

MEDITERRANEAN NGO DECLARATION FOR JOHANNESBURG

Nice, 12/01/2002

Non-governmental organisations active in the Mediterranean region met in Nice on the 11 and 12 January 2002 to contribute to the preparations for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Mediterranean is a region with a long history of cultural exchange and co-operation, but, on the other hand, currently, large groups of people in the region are threatened by environmental degradation, conflicts, insecurity, social exclusion and violation of human rights and of fundamental freedoms.

Sustainable development in the Mediterranean can be seen as a major contribution to make this region, with its clear ecological and cultural identity but with enormous differences in prosperity and perspectives, into a good example of coexistence and co-operation of different peoples and cultures sharing common resources and a common future.

PROGRESS SINCE RIO

The Mediterranean region gathering 22 countries at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and West Asia has, in the last 10 years, made a numerous progress in the implementation of Agenda 21:

- Civil society has become stronger and more involved in progressive way at local, national and regional levels. Several sub-regional and local authorities have started local agenda 21 processes. Regional co-operation in different ways, including science & capacity building, has improved.
- Marine pollution has been stabilised and sometimes reduced.
- Innovative institutional tools have been implemented in the Region: the Mediterranean Action Plan, started in 1975, has been renovated; and the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD), unique in the world for the participation of governments, civil society and private sector, has been created.
- Progress can be recognised, in a majority of countries, on access to drinking water, water-treatment, in nutrition and the state of public health.

However some shortcomings exist:

- Income gaps, between countries and inside countries, have widened
- The pressures on spaces, ecosystems and resources are increasing (coastal zones, freshwater systems, forests, agricultural areas, soils, fisheries)

- Urbanisation and consumption patterns are largely uncontrolled and the use of renewable energies is still marginal. These shortcomings undermine the progress made in recent years on, for example, public health.
- The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which is supposed to promote mutual development in a region of 700 million inhabitants, is so far still too focused exclusively on security, traditional economic development, structural adjustment and free trade.
- Failure to fulfil the Rio commitments has exacerbated the socio-economic crisis, increased vulnerability, made democracy more fragile, and have a particular impact on women, children, youth and other marginalised groups.

MEDITERRANEAN VIEWPOINTS FOR THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT

GOOD GOVERNANCE ESSENTIAL AT ALL LEVELS!

Achieving sustainable development requires democracy and good governance at all levels.

- Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, providing for public access to information, participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters, needs to be fully implemented in all countries. This starts with openness and transparency from authorities and business towards civil society.
- Good governance also means adequate implementation of environmental and social law, the eradication of corruption in government, the public and private sectors and decisive action against environmental and social crime.
- All countries should set up effective National Commissions for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and strengthen the roles and capacities of local and sub-regional authorities to formulate and implement sustainable development.
- Regional organisations can dramatically increase their effectiveness if they follow a participatory model. The Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development is so far the only body following this principle in our region. We call upon all multilateral bodies, in particular the UN and EU, to promote regional co-operation with a clear role and participation for civil society.
- On the global level, the institutional framework is fragmented. We call for reform and strengthening of UNEP and co-ordinated implementation of all Multilateral Environmental Agreements. We welcome the initiative for UNEP to establish a civil society participatory process. The Global Environmental

Civil Society Forum could serve as a model for other UN bodies.

- Developing countries must have equal rights and facilities in the decision making of International Financial Institutions.

ERADICATION OF POVERTY

The fight against poverty must be at the center of sustainable development policies, which requires top-level political consensus.

- Aid policies, and policies for implementing Agenda 21, must include special programmes for eradicating poverty and these must take into account of the economic, social and political causes of poverty.
- The link between environmental damage and the rise in poverty must be recognised, and measures and programmes combining the fight against poverty and the sustainable management of natural resources must be encouraged.
- Programmes combating poverty must closely involve civil society and the private sector, and access for young people to decent and productive employment must be a priority.
- Objectives for eradicating poverty must be quantified and demanding and an international observance system must be set up in order to evaluate progress made in the fight against poverty.

FAIR TRADE

The Mediterranean region is an example of unequal trade relations that benefit the developed countries and leave developing countries behind. We strongly support two important measures UN Secretary General Kofi Anan proposes for the Johannesburg Summit, as they are very relevant in particular to the Mediterranean region:

- *"Removing trade-distorting subsidies and improving access of products and services of developing countries to the markets of developed countries, in particular in sectors in which developing countries have competitive advantage, such as the agricultural and textile sectors.*
- *Assisting developing countries, in their efforts to fully integrate into the world trade system and participate effectively in multilateral trade negotiations".*
- Global as well as regional trade agreements should focus on strengthening local economies (mainly Small and Medium Enterprises), (i) establishing fair trade with equity and benefit-sharing, (ii) promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns and fighting poverty.

This also means that the current overwhelming influence of multinational corporations needs to be reduced:

We call for the WSSD to recognise the need for a convention on Corporate Accountability in favour of sustainable development. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has failed to establish an international framework for fair trade. The WTO has to be reformed to ensure within the full participation of developing countries and civil society actors, as well as to allow for full southern access to markets in industrialised countries.

MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT ALL LEVELS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- All countries should be able to mobilise sufficient and stable public and domestic resources at the national and local levels for sustainable development, taking into account that in the longer term these will prove to be very beneficial investments.
- Specific funds are required to finance local Agenda 21 activities as well as micro-credits for the private sector and local communities.
- Co-operation between local authorities and public-private partnership should be developed.

Given the massive differences in economic prosperity between countries, committed substantial support from developed to developing countries remains necessary:

- Official Development Aid (ODA) should finally reach, at least, the 0,7% GNP UN target. The use of ODA must be improved by transparent and participatory priority formulation and impact assessments, in relevant cases on a multi-lateral level, as well as capacity building for the beneficiaries.
- Debt swaps for sustainable development activities should be encouraged.
- In the process of compensating for loss of public income by the abolition of customs duties (a result of market liberalisation) fiscal measures that promote the polluter pays principle, including the abolition of environmentally perverse subsidies and the introduction of innovative environmentally positive taxation should be introduced.
- The introduction of international taxes to increase financial resources for sustainable development in developing countries has to be considered.
- Credit facilities for long-term investments in favour of sustainable development need setting up.
- Financial supports should be secured to allow the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, and more generally of whole set of the International Conventions with impact in favor of sustainable development.

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS.

Economic growth must be radically de-coupled from environmental degradation, a step that involves developing comprehensive policy frameworks on sustainable production and consumption. This must be based on:

- Equal access for all people to natural resources, while respecting the limited carrying capacity of nature;
- Maintaining and improving the quality of bio-diversity; and the right of people for a clean and healthy environment.
- The implementation of the precautionary principle is essential in all relevant policies

Developed countries must acknowledge that their over-consumption of natural resources has created an ecological debt to the south.

- Countries must promote sustainable agricultural practices and Integrated Water Resource Management at catchment area level, and must ensure equitable access for population to the resource, while taking into account ecological needs.

EDUCATION

Awareness raising, education and the emergence of a culture of sustainable development are fundamental to achieving sustainable development. Capacity building and training for young people is essential. New and revised strategies and means of awareness raising, education, training, and communication are essential for the effective management of human resources and capacity building for the underprivileged, in order to achieve sustainable development. As well as access to general education for all, education for environment and sustainability (EfES) should be systematically developed for all ages using formal and non-formal approaches. The same is true as regards vocational training for decision makers and administrators. A network structure of resources is essential, equipped with the necessary human, financial and technical means for implementing initiatives and encouraging international partnerships and exchanges for young people. The generation, enhancement, widespread diffusion, exchange and sharing of knowledge, experience and technology is an essential part of sustainable development.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

- The generation, enhancement and exchange of inter-disciplinary scientific knowledge and know-how are necessary for achieving sustainable development.
- The efficient transfer of traditional and modern, cleaner, eco-efficient and appropriate technologies between countries is necessary.

IN CONCLUSION

Efforts undertaken at international level, and properly carried forward by nations, civil society, the private sector and local authorities, must be supported by the major regions of the world, and particularly by "ecoregions" such as the Mediterranean, standing as it does at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and West Asia. The implementation of sustainable development can be a powerful leading vector in the future of this region, whose North-South fracture could be transformed into a reconciliation which could serve as an example for the rest of the world.

Mediterranean NGOs support the idea of a "Global Deal" involving clear commitments and concrete actions leading to poverty eradication, sustainable production and consumption patterns as well as improvement of governance and democratic processes at all levels.

The global deal should involve multi-stakeholder initiatives to help meet agreed international targets. It should lead to a type of globalisation which is equitable, inclusive and which contributes to sustainable development.

This Message has been endorsed by the following Networks :

1. Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), based in Cairo, a network of 200 NGO from 17 Arab countries.
2. Environment and Development in the Third World (ENDA).
3. European Environmental Bureau (EEB), based in Brussels, a federation of 135 NGO from all European countries.
4. Friends of the Earth MedNet, based in Alicante, a network of National Friends of the Earth offices from 11 Mediterranean countries including Jordan.
5. MEDCOAST Network, based in Ankara.
6. Mediterranean Ecological Media Network (MED - ECOMEDIA), based in Amman a network of 100 Environmental professionals and communicators from all the Mediterranean countries.
7. Mediterranean NGO Network for Ecology and Sustainable Development (MED Forum), based in Barcelona, a network of 113 NGO from 23 Mediterranean countries including Jordan and Portugal.
8. Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), based in Athens, a federation of 92 NGO from 23 Mediterranean countries including Jordan and Portugal.
9. World Wild Fund for Nature, WWF Mediterranean Programme. Based in Rome.