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Introduction

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols was held at the Centre Borschette, Brussels (Belgium), on 30 June 2005.

Participation

2. The meeting was chaired by the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, Mr. Corrado Clini, Director General, Department for Environmental Research and Development, Ministry of the Environment and Territory (Italy). The following members of the Bureau attended: Ms. Gentiana Hasko, Director for Foreign Relations and Communication, Ministry of the Environment (Albania) (Vice-President), Mr. Mohamed Borhan, Director-General of the Coastal Zone Management Division, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (Egypt) (Vice-President), Ms. Soledad Blanco, Director of International Affairs, DG-Environment-Unit E-1 (European Community) (Vice-President), and Mr. Philippe Lacoste, Deputy Director of Environment, Department of Economic and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France) (Rapporteur).

3. At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia) attended the meeting as an observer.

4. Mr. Paul Mifsud, Coordinator, and Ms. Tatjana Hema, Programme Officer, represented the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

5. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

6. The meeting was opened by the President of the Bureau at 9 a.m. on Thursday, 30 June 2005.

7. Ms. Soledad Blanco (European Community) welcomed participants to Brussels, noting that it was the first time that the European Community had had the pleasure of hosting a meeting of the Bureau.

8. Mr. Paul Mifsud, Coordinator, thanked the European Community for hosting the meeting and for its support.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

9. The meeting adopted the agenda prepared by the Secretariat (UNEP/BUR/63/1) and the organization of work set out in the annotated agenda (UNEP/BUR/63/2). The agenda is attached as **Annex II** to the present report.

Agenda item 3: Progress report on main activities carried out by the Secretariat during the period 1 November 2004 - 31 May 2005

10. The meeting agreed to take up the progress report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau (UNEP/BUR/63/3 and Add.1) section by section.

I. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS AND OUTPUTS OF THE MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Legal issues

11. The Coordinator indicated that the situation regarding ratifications had not changed since 14 September 2004, and drew attention to the inclusion of a new column on ratifications in Annex I to the progress report on the status of signatures and ratifications.

2. Diplomatic missions

12. The Coordinator said that in the course of his mission to France he had had contacts at the highest level. The mission to Slovenia was mainly related to preparations for the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties and he was pleased to report that the new Minister for the Environment in Slovenia had made a strong commitment to the Meeting. In Israel, he had urged the authorities to ratify the amended Convention without delay.

13. He had also attended the Third Biennial International Waters Conference of GEF and underlined how important it was for MAP to be present at meetings.

3. Financial and personnel matters

14. The Coordinator drew attention to Annex II to the progress report, which provided details of payments and outstanding contributions. No changes to the budget had to be reported.

15. Since the report had been prepared, further contributions had been received from France and Italy, bringing the total to €4,786,000. He particularly wished to thank Israel, Italy and Monaco for the additional funding provided for other activities.

16. Regarding personnel, the Security Assistant had been recruited for one year and consideration was being given to extending the appointment for the next biennium, but ways in which the post could be financed were being discussed with the United Nations.

17. During the ensuing discussion, the representative of France expressed his concern that some amended Protocols were not yet in force and feared that little progress had been made. Although he knew that ratification took time, ten years after the adoption of a Protocol was too long and indicated that there might be a problem. Furthermore, the MSSD Officer had taken up his post at a time when the Strategy had practically been adopted and he asked what role he would play in the future. Lastly, he wondered how the refocusing of ERS/RAC would relate to the work of the Information Officer at the Unit.

18. In response, the Coordinator said that there had been little reaction to letters urging ratification. He was continuing to try to arrange a meeting with the Spanish Minister for the Environment to discuss the situation. Ultimately, however, despite the best efforts of the Secretariat it was the responsibility of countries to ratify. Regarding the MSSD Officer, he said that the selection process through the United Nations Office in Nairobi took time and had prevented him taking up his post sooner; he had been engaged for one year and it would then be decided what should be done. Finally, the Secretariat was working closely with ERS/RAC and the web site, currently managed by ERS/RAC, would shortly be transferred to the Unit in Athens. The new site provided an opportunity to enhance MAP's visibility.

19. The representative of the European Community said that she was not fully satisfied with the focus of the web site. It appeared to be directed at experts and not the general

public. The web site should be a tool for communication and awareness-raising and be user-friendly.

4. Cooperation with partners

20. The Coordinator outlined the cooperation activities carried out by MED POL, REMPEC and SPA/RAC, as well as cooperation with NGO/MAP partners and public participation.

5. Information and public awareness

21. The Coordinator said that it would take some time to recruit the new Information Officer so, in the meantime, Mr. Baher Kamal had been given a four-month engagement to cover the period of the Contracting Parties' Meeting.

22. The Workshop for Mediterranean Media Professionals had proved a success and it was hoped that more would be held in the future.

23. The Coordinator described preparations for celebrating MAP's 30th anniversary, drawing attention to some of the activities described in the report. In response to a query, he said that the special issue of UNEP's "Our Planet" magazine was expected to be published in October 2005, in time for the Contracting Parties' Meeting.

6. Pollution prevention and control

24. The Coordinator drew Bureau members' attention to the many activities outlined in the progress report, underlining in particular the development of the sub-regional Contingency Plan for the Adriatic Sea, involving Croatia, Italy and Slovenia, which was expected to be signed on the occasion of the Contracting Parties' Meeting.

7. Conservation of biodiversity

25. The Coordinator informed the Bureau that the SPA/RAC Focal Points had expressed the strong feeling that greater support was needed to prevent the extinction of the Mediterranean monk seal. The situation regarding invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea was also critical and would have to be addressed.

8. Environment and development

26. The Coordinator said that a series of activities were planned to promote the Environment and Development Report and a publicity campaign was being prepared.

27. Regarding Coastal Area Management Plans (CAMPs), the Coordinator informed the Bureau that the agreement on the CAMP Cyprus project had been signed. Turning to the question of the historic sites programme, he said that the new draft programme was still under consideration.

28. Finally, the application of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean had to be addressed at the MAP level and a specific recommendation was being prepared for the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

II. SPECIFIC ISSUES

a. Legal issues

1. *Status of ratification*

29. The Coordinator drew attention to the opinion of the MAP legal adviser concerning the relationship between the Protocols ratified and those not yet ratified, which created difficulties.

30. The representative of France said that every time France had bilateral contacts with other Mediterranean States, it raised the issue of ratification. It was a matter of credibility for the Barcelona Convention and a way had to be found to encourage ratification. It was often not a substantive problem, but rather of finding time in Parliament's heavy agenda. However, the more time that elapsed the more difficult it became to place ratification on the agenda.

31. The representative of Egypt considered that the reasons why States failed to ratify should be ascertained and the problems identified. He feared that two of the Protocols did not in fact meet with the approval of some Contracting Parties and that was the reason they had not been ratified. If that was the case, it had to be admitted that there was a problem with those particular Protocols.

32. The Coordinator pointed out that countries that had signed but not ratified were obliged to state their reasons for failure to ratify.

DECISION

The Bureau invited those Contracting Parties not yet party to one or more revised or new legal instruments of MAP to expedite the process of ratification. The Bureau also invited those countries that had signed but not yet ratified these instruments to make their position known with respect to their ratification.

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to provide any assistance to countries upon their request in order to speed up the ratification process.

2. *Draft Protocol on Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM)*

33. Ms. Hema, Programme Officer, reported on the outcome of the regional consultative expert workshop held in Oristano (Italy) on 24 and 25 June 2005.

34. The representative of the European Community provided an update on the situation regarding the consultation process with respect to the draft of the text in the European Union. Member States had been asked to submit in writing any comments on a future legal instrument, whose potential for adoption, ratification and implementation would be a decisive factor. The text would have to be reviewed carefully to make sure that it reflected sustainable development policy in coastal areas and it should not go beyond the European Union *acquis* otherwise it would be difficult for Member States to accept. It should introduce a more flexible approach, elaborating a vision and purpose that integrated sectoral interests.

35. The representative of France considered that further time for consultation was required and it would be premature to submit the text to the Contracting Parties.

36. The representative of Egypt agreed that further clarification and work were required and suggested that an official technical meeting be held to revise the text before it was submitted to the Contracting Parties. He recalled that the issue had already been discussed at the 13th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

37. The President was also of the view that the time was not ripe to place the item on the agenda of the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, although the Parties could be asked to agree on the opening of negotiations.

38. The Coordinator pointed out that the Contracting Parties had requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft text, but guidance from the Contracting Parties was required before proceeding further.

DECISION

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to submit a recommendation to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties on establishing an Open-ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts from the Contracting Parties to develop a text of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Area Management and to submit a report thereon to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties by 2007.

3. *Compliance mechanism and reporting*

Compliance mechanism

39. The representative of France emphasized the need to discuss who would be entitled to make submissions to the Compliance Committee, which was a political matter and not one for technical experts.

40. The Coordinator said that he would report to the Contracting Parties on the progress of work and on the recommendations by the Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Implementation and Compliance under the Barcelona Convention.

DECISION

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to propose to the Parties extension of the mandate of the Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Implementation and Compliance in order to finalize the formulation of the compliance mechanism on the basis of the main elements presented in Annex IV to the progress report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau (document UNEP/BUR/63/3), as possibly amended by the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in September 2005, with a view to its adoption in 2007.

Reporting

41. Ms. Hema reported on the meeting of National Contact Points on Reporting, held in Morocco on 13 and 14 June 2005.

DECISION

The Bureau extended its appreciation to all Contracting Parties that had submitted their reports on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for the biennium 2002-2003.

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to propose to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to continue reporting on the implementation of the revised and new legal instruments of MAP, as agreed at the 13th Meeting, regardless of their status of ratification.

4. Liability and compensation

42. The Coordinator recalled that the issue was a sensitive one and it was recommended that an Open-ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts be established to address it.

43. The representative of France agreed that the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group might help to avoid problems in the future.

44. The representative of Egypt suggested that all Contracting Parties be invited to make their views known, even if they were unable to attend the Group's meetings.

DECISION

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to recommend to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts to develop appropriate rules and procedures with a view to implementing Article 16 of the revised Convention on liability and compensation.

b. Institutional framework

1. Evaluations: MAP, MED POL, ERS/RAC, CP/RAC

45. The Coordinator said that some of the recommendations made in the evaluation of MAP could be implemented immediately, if endorsed by the Contracting Parties, provided that they had no implications. Those that had implications, however, should be discussed further with a view to adoption by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties. The evaluation of MED POL had been positive and there was little to say about the evaluations of CP/RAC and REMPEC. It should be noted, however, that the major recommendation in the evaluation of ERS/RAC had been that it should be refocused and renamed.

46. The representative of Egypt suggested that the Bureau thank the Coordinator of MED POL personally for the excellent work he had done. Following the evaluations, a comprehensive programme would have to be drawn up to implement the changes recommended. It should be borne in mind, however, that the recommendations represented the personal opinions of the evaluators. He was concerned about the overlapping of activities and considered that the precise mandate of each Regional Activity Centre should be defined.

47. The representative of the European Community said that the evaluation reports required in-depth discussion, which could be facilitated by the Secretariat at the meeting of

MAP Focal Points, and proposals as to how certain recommendations could be implemented should be put forward. The recommendation concerning the MAP/EU Joint Work Programme found it too technical, but that was by necessity because it was a technical agreement between two administrations. Regarding the evaluation of ERS/RAC, she generally supported the refocusing, but emphasized that there should be no duplication of work with that of the MEDU Information Officer. That point required careful examination. She noted also that the CP/RAC Focal Points had expressed a desire to work more closely with industry.

48. The representative of France agreed that the recommendations could be addressed by the Focal Points, but not at their regular meeting, and he suggested that a special meeting be convened. With regard to ERS/RAC, he recalled that remote sensing came within the purview of information.

49. The Coordinator, in reply to a query, said that the evaluations would be circulated to the MAP Focal Points, who would decide to whom they should be distributed.

2. Main decisions of the meetings of the National Focal Points of MAP components

REMPEC

50. The Coordinator drew attention to the preparation of the final draft text of the Regional Strategy on prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships.

DECISION

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the Government of Italy for its continuous support to MAP in providing additional voluntary contributions to REMPEC.

BP/PAP/ERS RACs

51. The Coordinator drew attention to the conclusions of the meetings of Focal Points of BP/PAP/ERS RACs and to the publication of the Environment and Development Report.

52. The representative of France wondered whether events held to celebrate the publication of the Report needed to be coordinated and underlined the importance of having a brief summary of the Report, which was too bulky a document for widespread dissemination.

53. The Coordinator said that a summary would be prepared. The full Report would be available in September 2005 and the Secretariat was discussing with Blue Plan the programme of activities to publicize it.

DECISION

The Bureau welcomed the finalization of the Environment and Development Report and supported its broad dissemination and presentation at important regional and national events.

54. The representative of the European Community expressed support for initiatives to protect the Mediterranean monk seal, as advocated by the meeting of SPA/RAC Focal Points.

55. The representative of France asked whether the Secretariat had contacted those countries where problems existed in relation to protection of the monk seal because they should be the focus of attention.

56. The Coordinator said that the SPA/RAC Focal Points had discussed the issue in detail and had unanimously agreed on the need for a policy declaration.

3. *Preparations for the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties*

- *List of documents*

57. Ms. Hema, Programme Officer, introduced the proposed list of documents.

- *Proposed themes for discussion at the ministerial segment*

58. The representative of the European Community proposed that an additional theme be added, namely, the status of ratifications and why countries had not ratified.

59. The representative of France said that the proposed theme "Future direction for MAP on the basis of the external evaluation" was premature. If Ministers were to be persuaded to attend, the themes must be well prepared in advance by the MAP Focal Points and he doubted that there was enough time to discuss in depth the future direction of MAP.

60. The representative of the European Community considered that, even though debates at meetings of the Contracting Parties were indeed usually prepared by the MAP Focal Points, matters of political import such as the future direction of MAP had to be discussed at the highest political level by the Ministers themselves.

61. The President suggested that the Secretariat summarize the various options for Ministers.

62. The Coordinator agreed that such a text could be prepared, but it would require input from the MAP Focal Points.

DECISION

The Bureau recommended to the Secretariat the inclusion of the following topics in the agenda for the ministerial segment at the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties:

- (1) MSSD/Policy Declaration**
- (2) New orientation of MAP**
- (3) Implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs)**
- (4) Policy declaration on the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal.**

- *Preparations by the host country*

63. The observer from Slovenia described the preparations being made for the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, which would be preceded by a press conference with the Minister for the Environment to be held shortly in Porto Roz.

64. The Coordinator reported that the host country agreement with the Slovenian Government had now been signed.

DECISION

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the Slovenian authorities for their commitment to ensuring a successful meeting of the Contracting Parties.

c. Cooperation with partners

1. *Cooperation with the EC*

65. The representative of the European Community said that the inter-service consultation within the European Commission on the Joint Work Programme had ended and she would be in a position to give further information subsequently.

66. The representative of Egypt hoped that the views of the Contracting Parties would be sought before entering into any agreement with the European Union.

DECISION

The Bureau invited the Secretariat and the European Commission to agree on the Joint Work Programme in time for its submission to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points as an information document.

- *Meeting with the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs*

67. The Coordinator drew attention to the meeting he and other MAP officials had recently had with the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, at which they had been briefed on the future options for a possible EU maritime policy and had in turn informed the Commissioner and his colleagues of the various initiatives being undertaken and programmes implemented by the Secretariat and MAP components.

DECISION

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the European Commission, in particular to the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, for having accepted the invitation to visit MAP offices and for his commitment to involve MAP in the consultation process for the development of the EU Maritime Policy.

2. *Cooperation with IMO*

68. The Coordinator said that applications for the post of Director of REMPEC would close in August and the selection process would begin in September.

69. The representative of Egypt expressed his concern that the Centre would remain without senior staff. He added that the region was responsible for the Centre and should have its say in who was appointed.

70. The Coordinator explained that the Centre was administered by IMO and the decision on appointments lay with it. The Secretariat was insisting, however, that there should be an overlap between the departure of Mr. Patruno and the arrival of the new incumbent.

71. The President wondered whether it would not be possible to find a way of continuing to utilize Mr. Patruno's expertise.

72. The Coordinator said that he was confident that the new Director would be perfectly capable and it was not possible to envisage having a former Director working alongside the new Director other than for the period of overlap.

d. Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and political declaration

73. The representative of the European Community considered that the Strategy was globally positive, although she would have preferred more social and economic content. The future of the Strategy was one of the more difficult decisions to be taken by the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties. In her view, Blue Plan should be responsible for implementation rather than the MCSD. It was not a normal procedure to have an advisory body with such a degree of autonomy that could report directly to the Contracting Parties.

74. The representative of Egypt suggested that Blue Plan coordinate and monitor implementation of the MSSD, as well as identifying instances in which it was not being implemented.

75. The representative of France was relatively satisfied with the Strategy, although he would have like to see more emphasis on social and cultural aspects. The role of the MCSD was ambiguous, an advisory body that reported directly to the Contracting Parties. He thought Ministers might be reluctant to adopt a Strategy that they had not negotiated and were unable to amend.

76. The President agreed that it was necessary to identify the technical body to be responsible for implementing the Strategy. Clearly, the MCSD could not be responsible so perhaps Blue Plan would be a solution.

77. The Coordinator recalled that the Contracting Parties had established the MCSD and instructed it to report directly to them. The Strategy represented a framework that would involve all MAP components in its implementation.

78. The representative of the European Community said that there were two issues: firstly, the Strategy had to be adopted, endorsed or approved by the Contracting Parties, and that could be achieved through a political declaration; and secondly, it had to be decided what structure was best adapted to monitoring its implementation.

79. The representative of Albania pointed out that the Strategy constituted guidelines that could be supplemented at the national level in National Sustainable Development Strategies.

80. The representative of France asked whether the proposed political declaration would be submitted to the MAP Focal Points and what type of declaration it would be.

81. The Coordinator confirmed that the declaration would be put before the MAP Focal Points and then sent to national authorities, indicating that it was in line with the mandate given by the Contracting Parties. It would then go to the Contracting Parties at their 14th Meeting. He added that it was impossible to devise a Strategy that was applicable to the region as a whole so it was necessarily flexible and non-binding.

DECISION

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to draft a policy declaration on the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and to submit it for consideration at the next meeting of MAP Focal Points with a view to its inclusion in the final declaration at the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

e. Financial and administrative issues

1. *Audit of MAP*

82. The Coordinator introduced the audit of MEDUNIT carried out by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and contained in Annex VII to the progress report, indicating that the recommendations were already being addressed.

DECISION

The Bureau took note of the audit exercise and invited the Secretariat to implement the recommendations made in the report.

2. *MED-POL Coordinator – Upgrading of post*

83. The Coordinator underlined the heavy responsibilities of the MED POL Coordinator, particularly as a result of the adoption of the GEF Project.

84. The representative of the European Community enquired how the grade of the MED POL Coordinator compared with those of the Directors of the RACs.

85. The representative of France wondered whether the upgrading of the MED POL Coordinator's post should not form part of the review of all job classifications and descriptions recommended by the auditors in paragraph 20 of their report.

86. In reply, the Coordinator said that the post was at a lower level than that of the Director of REMPEC and indicated that part of the costs of Directors of the RACs were met by the host countries, adding that the overall review recommended by the auditors only applied to administrative staff.

87. The representative of the European Community considered that the matter should be brought to the attention of the MAP Focal Points, who were in a better position to judge.

88. The Coordinator pointed out that the financial implications were not considerable, but nevertheless provision had to be made in the budget.

89. The President said that upgrading of the post was recognition of the heavy responsibilities incumbent upon the MED POL Coordinator.

DECISION

The Bureau expressed its support for the Secretariat's proposal to upgrade the position of MED POL Coordinator to D1 and to raise this issue at the meeting of MAP Focal Points.

Agenda item 4: **Any other business**

90. No supplementary points were raised under this agenda item.

Agenda item 5: **Conclusions and decisions**

91. The Bureau reviewed, amended and adopted the summary of decisions prepared by the Secretariat. The full summary of decisions is attached as **Annex III** to the present report.

Agenda item 6: **Closure of the meeting**

92. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the meeting closed at 5.45 p.m. on Thursday, 30 June 2005.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and organization of work
3. Progress on main activities carried out by the Secretariat during the period 1st November 2004 - 31 May 2005.

I General review on the progress and outputs of the main activities

II Specific issues

a. Legal Issues

1. *Status of ratification*
2. *Draft Protocol on ICAM*
3. *Compliance mechanism and Reporting*
4. *Liability and Compensation*

b. Institutional matters

1. *Evaluations: MAP, MED POL, ERS/RAC; CP/RAC*
2. *Main decisions of the meetings of the National Focal Points of MAP components*
3. *Preparations for the 14th CPs meeting*
 - *List of documents*
 - *Proposed themes for discussion at the ministerial segment*
 - *Preparations by the host country*

c. Cooperation with Partners

1. *Joint Programme of Work Strategic Partnership*
2. *Cooperation with IMO*

d. Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

1. *MSSD including political declaration*
2. *MCSD meeting*

e. Financial and Administrative Issues

1. *MED-POL Coordinator – Upgrading of Post*
2. *Audit report of UNEP/MAP*

4. Any other business
5. Conclusions and decisions
6. Closure of the meetin

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS OF THE MEETING

1. Status of ratification

The Bureau invited those Contracting Parties not yet party to one or more revised or new legal instruments of MAP to expedite the process of ratification. The Bureau also invited those countries that had signed but not yet ratified these instruments to make their position known with respect to their ratification.

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to provide any assistance to countries upon their request in order to speed up the ratification process.

2. Draft Protocol on Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM)

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to submit a recommendation to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties on establishing an Open-ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts from the Contracting Parties to develop a text of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Area Management and to submit a report thereon to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties by 2007.

3. Compliance Mechanism

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to propose to the Parties extension of the mandate of the Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Implementation and Compliance in order to finalize the formulation of the compliance mechanism on the basis of the main elements presented in Annex IV to the progress report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau (document UNEP/BUR/63/3), as possibly amended by the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in September 2005, with a view to its adoption in 2007.

4. Reporting

The Bureau extended its appreciation to all Contracting Parties that had submitted their reports on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for the biennium 2002-2003.

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to propose to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to continue reporting on the implementation of the revised and new legal instruments of MAP, as agreed at the 13th Meeting, regardless of their status of ratification.

5. Liability and Compensation

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to recommend to the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts to develop appropriate rules and procedures with a view to implementing Article 16 of the revised Convention on liability and compensation.

6. REMPEC

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the Government of Italy for its continuous support to MAP in providing additional voluntary contributions to REMPEC.

7. BP/PAP/ERS RACs

The Bureau welcomed the finalization of the Environment and Development Report and supported its broad dissemination and presentation at important regional and national events.

8. Preparations for the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

The Bureau recommended to the Secretariat the inclusion of the following topics in the agenda for the ministerial segment at the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties:

- (5) MSSD/Policy Declaration
- (6) New orientation of MAP
- (7) Implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs)
- (8) Policy declaration on the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal.

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the Slovenian authorities for their commitment to ensuring a successful meeting of the Contracting Parties.

9. Cooperation with partners

The Bureau invited the Secretariat and the European Commission to agree on the Joint Work Programme in time for its submission to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points as an information document.

The Bureau extended its appreciation to the European Commission, in particular to the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, for having accepted the invitation to visit MAP offices and for his commitment to involve MAP in the consultation process for the development of the EU Maritime Policy.

10. Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to draft a policy declaration on the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and to submit it for consideration at the next meeting of MAP Focal Points with a view to its inclusion in the final declaration at the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

11. Audit of MAP

The Bureau took note of the audit exercise and invited the Secretariat to implement the recommendations made in the report.

12. MED-POL Coordinator – Upgrading of Post

The Bureau expressed its support for the Secretariat's proposal to upgrade the position of MED POL Coordinator to D1 and to raise this issue at the meeting of MAP Focal Points.