

# The Blue Plan's History

Awareness of the common nature of Mediterranean issues goes back a very long time. It has prompted international agreements on forest management (the 1922 Silvamediterranea agreement), fisheries (1949 agreement setting up the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) and agronomic training (setting up of CIHEAM in 1962). Following the global conferences in Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg, this regional mobilisation then spread to the environmental and sustainable development field.

## From the Stockholm Conference to the Blue Plan 1989

- **1972.** Global awareness of environmental issues leads to the first Global Environment Conference in Stockholm and the birth of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The concept of “regional seas” is put forward.
- **1975.** At the invitation and under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Mediterranean riparian states and the European Community decide to launch a “Mediterranean Action Plan” (MAP) with a legal instrument, the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean. Proposed by France, the idea of setting up a centre for reflection and forecasting in this framework is accepted with the support of the Egyptian planning minister. Thus the Blue Plan is born.
- **1977.** An inter-governmental conference in Split defines the Blue Plan's terms of reference. It is entrusted with developing Mediterranean cooperation to put together and make available a common pool of knowledge in order to help bring about steady, environmentally friendly development. The original feature in the approach suggested lies in its prospective and systemic nature. The aim is to understand, to explore and to propose.
- **1979.** The Blue Plan is set up in the Alpes-Maritimes region of France as a UNEP/MAP “regional activity centre”.
- **1980-1989.** For the first time, a large region of the world is endeavouring in an inter-governmental context to give thought to potential futures for its environment and development. This results in 1989 in the publication in five languages of the first report “The Blue Plan: Futures for the Mediterranean Basin”.

## From Rio to the birth of a Mediterranean sustainable development process

- **1992.** The Rio Conference, the first World Summit on the Environment and Development, warns of the non-sustainable nature of the global developments underway and calls for action (Agenda 21).
- **1993.** The Blue Plan is asked to develop its role as a Mediterranean observatory for the environment and development and to roll out the prospective approach in the coastal regions.
- **1995-1996.** The riparian states and the European Union amend the Barcelona Convention and decide to set up a « Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development » (MCSd) within the revamped Mediterranean Action Plan, to act as a think-tank for the region. The Blue Plan supports the Commission in drawing up common views and proposals on the following themes: water demand

management (1997); tourism (1998); indicators of sustainable development (1999) ; free trade and the environment within the Euro-Mediterranean context (2000) ; urban development (2001) ; finance and cooperation (2004).

Experts and stakeholders are mobilised, reports drawn up and workshops organised. Summary papers and proposals are drafted. Recommendations are adopted as necessary.

- Several countries in the South and East set up « national observatories » for the environment and sustainable development, conduct national tests on sustainable development indicators, publish reports on the state of the environment and draw up action plans for the environment and sustainable development.
- **1999-2000.** The systemic and prospective approach is taken up at world level in the water sector by the Global Water Partnership. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Forum (The Hague) the Blue Plan draws up the « Mediterranean Vision on Water, Population and the Environment », which is presented at the Turin Euro-Mediterranean conference.

### From the Johannesburg Conference to the Blue Plan's alternative scenario

- **2002.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg focuses on the need to change our consumption and production patterns, the protection and sustainable management of natural resources for development ends, better integrating sustainability into the globalisation process and support for the development of poor countries. It calls for national strategies to be drawn up. A Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development is announced.
- **2002-2005.** At the request of the Contracting Parties the report entitled « *A sustainable future for the Mediterranean : the Blue Plan's environment and development outlook* » is drawn up. This, the Blue Plan's 2<sup>nd</sup> major work, allows the progress made since 1985 to be measured and calls for action towards alternative sustainable development scenarios (cf. datasheet 3).
- **2005.** Adoption by the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development of a draft Mediterranean Strategy for sustainable development: a « framework » strategy which focuses on seven issues (water, energy and climate, transport, tourism, agriculture and rural development, urban development, seas and coasts) with targets for progress.
- **Post 2005.** The objective for the region is to move into alternative scenarios. The drawing up and implementation of voluntarist sustainable development strategies and policies in the countries, supported by targeted regional cooperation with solid funding is a priority. For the Mediterranean Action Plan, the Blue Plan and its partners, one of the major objectives is to make the Mediterranean a showcase observatory for sustainable development (indicators, examples of good practices, policy instruments, regional sharing of experience), a key tool for the monitoring and promotion of more sustainable development in the region.