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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

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Draft Decision supporting the reforming of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), proposed by the MCSD Steering Committee

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The 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties,

Acknowledging the implications of the outcomes of Rio+20 on the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) regarding the upgrading of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development into a High Level Political Forum,

Recalling the Decision IG20/13 of COP17, which invited the Steering Committee of the MCSD to "... work, taking into consideration the availability of funds in consultation with the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and with the assistance of the Secretariat, on reforming the MCSD in particular through revising its composition to ensure greater representativeness and foster a sense of ownership by the entire Mediterranean; and, sharpening its role and further enhancing its contribution to sustainable development in the Mediterranean and the national level as well as the mechanisms of the Barcelona Convention and present the results for adoption by the Parties. To this end, the conclusions and recommendations of its 14th meeting (Budva, Montenegro, 2011), as well as the upcoming Results of the Rio+20 Summit (2012) should be considered, as appropriate",

Recalling the current mandate and composition of the MCSD, which serve as a starting point for the strengthening of the MCSD (Decision IG 17/5 which adopted the Governance paper at the 15th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention held in Almeria (Spain)), as follows:

- I. Assist Mediterranean countries and other stakeholders active in the region in the adoption and implementation of sustainable development policies, including the integration of environmental considerations into other policies,
- II. Ensure the follow-up of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) through appropriate tools, mechanisms and criteria that would better enhance an efficient follow-up function,
- III. Promote the exchange of experience and good practices regarding the integration of environmental and socioeconomic policies, as well as examples which show the application of international sustainable development commitments at suitable scales in different countries,
- IV. Identify the obstacles encountered and support regional and sub-regional cooperation for the effective implementation of the sustainable development principle,
- V. Coordinate the periodical drafting of the report on the state of implementation of the MCSD recommendations, and,
- VI. Produce opinions of the overall MAP Programme of Work and the functioning of the Coordinating Unit and the RACs, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP / Barcelona Convention system as a whole,

Recalling also that the above-cited Decision IG 17/5 considered that the MCSD should involve the greatest possible variety of national actors in its work, so as to ensure the greatest possible dissemination of the concepts promoted, and that for this to be achieved the composition of the Commission was agreed to be expanded as follows: Contracting Parties 22 (21 MS and EU CION); NGOS (3); Local authorities (3); Socio-economic stakeholders (3); Scientific Community (3); Intergovernmental organizations working in the field of sustainable development (3); Eminent experts in the field of the topics of the MCSD meeting agenda (3),

Recalling on the one hand the constitutive documents of the MCSD from the fourth MCSD meeting in Monaco, 1998, as collected in UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 327/Inf.3 of June 2008, and on the other the Governance Paper of the Almeria COP in January 2008 (Decision IG 17/5),

Recalling also that the above-cited Decision IG 17/5 also underlined that all efforts should be made to ensure participation of representatives from both environmental and development sector and appropriate geographical representation, and media participation,

Recalling also the recommendations from 14th Meeting of MCSD on the analysis of the role and modalities of the MCSD contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.358/5, as follows:

- I. the primary function of the MCSD as an advisory body, focusing on creating synergies for regional integration, and on the need for practical action, drawing on national expertise, in pursuing its work,
- II. Emerging issues such as the ecosystem approach, climate change adaptation and the green economy approach should be taken on board,
- III. There is a need for integration and coordination with the other existing international and regional sustainable development and environmental programmes, policy frameworks and initiatives,
- IV. It is crucial to focus on the MCSD's comparative advantage and the input it could provide in facilitating environmental mainstreaming and integration, and strengthening cross-sectoral and intersectoral environment/development policy coordination at national and regional levels,
- V. The MCSD should serve as a platform of reference and a tool for enhancing regional dialogue on environment and development issues, assisting Contracting Parties in introducing environmental concerns into sectoral policies,
- VI. The work of the MCSD should be expanded to include other stakeholders to give the Barcelona Convention broader appeal,
- VII. There is a need to establish a coherent monitoring system for the MSSD and its periodic review,

Appreciating that in the 17 years since its inception, the MCSD has made important contributions to the sustainable development of the region, including, particularly, the MSSD, developed in the spirit of the guidelines and principles adopted at Rio in 1992 and adopted by the 14th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Portoroz (Slovenia) in 2005, the provision of a reference framework for sustainable development actions in the Mediterranean region; its innovative modalities of participation and engagement of civil society organizations and other major stakeholders, its contribution in many ways to MAP and its activities by broadening perspectives and linking environmental protection to development issues, enriching discussions and eventually policies and actions on environmental management around the Mediterranean, enabling dialogue with civil society on environment/development issues, and finally, the way the MCSD has been an innovation at the global scale as the only sustainable development commission at the Regional Seas level of UNEP, benefiting from a long-established cooperation on environmental protection in the Region under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, thus supporting the catalytic role of MAP in regional governance,

Appreciating also that at the same time there is general recognition that, as with the Global Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD), there have been some shortcomings, such as the limited scope of the MCSD, which can be attributed to various factors influencing effectiveness such as the long-term horizon of sustainable development strategies; the broad mandate and very limited means it has been given; the challenges to maintain substantive technical coherence while ensuring cross-sectoral integration; the difficulties in securing involvement of all relevant stakeholders; the insufficient focus on effective monitoring; the

complexities of Mediterranean regional governance; and the limited political will and commitment as noted in UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.358/5 - The Roles and Modalities of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development,

Emphasizing that the objective of a strengthened MCSD should be the further integration of the environment pillar in other public policies, brought about through focusing on the interface between environment and development, and thus building on its successes and potential,

Taking note of the recommendations from the 15th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development in Malta in 2013 in this regard, particularly with respect to the envisaged core functions of the MCSD,

Acknowledging that there is a need to balance ambition and realism, especially since the MCSD has had a relatively limited budget so far,

Considering the need for enhanced cooperation with other international and regional organizations and financial institutions such as the World Bank, the Union for the Mediterranean, the UNDP and the Secretariat of the UNFCCC, in particular in view of on-going negotiations to adopt a legally-binding new global climate change regime at the end of 2015,

Decides to:

Strengthen the position of the MCSD in the MAP system and in the wider regional community, in line with the outcome of Rio+20 and COP17 Decision IG.20/13, by ensuring that, sustainable development matters will be regularly discussed at the Conference of the Parties once every two COP meetings (four years);

Sharpen the mandate of the MCSD so as to strengthen its role and contribution to integrate the environment in other public policies and call for the revision accordingly of the constitutive documents of the MCSD, including its 'Terms of Reference', 'Rules of Procedure' and 'Composition', as discussed below, and present the revised documents for the consideration and approval of the COP in 2015, bearing in mind the core functions of the revised MCSD as discussed during the 15th MCSD meeting in Malta, and as follows:

1. Revising the MSSD, regularly monitor it on biannual basis and evaluate its implementation, using the MSSD indicators and the universal SDGs emerging from the RIO+20 process, expected in 2015, but also possibly other means such as monitoring implementation through actions (legal actions, programmes and projects);
2. Forging partnerships and coordination between various actors, including other UN actors besides UNEP;
3. Encouraging the exchange of good practice, in sustainable development plans, programmes and projects, and in the formulation of sustainable development policies and strategies for which a simplified peer review could be a tool; and,
4. Preparing input for COP sessions on Sustainable Development, including priority and emerging issues;

Request the MCSD, with the support of the Secretariat, to review MCSD participation and its composition, while retaining its focus on environmental sustainability (as agreed at COP 17 in Paris) and the interface between environment and development, with a view to ensuring the sufficient membership and participation, as MCSD members, by the key regional sustainable development stakeholders as described below, and presenting a final proposal for adoption by the 19th COP in 2015:

- other UN specialized agencies and programs such as UNDP, UNIDO, FAO/ GFCM and UNESCO;
- partners representing the economic and social pillars of sustainable development;
- parliamentarians;
- the scientific community;
- local governments;
- representatives of wider Mediterranean processes, in particular the Union for the Mediterranean;

Request the Secretariat to support the MCSD to work further on forging partnerships and coordination between various actors, including the World Bank, the Union for the Mediterranean, and other UN actors besides UNEP such as the UNFCCC and the UNDP, to improve the implementation of the new MSSD;

Request the MCSD to encourage, through its meetings and operations, the exchange of good practice;

Request the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for the consideration of the MCSD on how a simplified peer review process could be put in place;

Request the Secretariat to support the MCSD in preparing input for COP sessions on Sustainable Development, including priority and emerging issues;

Invite the MCSD, supported by the Secretariat and Info/RAC, to be more effective and visible in its work and its communications, using technology to support its work, specifying the exact nature of the outcomes it produces in response to each of its core functions commensurate with its means, and ensuring that sufficient funds are allocated to allow the MCSD Steering Committee to meet at least once in the biennium between MCSD meetings.