion the impact on the least privileged sectors of society and the region's natural resources, and which will guarantee more long-term sustainability.

The ongoing efforts to promote tourism, for example, given its environmental impact, should be closely monitored to ensure that the desire of some countries to alter their balance of payment deficits, does not lead them to exceed the tourist carrying capacity of the natural environment and to sacrifice natural areas and landscapes.

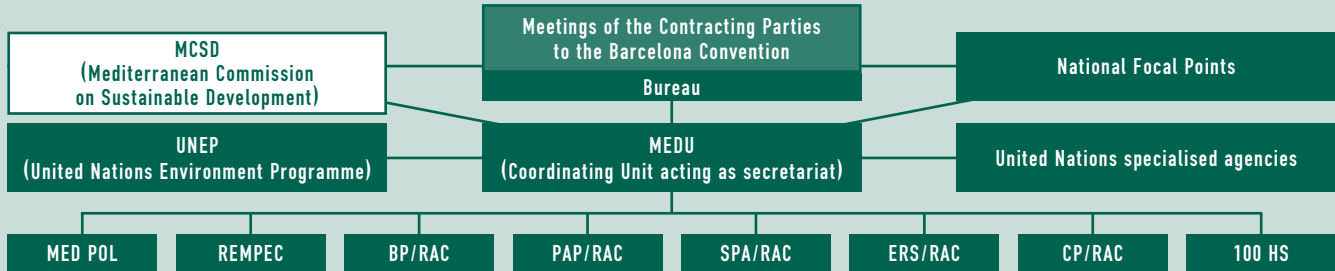
Strategies for sustainable development are being mapped out for key economic areas and for the management of natural resources generally. Ways forward include methods of increasing agricultural productivity using environmentally-friendly techniques, encouragement of the use of new energy sources for domestic, industrial, public and private use (whilst publicising the cost advantages of renewable energy sources) and the identification and promotion of greener forms of transport. Plans for better urban management and the development of rural areas incorporate respect for natural resources that these communities depend on will help revitalise rural societies, curbing the exodus to coastal cities, while protecting forests and biodiversity.

As it is proving to be a hub for the exploration and advancement of realistic sustainable development initiatives, the MCSD will seek to publicise its work, including MCSD reports, a synthesis of the Strategic Review, and success stories, during major international and regional events, in order to further boost exchanges of sustainable development information and experience. The Commission aims to contribute to the preparations for the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development so that other parts of the world may draw on the MCSD's regional experience. It should also highlight the importance of the regional level as a necessary bridge between global and national levels for building up an environmentally and socially sound sustainable development strategy.

“I have strongly positive feelings about the MCSD. I feel it is important to acknowledge the MCSD as a model of partnership, governance, dialogue, of north to south cooperation, and also one facilitating the process of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It is the only model of regional cooperation which has the north-south working together.”

Dr. Emad Adly, RAED and AOYE

MAP INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE



KEY MCSD MEETINGS

Rabat, 16-18 December 1996	
Palma de Majorca, 6-8 May 1997	Rome, 1-3 July 1999
Sophia Antipolis, 28-30 October, 1997	Tunis, 14-17 November 2000
Monaco, 20-22 October 1998	Antalya, 3-6 October 2001



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