

MEDCOAST's Hammamet Declaration

The **Fifth International Conference on the Mediterranean Coastal Environment, MEDCOAST 01, 23 - 27 October 2001, Hammamet - Tunisia**, was organised in collaboration with two Tunisian institutions namely; the Agency for Coastal Protection and Planning and National Institute of Marine Science and Technology. The conference was honoured by the presence and address of the Minister of Environment and Territorial Management in the Opening Session. One hundred and sixty seven participants of the conference, representing twenty eight countries, in appreciation of the generous support provided by the Tunisian Government to the organisation of the conference, and;

- Being aware of uniqueness of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea coastal environment, the importance of the coastal areas as the melting pots of the cultures of the people in the riparian states, and the significant role of these areas in the economical development of the countries, and the wealth of the populations;
- Noting the long-lasting efforts of the Mediterranean countries under the framework of the UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) for regional collaboration with the aim of improving the environmental and ecological conditions of the Mediterranean and its coastal areas, and the positive impact of the Rio Conference on the widening of the MAP's vision and perspective with the start of the second phase in 1995;
- Supporting the creation of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) as an advisory institution to observe and guide, where possible, the regional collaboration that impact the sustainable development efforts in the Mediterranean countries, but being concerned by the significant overlap of the MCSD with the traditional MAP system;
- Witnessing with concern the delays in the establishment of an effective mechanism for collaboration of the Black Sea countries since 1997 in solving the regional and national coastal and marine issues despite of the favourable environment created and foundation laid out by the Black Sea Environmental Program, and being worried for the insufficient co-ordination of various individual projects initiated thereafter;
- Observing that the anthropogenic pressure for fast development of coastal and marine resources, especially in the southern and eastern countries, often result in un-recoverable, important losses, despite the increased efforts towards better coastal and marine management in many countries of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

Unanimously agree to bring out the following observations and recommendations to the attention of the national and international institutions dealing with coastal and marine issues, as well as of the public:

1. Collaboration over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea basins should be extended beyond the intergovernmental programs. Creation and functioning of decentralised networks aiming cooperative efforts to improve coastal and marine management practices should be encouraged by the international programs and donor institutions. In this context, the Mediterranean programs of the European Union, which created a significant momentum in the region for decentralised co-operation in the first half of the 1990's, should be revitalised, and similar programs

for the Black Sea should be initiated. Instruments should be designed to substantiate the interaction of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea networks.

2. Inter-governmental co-operation over the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins must be expanded beyond the level of the environmental ministries, as it is presently achieved by the MAP system. Intergovernmental collaboration over the important regional issues, such as tourism development and management, fisheries, marine transportation of dangerous products and of refugees, must be effectively institutionalised. Independent Mediterranean and Black Sea inter-governmental institutions should be created for the collaborative management of these regional issues. At the same time, all Mediterranean countries are invited to ratify all protocols that have been already enacted within the MAP system.
3. Tourism, being the most important economical use of the coastal and marine areas in the Mediterranean and having a good potential for development in the Black Sea, and thus providing great development pressures on pristine and ecologically sensitive sites in particular, and on the environment and resources in general, needs to be managed more effectively at the regional scale. Creation of the *Mediterranean Tourism Organisation* as an intergovernmental institution would facilitate information and experience sharing among the riparian countries on one hand, and development of regional policies, guidelines and agreements for minimising the tourism related impacts on the other. One such policy could be implementing schemes for “*tourist contribution*” at the regional scale and using the money collected for improvement of the coastal environment and for restoration of the pressured ecosystems.
4. The pristine coastal and marine sites, that possess important ecological, cultural and aesthetic values should be protected against development, and should be left aside for the benefit of the future Mediterranean and Black Sea communities. The northern countries, by using the available and new international mechanisms, should provide resources to the southern countries for management and protection of such sites, in addition to compensation for the opportunity cost of conservation.
5. Development of tools and techniques for coastal and marine management and generation of the essential data and information should be promoted. Collaboration of basin wide scientific institutions through the existing or to be created networks should be encouraged. Especially, collaboration of the northern and southern scientific institutions in well designed regional research and monitoring programs should be supported. The scope of the Short and Medium Action Plan (SMAP) of the European Union should be widened to cover such scientific and monitoring projects of regional networks for providing funding on a competitive basis. Preparation of the *Mediterranean Coastal Atlas* is an important example for such collaborative regional projects

The synergy among the programs of the intergovernmental institutions, such as the UNEP's MAP and UNESCO's IOC, and the regional efforts of decentralised scientific and professional networks should be improved. The international programs should benefit to the maximum capacity from the capabilities and efforts that exist at the regional scale. Such collaborative efforts and task sharing will produce not only higher quality products, but will be significantly cost effective as well. The capabilities of MEDCOAST, being the most developed regional network for research, human capacity development and information sharing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and of other similar organisations, should be fully utilised by the intergovernmental programs. The scientific meetings and training courses, which have been organised by MEDCOAST over a decade, provide significant opportunities for enhancing the inter-governmental programs dealing with coastal and marine management. Such events should be effectively utilised and financially supported by the inter-governmental institutions.