

## TIRANA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

**We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols, meeting in Tirana, Albania, on 19 December 2017,**

*Recalling* the importance of the regional dimension for the implementation of global strategies and agendas,

*Recalling also* the unique nature and mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention system and its primary role in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean,

*Welcoming* the progress made in the delivery of the mandate described set out in the Mediterranean Action Plan, the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and in other instruments and decisions,

*Welcoming also* the outcome document of the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017, entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, and the commitments to action announced by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as well as the regional commitments submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan within the framework of the Conference and of the fourth “Our Ocean” Conference, held in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017,

*Recalling* the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Ministers of the Environment at the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi from 4 to 6 December 2017 under the overarching theme “Towards a pollution-free planet”, and especially the commitments to strengthen actions that prevent, mitigate and manage marine pollution and promote science-based decision-making,

*Noting* the key findings of the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report, and *highlighting* the fact that despite the measures taken to date, marine pollution, including new and emerging pollutants, remains one of the main pressures on the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean, causing significant adverse impacts on natural ecosystems, and *also highlighting* the degradation of marine and coastal biodiversity caused by cumulative pressures, including ecosystem fragmentation; overexploitation of natural resources; introduction of invasive alien species; marine, soil and atmospheric pollution; and climate change,

*Recalling* the importance of oceans and biodiversity conservation for swift and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

*Being aware* that the development of sustainable blue economy and key socioeconomic activities depends on clean, biologically diverse and healthy seas, and reaffirming the vital importance of the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and of the sustainable management of natural resources for the provision of goods and services for the population of the Mediterranean region,

*Welcoming* the outcome of the Ocean Conference and reiterating its call to strengthen cooperation, policy coherence and coordination among institutions at all levels, including between and among international, regional and subregional organizations and institutions, arrangements and programmes,

*Recognizing* the contribution of non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other key stakeholders as a means to maximize effectiveness and results on the ground,

*Reaffirm* our commitment to making progress towards achieving and/or maintaining Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean, in line with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and *decide* to start discussions on the next steps of the ecosystem approach implementation beyond 2021 to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*Resolve* to enhance our efforts to play a key role in working towards a pollution-free planet and to integrate pollution prevention into local and national planning for the long-term well-being of our people and our planet;

*Decide* to continue taking appropriate measures to prevent and reduce marine pollution from land-based and marine sources as set out in strategic Mediterranean Action Plan documents, including the Mid-term Strategy 2016–2021, the Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-based Activities in the Mediterranean Region (SAP-MED), the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016–2021), the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan and national and regional action plans, with particular regard to municipal and industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste management, the reduction or phasing out of toxic and obsolete chemicals and hazardous waste, marine litter, plastics and microplastics and especially single-use plastics;

*Commit* to promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, including making the best use of investment and innovation opportunities, supporting market-based and other solutions to reduce waste generation, improving mechanisms for environmentally sound waste management, and developing and promoting sustainable chemicals management and safe alternatives to plastics and toxic chemicals;

*Welcome* the commitments to eliminate 2,000 tons of polychlorinated biphenyls and persistent organic pollutants and 30 tons of mercury in pollution “hot spots” in the Mediterranean under the MedProgramme;

*Commit* to strengthening the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and achieving its targets, in synergy with similar work undertaken within other global frameworks, such as the Group of 7 and the Group of 20, and welcome commitments of the Contracting Parties under the “Clean Seas” and “Beat Pollution” campaigns led by the United Nations Environment Programme;

*Encourage* Contracting Parties to promote transformative investment for our economies and societies, bringing in the private sector to finance clean, resource-efficient, low-carbon opportunities;

*Resolve* to enhance action to fully implement the priority and specific actions and achieve the biodiversity-related targets as set out in the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP-BIO); the regional action plans for endangered species and habitats; and the integrated monitoring and assessment programme (IMAP), on biodiversity and non-indigenous species within the framework of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap in order to enhance the Good Environmental Status of the ecosystems, habitats and endangered species of the Mediterranean sea to reduce the impact of invasive and non-indigenous species and achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 9;

*Commit* to accelerating efforts to ensure the implementation in the Mediterranean of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular target 11, and the ocean-related Sustainable Development Goal targets, in particular target 14.5, and cooperating so as to achieve ambitious targets by 2030;

*Encourage* Contracting Parties to work on advancing the process of establishing marine protected areas in line with global developments, including the ongoing process for the development of a global, legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, and the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, where appropriate;

*Welcome* voluntary sources of financing for Mediterranean marine protected areas, for example the work of the Trust Fund established for Mediterranean marine protected areas and the financial contributions already provided therein;

*Reaffirm* our commitment to promoting adaptation to climate change and increasing the resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal natural and socioeconomic systems to the impacts of climate change by advancing the implementation of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean and the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas;

*Resolve* to act in support of the prevention and phase-out of marine pollution and in support of biodiversity conservation within the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention and its Protocols by maximizing coordination and synergy with the work of other multilateral environmental agreements at all levels, as well as with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and other partners, and *invite* all secretariats to strengthen their collaboration;

*Invite* international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations and the private sector, with the interest and capacity to do so, to support the work of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan and its related initiatives;

*Welcome* the work done on the development of the Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management and the Conceptual Framework for Marine Spatial Planning and agree to further develop those two key instruments with a view to ensuring and promoting the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, achieving Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean and contributing to its sustainable development through enhanced planning and management approaches;

*Commit* to implementing effective national monitoring programmes based on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP), as a tool to assess the state of the marine and coastal environment and the effectiveness of measures taken towards achieving and/or maintaining Good Environmental Status, the effectiveness of policies relevant to the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention system and the achievement of strategic targets related to pollution reduction, hydrography and biodiversity conservation;

*Reaffirm* our commitment to strengthening national and regional capacities to ensure the implementation of commitments under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and the further improvement of national reporting on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, aiming for comprehensive and integrated reporting that enables processing of the information and strengthening of the knowledge needed to underpin national and regional policymaking;

*Also reaffirm* the instrumental role of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention system in facilitating the implementation of the ocean-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean;

*Highlight* the important contribution that coordination at the regional sea level can make towards delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2025;

*Commit* to promoting maximum coherence and synergy between regional monitoring mechanisms and global mechanisms for the purposes of monitoring for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*Also commit* to continue and enhance our engagement and partnership with global, regional and sub-regional bodies and programmes, the scientific community and academic institutions, the private sector, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, community groups, and other relevant actors to support the achievement of our common goals for the implementation of the ocean-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 14, and especially on the prevention and reduction of pollution and on the conservation of biodiversity.

---