

# The MedPartnership

## Together for the mediterranean

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### MedPartnership Press Conference in Damascus: Cooperating to safeguarding the Mediterranean

16/03/2011

The MedPartnership held a press conference today in Damascus, Syria where the project's overall progress and achievements for 2010 were presented. Special attention to the activities in Syria was given. The press conference was realized within the framework of the MedPartnership's Second Steering Committee Meeting currently being held in Damascus.



The Minister of State for Environmental Affairs of Syria, Ms. Kawkab al-Sabah Dayeh reiterated Syria's commitment on safeguarding the marine and coastal environment. The Minister said that "We depend a lot on the MedPartnership as we expect to gain international support for cleaner seas and sustainable development both in coastal zones and in the interior of the country. I consider this meeting to be the beginning of a closer cooperation in order to achieve the environmental results that we all wish for". The Minister also mentioned the importance of the participation of NGOs within the framework of the MedPartnership in order to raise awareness on environmental issues.

Speaking for the MedPartnership, UNEP/MAP's coordinator Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias said that "As environmental protection is becoming a greater priority, if all interested parties maintain their commitment to protocols, conventions, projects and financing more opportunities for involvement will arise in the future".

The Project Manager for the MedPartnership Mr. Ivica Trumbic stated that "the MedPartnership is a long term partnership and we aim to a longer term than 2014. It is a huge undertaking and we therefore expect results across a wide range of issues. The project depends on the involvement of the countries who will benefit, as well as on the peoples of the region".

Furthermore, the press conference also dealt with two major issues pertinent to Syria. The first "Shaping the future of the Mediterranean Coasts: Celebrating the ICZM Protocol" examined the applications of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol ratified by Syria in November 2010. In brief, the ICZM Protocol is a unique legal instrument for sustainable coastal development providing an effective way to ensure that human actions are undertaken with a concern for balancing economic, social and environmental goals and priorities in a long-term perspective. The second issue referred to Syria's National Action Plan for land-based sources of pollution and relevant demonstration projects within the framework of the MedPartnership.

#### NOTE

The UNEP/MAP GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership) is a collective effort of countries and leading organizations (regional, international, non governmental, etc.) sharing the Mediterranean Sea towards the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean. The MedPartnership is being executed by the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the World Bank, and is financially supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donors, including the EU, and all participating countries.

The MedPartnership's overarching goal is to enable a coordinated and strategic approach to catalyze the policy, legal and institutional reforms, and the investments necessary to reverse the degradation trends affecting the Mediterranean, including its coastal habitats and biodiversity. The total value of MedPartnership, including financial participation in investment projects, is more than 100 million US dollars. The project started in 2009 and will be completed in 2014. The Project Management Unit is located in Athens, Greece, while more than 40 demonstration projects are being carried out in 13 southern and eastern countries of the Mediterranean Region.

