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**Agenda item 6: Contribution of the MCSD to COP 20**

**Preparations for COP 20**

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UN Environment/MAP  
Athens, 2017



## **Introduction**

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (Barcelona Convention) will take place in Tirana, Albania, on 17-20 December 2017.
2. The Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting (Tirana, Albania, 25-26 October 2016), took note of the possible themes of COP 20 and suggested to focus on the implementation of the SDG 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, addressing in particular land-sea interaction, including ICZM, marine biodiversity, marine litter/plastics, in relation to specific sectors such as tourism.
3. The Steering Committee of the MCSD at its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting (Athens, Greece, 18-19 January 2017) concluded that the MCSD could focus the discussions based on the suggestion of the Bureau’s 83<sup>rd</sup> meeting for the COP 20 theme, considering also the possibility to examine a wider scope/theme for COP 20 that addresses implementation of SDG 14 from a wider perspective, looking in particular at issues such as pollution, SCP or ICZM/MSP.
4. To finalize the Bureau’s recommendation, the Secretariat, after consultations between the Coordinating Unit and the MAP Components, and taking into account the focus of major international events on oceans in the context of sustainable development and the theme of UNEA-3, prepared two proposals for the main theme of COP 20, namely “Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Focus on SDG 14: Towards a Pollution-Free Mediterranean” and “Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development with Focus on SDG 14: Regional Commitment to Global Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism”. The Bureau, in its 84<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Athens, Greece, 19-20 June 2017), welcomed the proposals of the Secretariat regarding the theme of COP 20, and decided on the theme: *“Implementation of SDG 14 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a Focus on Marine Pollution and Biodiversity”*.

## **The main rationale behind the COP 20 theme**

5. This theme is closely linked to the vision of the UNEP/MAP Mid Term Strategy 2016-2021 “A healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse contributing to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations” and to its ultimate objectives, which are the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean and the contribution to sustainable development.
6. Furthermore, at the global level, a number of major events in 2017 are focusing on ocean issues, including on pollution and biodiversity, such as: (i) the UN “Ocean Conference” on the implementation of SDG 14; (ii) UNEA-3 in December 2017 on the implementation of SDG 14 with focus on marine pollution (Target 14.1); (iii) the “Our Ocean” conference in October 2017; and (iv) the Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in October 2017.
7. The COP 20 theme complements the theme of the Ministerial segment of COP 19 *“Forty Years of Cooperation for Healthy and Productive Mediterranean Sea and Coast: A Collective Journey Towards Sustainable Development”* and offers an opportunity for an in-depth and timely exchange on issues of global relevance, which are at the core of UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention.
8. Dedicating COP 20 to this topic will target the attention to the Mediterranean reality. It will give the Mediterranean Ministers the opportunity to review the regional specificity of the implementation needs of international commitments, to discuss the links between pollution and biodiversity, and to set priorities and make commitments in support of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention instruments towards achieving SDG 14.

### **Contribution of the MCSD**

9. Under this agenda item, the MCSD members are expected to discuss the input of the MCSD to COP 20. This is the first meeting of the MCSD after the adoption of Decision IG. 22/17 on the “Reform of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents”. This is therefore a unique opportunity to fulfil the aspirations of the MCSD to have an active and substantial role as “an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and a forum for debate and exchange of experiences on sustainable development issues that concern all interested parties in the Mediterranean region”.

10. In view of facilitating the deliberations during the 17<sup>th</sup> MCSD meeting and to promote an interactive dialogue involving the greatest possible variety of actors, the Secretariat has prepared the following questions to enable an adequate and relevant input of the MCSD to COP 20.

#### **Questions for discussion during the MCSD meeting:**

- a) Following the discussions of the last two days, what are in your view the priority issues, best practices, and main challenges for the successful implementation of sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean region that also contribute to achieving SDG 14 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development??
- b) What is the role and added value that the different stakeholder groups represented in the MCSD can have in the implementation of SDG 14, particularly in relation to marine pollution and biodiversity in the Mediterranean region? What would you like to emphasize from the point of view of the category of stakeholders that you represent?
- c) Which specific aspects of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 can contribute mostly to the theme of COP 20?
- d) Considering the theme of COP 20, if you could raise one question to be asked to the Ministers during their discussions, what would that question be?