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Commission on Sustainable Development

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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE THEME:

**"INDUSTRY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(Cultural, economic, technical and financial aspects
of the gradual elimination of pollution
from land-based sources)"**

Task Manager: Italy

INDUSTRY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

General remarks

Overall globalization of the economy, combined with a worldwide rise in the level of competitiveness, is becoming ever more strongly entrenched. Although on the one hand growing competitiveness is a catalyst for economic development, on the other it can jeopardize and curb sustainable development.

Living standards today compromise the availability of basic natural resources and give rise to the spectre of poverty for future generations. This is why such living standards will eventually prove difficult to reconcile with policies aimed at promoting sustainable development.

There is very little chance that economic growth will be sustainable if new models of production are not gradually put in place in order to mitigate the adverse effects of economic activities on the environment. In other words, there will have to be far-reaching technological changes, which implies focusing on the role to be played by technical knowledge and culture in production processes and systems of consumption. Industries that do not respect the environment are condemned to lose their market competitiveness in the long term and this new factor must henceforth be taken into account in development policies.

It is absolutely essential to reduce the emission of pollutants and the generation of waste to levels that can be absorbed by natural cycles and it is urgently necessary to implement processes for the recovery and treatment of substances contained in products that are coming towards the end of their life cycle and in residues from manufacturing processes.

In the past, environmental protection and industrial production followed two parallel paths that never met, but it is now clear that they are interdependent and that it is not possible to refer to one without taking into account the other.

Industry is one of the causes of the disturbing inflow of nutrients into the Mediterranean Sea and it is expected that this trend will increase as a result of growth in certain developing countries or countries with economies in transition.

At the same time, there can be little doubt that there is now unprecedented technical potential to create a new situation that would allow human pressure on the environment to be reduced to a minimum. For example, new manufacturing processes that utilize fewer natural resources can be adopted so that the use of certain substances can be reduced or even eliminated and a significant decrease in the emission of pollutants, as well as eutrophic and toxic waste, can be achieved.

If the Mediterranean community is unable to create the conditions for radical change in the use of natural resources, the latter will no longer be renewable because the cycles concerned will cease to offset the losses and the inevitable consequence will be economic stagnation. There must therefore be unreserved commitment to the principle of sustainable industrial development, studying ways in which it will be possible to ensure that least developed countries do not see their situation worsen because they do not have the necessary resources to promote clean and environmentally-friendly production.

It is the responsibility of governments to initiate and implement industrial development policies that take into account both regional and national perspectives according to the respective requirements and opportunities, and at the same time involve all the actors concerned, including NGOs. Their involvement could make a significant contribution to creating a larger number of jobs in these sectors.

The Mediterranean community is made up of peoples from very varied backgrounds, but there is a common model that has evolved through the influence of the great civilizations that have held sway around the Mediterranean throughout the centuries and this fact alone is a decisive guarantee that can help the region to reinforce cooperation over and above national frontiers and find common solutions to its problems. In this connection, there is one aspect that cannot be ignored: the cultural and economic effects of the desired transformation. What will be the effect of this transformation on traditions, local culture, the social and economic framework, even in the least developed countries?

All the action programmes and measures to be taken must respect these socio-economic conditions by encouraging partnership agreements, cooperation that is ever mindful of the organizational management aspect and seeks innovative financial formulas such as rolling funds or the application of political interest rates by developing countries.

The Group's terms of reference

With a view to submission to the MCSD and subsequently to the Contracting Parties, the Group should elaborate proposals on the establishment of an industrial production system capable of improving living standards and simultaneously setting up a process for the elimination of pollution caused by land-based sources and activities, especially the gradual elimination of the input of toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative substances and the treatment and management of wastewater.

The document should also provide guidance for the MED POL programme.

All types of information will have to be collected for the purpose of elaborating an environmentally-friendly industrial development plan. The objective of the Group is to carry out the following tasks in order:

1. to determine the types of industry that have a high development potential within the various national contexts;
2. to identify the socio-economic and environmental impact of these types of industry;
3. to assess the economic effectiveness of this industrial development;
4. to identify production techniques that are no longer compatible with respect for the environment and must be transformed as a priority;
5. to promote an ecologically sound industrial strategy, ensuring that the mistakes made by developed countries are not repeated in developing countries;
6. to encourage developed countries to organize training for technicians from developing countries or countries with economies in transition;
7. to facilitate exchange of information among member countries where necessary;
8. to assess the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce the load of pollutants and to evaluate the safety level of new plants;
9. to ensure that there is enough flexibility to allow the necessary adjustments to be made.

As implementation of the Land-based Sources Protocol has not reached the same level in all Contracting Parties, attainable reduction goals should be fixed for each country (expressed as a percentage), together with a precise timetable for each category of pollutant deemed to be a source of concern.

The Group should have completed its work within a year so that the Contracting Parties can utilize it in drawing up their action plans once the revised Land-based Sources Protocol has entered into force.

Scope of the subject

The subject is vast, therefore, the Group will have to make choices in order to limit the scope of its study.

As the attached diagram shows, the Group will have to identify:

1. the industrial sectors to be developed or transformed, with the cooperation of local authorities;

2. the best available technologies (BAT) and the best environmental practices (BEP) that can be adopted immediately in order to make production less polluting, in cooperation with industry;
3. the types of industry (meaning production activities in the broadest sense) situated in the Mediterranean basin that generate pollutants defined as priorities, with a view to drawing up appropriate categories according to their impact on the marine environment;
4. the sea water quality objectives to be reached within x number of years;
5. the minimum number of parameters and pollutants to be measured permanently, together with the sampling sites.

Working methods

This document has been prepared in order to encourage reflection and incite a reaction among members of the Working Group. Its aim is not to circumscribe the problems, but only to encourage a study of the issue.

Each member of the Working Group should make comments and proposals so that the ideas outlined can be revised or completed.

The Group could meet together whenever the MCSD meets, but its work must continue in the intervening periods. Information should be exchanged by fax and proposals sent to the task manager.

During the MCSD meeting in Palma de Mallorca, a meeting should be held to organize the work and complete the attached list of members by including all the necessary information.

At the end of the year, there should be a consultation meeting between the Group and the ministerial, industrial and socio-economic representatives concerned. In this connection, a donor will have to be found in order to resolve the problem of financial resources.