

APPENDIX I**MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(Report of the Informal Working Group)**

1. The Barcelona Resolution prepared at the Joint Meeting (Athens, 3-8 April 1995) includes the following reference to the Commission:

"Decide that within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan a Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) should be set up and start work during the first quarter of 1996".

2. The informal group chaired by Mr. Ennabli, which met pursuant to a request by the plenary, noted first of all that exchanges of views on the Commission, and particularly on its terms of reference, composition, relationship with the global Commission and with national commissions where they exist, have been very limited.

3. The Contracting Parties have at their disposal the following documents:

- Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Chapter 38), which established the global Commission;
- texts of the Tunis Conference of November 1994 which was decisive for the initial formulation of the idea of establishing a Mediterranean Commission (Chapter 38, paragraphs 1 to 14);
- document UNEP/BUR/46/2 prepared by the Coordinating Unit for the Bureau in January 1995. At its meeting held on 31 January 1995, the Bureau did not discuss this document but requested that it should be circulated at the Joint Meeting. This was done, although the Joint Meeting was unable to study the text and exchange views;
- other unofficial documents such as those prepared by the EEB for the NGO Forum in Barcelona in June 1995.

The Secretariat is requested to circulate existing documents to the Contracting Parties, together with any other documents concerning the global Commission or the functioning of national commissions of which it is aware.

If the timetable fixed in the Resolution is to be respected strictly or with only minimal delay, it is urgently necessary to discuss the matter. However, in view of the situation, the words "first quarter of 1996" could be replaced by "first half of 1996".

4. The working group chaired by Mr. Ennabli was composed of representatives of Contracting Parties and some NGOs; representatives of Algeria, France, Croatia, Greece, Israel, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey were present.
5. The group identified a number of issues that were pending or required further clarification; it also proposed a procedure to enable the terms of reference and the composition of the Commission to be defined as soon as possible.

6. With regard to these issues:
- 6.1 Although it is virtually agreed that the Commission should be within the framework of MAP and that the Coordinating Unit should act as its Secretariat, its status requires further study. According to preliminary statements, it would appear that its status should be that of a consultative body. It should not undertake tasks such as preparing the annual programmes in which the budget is fixed nor the administrative or technical follow-up to MAP programmes. The abolition of the committees in their original form is another issue.
- 6.2 At this stage, it is necessary to fix the outline of the Commission's terms of reference before it meets, even though it is accepted that it must be given some latitude in respect of its priorities and working methods. It could be responsible for identifying the major economic, ecological and social problems for the various chapters of Agenda 21. It will propose orientations at a high ministerial level in MAP and to the Contracting Parties. The Commission's functions could also include monitoring the situation and sustainable development activities in the region.
- 6.3 The composition of the Commission was mentioned: it would appear that at the present stage it should not be too broad; it might include
- representatives appointed by States who are not only competent in environmental matters but also in other areas of Agenda 21;
 - persons belonging to:
 - local authorities;
 - Mediterranean associations and their networks
 - independent persons.
- 6.4 The periodicity of the Commission's plenary meetings will be determined in the light of high-level MAP meetings; they could be held annually or biennially after the first implementation phase, which will require more frequent meetings. If the Commission deems it appropriate, it could hold meetings with limited participation.
- 6.5 The Commission's resources will be derived from the MAP budget and from outside contributions. It could stimulate the work of the Coordinating Unit and its Centres, especially the Blue Plan and its observatory function.
- 6.6 The Commission will have working relations with the global Commission as needed, basing itself on the latter's stage-by-stage work programme. It may prepare for the global Commission any elements that may be of interest to the latter regarding sustainable development in the Mediterranean and will communicate with the global Commission through MAP authorities.
- 6.7 It will facilitate exchanges among national sustainable development commissions in the region, where these exist.
7. Regarding the procedure and the stages to be followed when setting up the Commission, taking into account the tight schedule the following is proposed:

- 7.1 An exchange of views in the plenary meeting during the Barcelona Conference or continuation of work in a formal committee;
- 7.2 A request to the Coordinating Unit to prepare a document taking into account the discussion.
- 7.3 The Secretariat is entrusted with the task of preparing a document summarising the proposals and transmitting it to the Bureau and the Contracting Parties, allowing a period of two months for making comments and proposing additions if necessary.
- 7.4 The Bureau, at its next meeting (in October 1995), will consider the replies and draw up a revised text.
- 7.5 It will transmit this text to the Contracting Parties for further consideration with a request to reply before 1 January 1996.
- 7.6 The next meeting of the Contracting Parties, to be held in 1996, will prepare a text that will allow the Commission to be convened as soon as possible towards the end of the first half of the year.