

## **Mediterranean Environment Civil Society input on Climate Change to regional fora, COP 15 (Copenhagen 2009) negotiators and decision makers at all levels**

All climate change scenarios predict that the Mediterranean will be one of the most severely affected regions, with an increase in the intensity and frequency of floods and particularly of droughts and repercussions on the quality of life and of natural resources.

Representatives of **Mediterranean Civil Society working on environment and sustainable development**, gathered in Cairo on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2009<sup>1</sup>, propose herewith appropriate approaches and measures in order to tackle adaptation - and to a certain extent also mitigation - challenges in the Mediterranean region.

The measures suggested for the areas mentioned below should be applied in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and must be complemented by horizontal, cross-cutting **good governance**, appropriate **awareness raising, information and capacity building, research, education for sustainable development**, meaningful **public participation/stakeholder involvement** and the wide use of **financial instruments**. Robust **regulatory frameworks** will need to be developed and enforced while **institutional set-ups** might also be reformed so as to respond to emerging climate risks in a **holistic approach**. The adaptive capacity of individuals, communities and authorities needs to be enhanced. Furthermore, current production and consumption patterns and trends need to be reversed.

### **i) Water resources**

- a. Mainstream adaptation measures into national IWRM planning/policies
- b. Promote water efficiency and demand management (i.e. sustainable irrigation techniques; water savings in agriculture and industry; socially sensitive water pricing policies for households; rationalize virtual water balances)
- c. Use conventional and non conventional water resources appropriately so as to match increased demand, such as rainwater harvesting, water retention and collection systems, appropriate wastewater treatment and reuse ('regenerated' water), desalination via renewable energies, groundwater recharge. Traditional water collection and distribution mechanisms should also be reintroduced

### **ii) Civil protection from extreme weather events**

- a. Develop early warning systems for extreme weather events (i.e. heat and cold waves, floods, droughts, forest fires and tornados) and regional cooperation in this field
- b. Promote knowledge and good practices at community and individual level
- c. Promote related research and strengthen information systems on climate change creating coordinated, transversal and inter-sectoral mechanisms
- d. Increase public awareness on climate change impacts, including the implications on human health
- e. Discourage new construction in areas prone to floods and landslides
- f. Develop flood protection systems up-stream and protection systems against sea-level rise on the coastlines accordingly
- g. Invest more efforts to research the interlinks between climate change, extreme phenomena and migration and address them effectively taking measures for the human rights of people escaping environmental deterioration.

### **iii) Ecosystems**

- a. Protect ecosystems, in particular wetlands, from over-extraction of water especially during drought periods, ensuring adequate water for their ecological functioning
- b. Conserve wetland systems (i.e. flood plains, river deltas) useful as buffer zones for flood protection

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<sup>1</sup> Civil Society Dialogue on Mediterranean Processes: UfM Ministerial on Environment – Climate Change COP 15 Copenhagen – Long Term Strategy on Water in the Mediterranean, invited by MIO-ECSDE and co-organized by MIO-ECSDE, GWP-Med and RAED, with the support of the European Commission and the Swedish EU Presidency. Over 120 NGOs, Members of Parliament and journalists from most Mediterranean countries participated in the event and adopted this text.

- c. Protect forests and maquis-covered areas from wildfire risks (through monitoring and early intervention) and from overgrazing
- d. Promote the protection of soil as a complex and crucial ecosystem which when healthy can efficiently contribute to climate change regulation.
- e. Calculate and introduce the valuation of ecosystem services as an integral part of IWRM, adaptation and sustainable development strategies
- f. Protect marine biodiversity from the implications of climate change, the resulting acidification of the seas and its impact on marine biota. The establishment of Marine Protected Areas is crucial

**iv) Agriculture/forestry/land use/coastal zones**

- a. Encourage the use of drought resistant crops especially in arid zones
- b. Promote efficient irrigation techniques
- c. Maintain or reintroduce soil retention and water harvesting techniques
- d. Protect arable land in coastal zones from saltwater intrusion by avoiding groundwater over-extraction, by developing sound groundwater recharge practices and barriers to saltwater intrusion, when appropriate
- e. Protect forests from wildfires through increased awareness raising, monitoring and on-site infrastructures to retain water in order to prevent soil erosion and subsequent risk of floods, landslides and desertification as well as further warming
- f. Avoid the development of settlements, infrastructures (i.e. industry) and activities in zones prone to sea-level rise in the next 20-30 years

**v) Energy/industry/transport**

- a. Promote bio-climatic architecture (incl. passive cooling and heating techniques, retrofitting of buildings) to cope with increased temperature variability and avoid further warming
- b. Encourage energy-saving measures and techniques – *inter alia* through pricing policies - for households, industry, transports, etc.
- c. Foster the development of renewable sources of energy, in particular solar (photovoltaic, thermal), wind, wave and geo-thermal
- d. Envisage the use of small hydropower systems in such a manner that they can be combined with water storage and flood protection and minimize undesirable side-effects for ecosystems

**vi) Tourism**

- a. Promote water efficiency measures and use of non conventional water resources (i.e. waste water reuse) in the tourism sector
- b. Avoid the development of large-scale and/or water-intensive tourism activities in arid areas (i.e. golf complexes)
- c. Promote alternative/sustainable tourism activities during seasons less prone to drought and heat waves

**vii) Financing**

- a. Additional, coordinated and accessible funds are needed as are transparent and effective financing mechanisms especially for less developed and vulnerable countries and communities
- b. These funds need to be appropriately blended in order to adequately address the needed measures (% GDP, grants, loans, etc.)
- c. The GEF contribution to climate change adaptation activities should be increased, while the Adaptation Fund should include North African countries