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88th 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

Rome, Italy, 21-22 May 2019

Report: Conclusions and Recommendations

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Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of Italy and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 88th 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 (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols was held in Rome, Italy, on 21-22 May 2019.

Participation

2. The President of the Bureau, Ms. Klodiana Marika (Albania), the Vice-Presidents: Ms. Marina Argyrou (Cyprus); Ms. Heba Sharawy (Egypt); Mr. Oliviero Montanaro, together with Ms. Maria Carmela Giarratano and Ms. Silvia Sartori (Italy); Mr. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou (Tunisia) and the Rapporteur, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro) attended the Bureau meeting. Ms. Marijana Mance (European Union) attended the meeting as an observer. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, Programme Officer, Expert). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The meeting was opened at 09:30 on 21 May 2019 by Ms. Klodiana Marika, President of the Bureau. She welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their last meeting of the 2018-2019 biennium.

4. The Coordinator also made a statement of welcome to the participants, especially welcoming the new Member of the Bureau from Cyprus, Ms. Marina Argyrou.

II. Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

5. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.88/1. No additional issues were added to agenda item 7 “*Any Other Matters*”. The Agenda is presented in Annex II of the present document.

III. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for October 2018–April 2019

6. The Coordinator introduced the document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period October 2018 - April 2019*” (UNEP/MED BUR.88/3). He presented highlights from the report, noting that efforts were made to produce a focused and concise document. He also introduced the “*Progress report by the Secretariat on the implementation of COP 20 Decisions*” (UNEP/MED BUR.88/4) and made reference to the “*Reports of the 37th and 38th Meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel*” and the “*Compilation of Project Fiches*”, presented in documents UNEP/MED BUR.88/Inf.4 and Inf.5 respectively, for the information of the Bureau.

7. In his presentation, the Coordinator highlighted that work on the implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW) and other COP 20 decisions has been very intense during the reporting period, achieving tangible results. Special reference was made to the meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel, which had at the core of their agenda the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021, as well as to the MAP Components/Thematic Focal Points meetings taking place in the period between April and June 2019. He highlighted the importance of these meetings in preparation of the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 21.

8. Further highlights included the recent ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Malta, the progress in relation to resource mobilization, including the finalization of the preparations of the GEF MedProgramme Child Projects, the conclusion of the negotiations with the European Commission to

support the 3rd phase of the Marine Protected Areas project under the GreenMedIII Strategy, the approval of the 2nd phase of the SwitchMed Project, the approval of project proposals submitted by the MAP Components to the European Commission, and the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS). Details on implementation of projects supporting the execution of the PoW were also provided.

9. Furthermore, the Coordinator informed the Bureau of the work of the Secretariat towards strengthening partnerships and synergies in the global and regional levels, including the MOU signed with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat (Geneva, Switzerland, on 7 December 2018), the contributions by MAP to UN processes and events, such as the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference (Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2018); UNEA-4 (Nairobi, Kenya, 11-15 March 2019), COP 14 of the CBD (Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, 17-29 November 2018); the 2019 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region (Geneva, Switzerland, 21-22 March 2019); and the GFCM Fish Forum 2018 (Rome, Italy, 10-14 December 2018). He also informed on the Workshop on the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter in synergy with the Regional Seas Convention (Metz, France, 5-6 May 2019), as well as on the cooperation with the Benguela Current Convention and the European Environment Agency (EEA). He stressed the importance of the contribution of MAP-Barcelona Convention in future processes and events, and especially to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the CBD and the next UN Ocean Conference to be held in Portugal in June 2020, co-organized by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya. Finally, he updated the Bureau in relation to the implementation of the core and cross-cutting themes of the Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) and PoW.

10. The Bureau members expressed appreciation for the progress achieved in the implementation of the activities carried out and for the early start of implementation and the efforts provided. Furthermore, they welcomed the structure of the report, noting that future versions should also address challenges and constraints affecting the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and of the PoW, together with relevant suggestions, as appropriate.

11. The meeting highlighted the importance of the contribution of MAP-Barcelona Convention to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and of processes such as the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea or parts thereof as SOx emission control area under MARPOL Annex VI.

12. One member of the Bureau referred to the need for capacity building, especially in relation to providing support to Contracting Parties to finalize their national implementation reports.

13. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation for the work done in the period October 2018–April 2019 as presented by the Secretariat, and for the efforts and results achieved so far.

(b) The Bureau recommends that in the future the Progress Report be prepared strictly in line with the elements of the programme of work, informing on the status of activities, and where relevant, on challenges and delays in the specific outcome implementation.

IV. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

14. The Coordinator informed the meeting on the progress made as presented in document UNEP/MED BUR.88/5 “*Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues*”, addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, and administrative matters. He noted that the deficit in the CAL account has been fully repaid, that a positive MTF balance exists, and that the Working Capital Reserve (WCR) has been maintained in accordance to the decisions of the Contracting Parties.

15. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the work done by the Secretariat that resulted in the healthy financial situation as well as for the information provided. The members of the Bureau asked for further details on financial situation in the biennium 2018-2019 and noted that the existing surplus could be used to increase the budget for the biennium 2020-2021.

16. The Secretariat pointed out that the WCR is a very good measure in place, but to make use of it may be difficult; to this end, another tool used by several Multilateral Environmental Agreements is the operational reserve.

17. The Bureau members took note of the comments by the Secretariat; they advised however to make use of the WCR as a more robust mechanism.

18. Regarding long standing arrears it was noted that two out of the five countries in arrears face specific critical situations, and that if the issue persists it will need to be addressed by the COP.

19. The Bureau discussed a number of other relevant issues, including the implementation of the UN scale of assessments, the issue of programme support costs, the currency of accounting records and exchange rate issues, and advised the Secretariat accordingly.

20. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the Report on Financial Issues and takes note of the important surplus at 31 December 2017, as reported in the document. The Bureau asks the Secretariat to prepare an information document on the situation of the balance, including possible options for the use of any possible positive balance. It takes note of the Fund balances and the Working Capital Reserve and requests the Secretariat to continue maintaining the Working Capital Reserve at the recommended level. Furthermore, the Bureau asks the Secretariat to share the recommendation received from UNEP Headquarters on this issue on the “net cash balance” with all the Contracting Parties and to continue exploring with UNEP Headquarters the proposal to retain a “net cash balance” at the level of a maximum six-month budget. This could also be addressed by increasing the amount in the WCR in order to provide sufficient liquidity and to ensure that the timing of the payments of the contributions does not affect the implementation of the PoW, for consideration by the MAP Focal Points meeting.

(b) The Bureau notes with appreciation the high level of contributions received for the year 2018.

(c) The Bureau strongly urges the Contracting Parties whose contributions for the current year are still pending to pay them as a matter of urgency.

(d) The Bureau takes note with high concern of the unpaid arrears of more than 24 months of the amount of more than one million EUR. The Bureau urges the Secretariat to continue the discussions with these countries to agree on possible roadmap for the payment of these arrears and to report to the COP on the outcome of these discussions, for further measures. The Bureau recommends that the MAP Focal Points discuss possible further measures to be taken. The Bureau requests that the President of the Bureau and the Secretariat write a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of these Contracting Parties.

(e) The Bureau supports the proposal of the Secretariat on the methodology applied for the adaptation of MTF scale of assessments to the current UN scale of assessments. It requests the Secretariat to submit the contributions adjusted in line with the scale of assessments for the period 2019-2021 and the revised assessed ordinary contributions apportioned to the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, to the MAP Focal Points meeting and to the Contracting Parties at their next meetings, for their consideration and approval. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to submit an analysis of the methodology of the application of the adjusted scale of assessments and submit a proposal to the next meeting of the Contracting Parties for the timely application of the scale of assessments as a standing procedure, applicable from the year 2020.

(f) The Bureau takes note of the budget consumption rates and requests the Secretariat to ensure that by the end of the biennium the consumption rate will be in line with the approved budget.

(g) The Bureau takes note of the expected increase in programme support allocation for 2019 and urges the Secretariat to make appropriate use of these resources to strengthen the operations of UNEP/MAP.

(h) The Bureau takes note of the procedure for the compensation of losses arising from exchange rate fluctuations and requests the Secretariat to compensate the RACs for such losses as provided for in the Financial Rules.

(i) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment at the Coordinating Unit and encourages the Contracting Parties who may be able to do so to contribute human resources to the Secretariat through available schemes.

(j) The Bureau takes note with appreciation of all efforts made by the Hellenic Republic and the Secretariat and urges the Host Government to find as soon as possible an optimal solution, in line with its commitment, that will provide the Secretariat with adequate premises to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of UN operations.

V. Agenda item 5: Specific Issues

21. The Coordinator presented the “*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.88/6).

22. The meeting discussed the matters summarized in the following paragraphs.

- A. Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

23. The Coordinator reported that on 10 April 2019 the Depositary received the instrument of ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Malta and that the Protocol entered into force for Malta on 10 May 2019. He noted that the Secretariat will continue to follow-up with those Contracting Parties which have not yet ratified the Barcelona Convention and/or its Protocols. In addition, to increase the ratification rate, the Secretariat will explore the possibility to develop capacity building activities for the forthcoming biennium, and that this is also addressed in the proposed PoW for 2020-2021.

24. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly.

25. Conclusions:

(a) The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to liaise with the Secretariat to facilitate coordination towards ratification of the relevant legal instruments;

(b) The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to achieve the full ratification of the revised Barcelona Convention as well as the ratification of its Protocols;

(c) The Bureau welcomes the proposals by the Secretariat to enhance efforts, including by exploring the possibility of developing capacity building activities in line with the Mid-Term Strategy, with the aim of increasing in the forthcoming biennium the ratification rate of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

- B. Compliance and Reporting

26. The Secretariat provided an update on the status of implementation of Decision IG.23/1 on *Revised Reporting Format for the Implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols*, and of Decision IG.23/2 on *Compliance Committee: biennium 2016-2017*.

27. The Deputy Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, highlighted that the Compliance Committee has now full membership, since Professor Denis Allemand, nominated by Monaco as Alternate Member of

the Compliance Committee, took over his position following the Bureau's concurrence, in line with Decision IG. 23/2. She noted that the preparations for the 15th Meeting of the Compliance Committee (Athens, Greece, 25-26 June 2019) are proceeding well and that documents were distributed. Main issues on the Agenda of the meeting include, *inter alia*, key findings and draft recommendations to COP 21 and the draft set of criteria for assessing compliance.

28. On reporting, the Secretariat provided updated information on submission of national implementation reports: as of 10 May 2019, 20 Contracting Parties have initiated their reporting tasks under the new BCRS and this has resulted in the official submission of the national implementation reports for the Barcelona Convention and/or its Protocols under Article 26 of the Convention by 12 Contracting Parties (this number includes CPs who have submitted reports only for some of the Protocols).

29. The Coordinator referred to the progress regarding the submission of outstanding national implementation reports for the biennia 2012-2013 and/or 2014-2015, as presented in the *Report on Specific Issues*. He reminded the Bureau that the submission of the reports is an important obligation of the Contracting Parties that enables the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system to have a clear understanding of the general advances made in the region as well as of the implementation gaps that need to be addressed.

30. Participants reiterated the importance of the national implementation reports, while a member of the Bureau noted that technical difficulties that were observed due to the new online reporting system were overcome through the support of the Coordinating Unit and INFO/RAC.

31. The Bureau members expressed appreciation for the work of the Compliance Committee and for the work of the Secretariat in relation to the reporting on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and advised accordingly.

32. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the reporting periods 2012–2013 and 2014–2015 without further delay;

(b) The Bureau strongly urges Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2016-2017, using the new online BCRS without further delay and requests the Secretariat and INFO/RAC to provide technical support to the Contracting Parties that face difficulties in uploading their Reports.

- C. **Main Elements of the 2020-2021 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget**

33. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the preparations of a simplified and more strategic results-based PoW and Budget for 2020-2021, following an inclusive process and in accordance with COP 20 Decision IG. 23/14 on *Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2018-2019*. He noted that the comments received from the MAP Components/Thematic Focal Points – on the PoW, since the budget has not been shared with them - demonstrated a positive reaction from the Contracting Parties and added that the draft PoW will be presented to the 18th MCSD Meeting (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019) to “produce opinions of the overall MAP Work Programme, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP / Barcelona Convention system as a whole” according to the MCSD's mandate. He also noted that the PoW for 2018-2019 aims to fully implement the current MTS, since it is the last biennium of its implementation.

34. On the budget, the Deputy Coordinator explained the option that have been developed and in particular the third scenario, which includes an additional amount of 720,000 EUR compared to the 2018-2019 budget. This is to be taken from a positive balance of the MTF. On the Bureau's proposal in relation to an “equal core share of support” from the MTF to all RACs, she noted that this is also related to the minimum common provisions of Host Country Agreements for RACs, and that the Secretariat is working on clarifying the means needed for RACs to deliver these provisions, which

have not yet been finalized. She added that this issue will also depend on each individual RAC, on the external resources allocated to each RAC, as well as on the prioritization of activities.

35. The Coordinator highlighted that this issue is more relevant to the budget and capacity to deliver than to the Host Country Agreements of RACs. Through an internal exercise, the RACs provided detailed information on their current structure, operational costs and needs, and based on these the Secretariat is undertaking an analysis, including on the capacities of RACs and their needs to deliver their mandate and PoW/MTS. He stressed that the Secretariat shares the concerns of RACS and was committed to bring this issue to the attention of the Bureau, since it is crucial for the Bureau to examine the resources attributed to RACs, and to the MAP-Barcelona Convention System as a whole, to deliver their increasing mandate.

36. The members of the Bureau discussed the issue and provided their comments and advice on the points raised by the Secretariat and in the *Report of Specific Issues*. On the issue of the equal core share of the MTF to all RACs one Member suggested to consider only the minimum activities that each MAP Component should pursue and the Secretariat to develop a reference cost as a basis; the rest of the budget allocated to each RAC will be depending on the mandate of each RAC, the PoW requirements, external funds, etc. It was also noted that it is important to follow Decision IG. 23/14 and to consider the implications of the different scenarios on the activities.

37. The Deputy Coordinator explained that the Secretariat included in all scenarios the necessary budget for the posts of Information and Communication Officer and Quality Status Report Officer, and that to minimize effects on the operation of RACs, MEDPOL was charged 52% of the resulting increase, while the remaining 48% was charged proportionally to all RACs. There was an effort to avoid affecting RACs, and especially INFO/RAC and SCP/RAC who receive a smaller contribution from the MTF.

38. The Coordinator stressed that the RACs face very clear difficulties due to the reduced resources and the increased mandate and ambition to deliver. He added that the new MTS 2022-2027 needs to solidify the role of MAP and that the structure and resources are not adequate in this respect. External resources are and will be secured, but there is a need for core staff to support these, and that a strategic discussion is required by the Contracting Parties on this issue. The increasing delivery cannot be continued without increasing the human resources of the Secretariat.

39. The members of the Bureau agreed that this is a very important issue that needs careful consideration and strategic discussion to increase efficiency. It was noted that it is important to proceed with an analysis of the current structure and needs, for a possible strengthening of the Secretariat, especially in view of developing and delivering the new MTS. Further discussion on this matter was held under agenda item G. (see below).

40. The Bureau discussed possible ways to reduce expenses, i.e. by selecting venues that will reduce the costs, by organizing back-to-back meetings, by minimizing technical meetings, by securing early nominations of meeting participants, by examining the possibility to renounce the reimbursement of travel costs in the case of some Contracting Parties, etc.

41. On the issue of the budget scenarios it was noted that the final decision is to be taken by the Contracting Parties based on the further, more detailed, information to be provided by the Secretariat in view of the MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP 21.

42. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau welcomes the proposal by the Secretariat on the principles and main elements for the PoW 2020-2021 and encourages the Secretariat to finalize the work along these lines for submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting, taking into account comments received following the consultation with the Focal Points;

(b) The Bureau takes note of the proposal of the Secretariat on the approach and recommendations in relation to the preparation of three options for the budget and requests the Secretariat to submit them to the MAP Focal Points meeting, with the following clarification on

the third option: The Bureau concludes that an additional amount of 720,000 EUR compared to the 2018-2019 budget could be taken from a positive balance of the MTF to cover (a) the additional mandates as explained in the Report on Specific Issues, (b) the in-cash counterpart contribution to the MedProgramme, and (c) the 2% increase of the operational costs of RACs. This will be based on additional information on the indicative balance of the MTF of the 2018-19 biennium and details and justifications for the current state and proposed increase of the operational costs of the RACs;

(c) The Bureau appreciates the information provided by the Secretariat on increased efficiency and cost-saving measures taken for the organization of MAP meetings and requests the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the MAP Focal Points meeting the need for timely nomination of Contracting Parties representatives to avoid increase of travel costs, and explore other modalities to reduce travel costs.

- D. Roadmap for the Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and the Preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy

43. The Secretariat presented the roadmap for the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the next MTS, taking into account the relevant evaluation and assessment processes, which was prepared following the request of the Bureau at its 85th Meeting. It was noted that this task requires adequate resources, including for the preparation of a dedicated MAP Focal Points meeting and the involvement of other actors.

44. A member of the Bureau expressed the readiness of his country (Italy) to support the process if more funds than those available in the MTS are required. He stressed that regarding the evaluation of the current MTS a comparison between adopted and achieved deliverables should be provided. The evaluation of whether the structure and outputs of the MTS are still adequate is also necessary to describe the needs of the MAP-Barcelona Convention System. He added that this evaluation should be linked to a review of ongoing processes at the global level, and that the strategic part of the assessment should be done by a pool of experts with different skills and expertise.

45. The Secretariat took note of the comments, noting that it is a serious and complex process that needs to be guided by the Contracting Parties and the Bureau.

46. Conclusions:

(a) The Bureau took note of the proposed roadmap for the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the next MTS, as presented in Annex I of the Report on Specific Issues, and requests the Secretariat to finalize the document following the comments received during the 88th Bureau meeting, especially on the modalities of the preparation of the new MTS and the diverse expertise required, for transmission to the MAP Focal Points meeting and to COP 21;

(b) The Bureau recommended that the process for elaboration of the new MTS should be based on an evaluation of the current MTS and should be in line with the relevant global developments. The Bureau also recommended that the development of the new MTS is accompanied by an in-depth assessment of the current structure and needs for enabling the Secretariat to deliver the new MTS, and especially the Coordinating Unit, including MED POL, and other MAP Components.

- E. Preparations for COP 21: Theme of Ministerial Session, Draft Decisions and Main Documents, Main Elements of the Ministerial Declaration, Organization and Host Country Preparations

47. The Bureau member of Italy updated the meeting on the progress in relation to the preparation of COP 21, noting that the venue has been identified as Castel dell' Ovo, an iconic landmark of Naples, and that an official logistical visit is being organized to finetune details of compliance with COP 21 requirements. He added that the Host Country Agreement is being finalized for signature in

June 2019. On the Ministerial Declaration, he noted that an inclusive, co-operational process is being developed, including the possible organization of two workshops with stakeholders, one regional and one national in Italy, and a forum for youth.

48. The Coordinator expressed gratitude to the Government of Italy for securing this venue. He noted that COP 21 is expected to provide the political guidance for the preparation of the new MTS. He also referred to the list of draft COP 21 decisions presented in the same report, noting that the PAP/RAC Focal Points meeting decided not to move forward with the decision on the “Adoption of Guidelines for environmental assessment in a transboundary context”. He stressed the importance of Contracting Parties’ efforts in mobilizing interest within the different groups of countries for an active and high-level participation at COP 21. Bureau members should be represented at COP 21 at Ministerial level. Finally, he noted that the very successful experience of having the Bureau members as officials of the MAP Focal Points meeting should be repeated at the current biennium.

49. The Bureau member from Egypt expressed the initial interest of her country to host COP 22, noting that final confirmation is needed by her country’s authorities. Bureau members welcomed this announcement; the Bureau member from Italy offered the support of his country capitalizing on the experience of Italy as host country of COP 21.

50. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau welcomed the work of the Secretariat and the Host Country for the preparation of COP 21 and the proposal regarding the theme/s of the Ministerial Session and the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, and asks the Secretariat, in consultation with the Host Country, to prepare the final Concept Note on the proposed theme/s and the first main elements of the Ministerial Declaration for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points, where the theme/s will be agreed and the main elements of the Ministerial declaration subsequently discussed;

(b) The Bureau took note of the proposed list of draft Decisions for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and requested the Secretariat to finalize their preparation, taking into account the outcome of the MAP Component Focal Points meetings.

- F. Preparations for upcoming MAP Meetings: Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity, 18th MCSD Meeting

51. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the preparations for upcoming MAP Meetings and especially the Meeting of the Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) and the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD).

52. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the information provided, noting that the calendar of meetings and events leading to COP 21 is very heavy and efforts should be made to avoid overlaps.

53. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau welcomes the progress made in the preparations for upcoming MAP Meetings.

- G. Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs

54. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the progress in relation to the preparation of the minimum common provisions to ensure effective operation of the Host Country Agreements of RACs. He noted that only three Host Country Governments have provided inputs and that, based on these inputs, the Secretariat has prepared a revised version of the minimum common provisions, together with a short explanatory note for the consideration of the Bureau (presented in Annex VII of the *Report on Specific Issues*).

55. One Bureau member noted that there is a need to be pragmatic since it is not possible to have a text that suits all needs, but only a text with the minimum conditions. He noted that his country strongly prefers RACs to be hosted by public, not private, entities, and added that the Director of a

RAC should be a UN staff member; this would ensure transparency, predictability and cost-effectiveness. He noted that a possible option is to include in the draft decision for COP 21 on Governance the possibility to develop further targeted proposals with host countries of RACs, based on the minimum common provisions, referring also to the reshaping of financial support.

56. Another member of the Bureau stressed the need for RACs to have a regional and global technical presence, and that to enable this they should have an intergovernmental character. Such a special status would enable RACs carry out their regional activities, and is related to the type of bank accounts, efficiency of action, and availability of means.

57. The Coordinator noted that the Secretariat will continue following up with those host countries of RACs that have not yet provided inputs on the minimum common provisions; he added that the Secretariat will refine the explanatory note by providing further insight on the comments received and the discrepancies existing between these comments.

58. With the opportunity of this strategic discussion, the Coordinator also referred to the difficulties faced by the Coordinating Unit, including MEDPOL, in delivering the mandate due to the staff downsizing that took place in recent years and the increase in activities. He noted that the Contracting Parties have made an important review of the capacity of the Secretariat at times of crisis; now that the situation has changed, there is a need to reflect again. He added that it is important to look at the consequences of past decisions and to try to remediate these when the crisis lies behind. Such a remediating process could be put in motion in preparing for the new MTS.

59. The members of the Bureau expressed appreciation for the work of the Secretariat and of the challenges mentioned. They stressed that it is very relevant and important for the Secretariat to have adequate staff to take forward its mandate and to take the necessary actions. They noted the need for an analysis of the financial implications of the proposal to enhance the Secretariat in conjunction with the preparation of the new MTS, for further discussion by the Contracting Parties in the near future.

60. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau welcomes the progress in the preparation of the minimum common provisions for the development of Host Country Agreements for RACs, as presented in Annex VII of the Report on Specific Issues, and requests the Secretariat to finalize these provisions taking into account the comments received during the 88th Bureau meeting, as described in the Report of the Meeting, and to transmit them to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21, for consideration;

(b) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to follow-up with the remaining Host Countries of RACs in order for them to provide their inputs in time for the preparation of the draft Decision on Governance to be submitted to the MAP Focal Points meeting.

- H. Cooperation and Partners: MoUs/Agreements, MAP Partners, Joint Cooperation Strategy

61. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the progress in relation to the preparation of a possible MoU with the UNESCO/Man and Biosphere Secretariat, following the request of the Bureau at its 87th meeting. The UNESCO Secretariat was contacted and provided a positive first response on the possibility of cooperation with UNEP/MAP and on developing and signing such an MoU. A robust proposal was prepared by MAP and shared with UNESCO and is currently under review by the UNESCO/Man and Biosphere Secretariat.

62. The member of the Bureau from Italy noted that Italy is a strong advocate of this Agreement, which could focus on three main streams of activities related to the environment, namely biodiversity (Post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity), implementation of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, and implementation of climate change agreements under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol

and Paris Agreement). Means of implementation should also be addressed in such an MoU/Agreement, the preparation of which can be supported by Italy.

63. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the progress in relation to the preparation of the Draft Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity, noting that the Secretariat prepared a revised version of the Strategy, together with explanatory notes requested during the latest consultation MAP Focal Points and the Thematic Focal Points for SPA/BD, which is annexed to the *Report on Specific Issues*.

64. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the progress in relation to the Joint Cooperation Strategy and provided their comments on the document, focusing on the text in brackets. They advised to include only Conventions/Agreements in the text and that non-governmental partners, such as MEDPAN, can be involved in the implementation of the Strategy but not included in the Strategy's text. They also noted that it is better to avoid new structures, such as a Coordination Committee, and that the existing governance structures of the main partners should be used instead. Finally, they noted that it is preferable not to single out specific MAP Components, since the whole MAP system will be involved in the Strategy.

65. The Coordinator thanked the Bureau Members for their inputs and noted that following this discussion the Strategy will be finalized for submission to the MAP Focal Points, and for consideration by the respective bodies of the other main partners of the Strategy.

66. With reference to Decision IG.19/6 on MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership, the Secretariat updated the Bureau members on the applications received by civil society organizations for accreditation as MAP Partners, as well as for renewal of accreditation by existing MAP Partners, and introduced the evaluation by the Secretariat of the new applications, as in Annex IV of the *Report on Specific Issues*.

67. The Bureau endorsed the eight applications of organizations to become new MAP Partners as well as the ten applications for renewal of accreditation of existing MAP Partners. The Bureau members noted that, since the number of MAP Partners is increasing, it is important to develop specific guidance/code of conduct on the development of Agreements between the MAP Components and partners, that will also refer to transfer of funds.

68. The Coordinator informed the meeting on submission at the end of March 2019 of the complete set of information required by GEF rules and procedures, to mobilize and make available USD 37,7 million to execute the activities. the progress in relation to the GEF funded "Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme) Enhancing Environmental Security", and on the positive first reactions from the GEF Secretariat.

69. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau members on the progress in the cooperation with other organizations and initiatives, including the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), the Benguela Current Convention and the G7 Environment Ministers meeting.

70. The Bureau welcomed the continuous progress in the cooperation with other organizations and initiatives, noting the very important process established with G7 since 2017 and the permanent links with the Regional Seas Programmes, highlighting the leading role of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The Bureau member from Italy informed the meeting that his country is willing to support MAP with further resources on issues related to cooperation on Marine Spatial Planning.

71. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau welcomes the progress in the preparation of an MoU with UNESCO/Man and Biosphere and agrees with the possible areas of cooperation, as proposed. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to finalize the draft MoU, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, for submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting for consideration and approval and then to COP 21 for signature;

(b) In relation to the Joint Cooperation Strategy between Secretariats, the Bureau takes note of the revised version prepared by the Secretariat, as presented in Annex V of the Report on Specific Issues, and requests the Secretariat to finalize it following the comments received during the 88th Bureau meeting and to transmit it to the MAP Focal Points meeting, so that consultations with the Partners may be finalized for signing the Strategy, if possible at COP 21;

(c) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new applications submitted by “*Asociación ONDINE*”, “*Palestine Wildlife Society*”, “*Agence des Villes et Territoires méditerranéens durables / The Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (AVITEM)*”, “*International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC)*”, “*Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC)*”, “*UniVerde Foundation*”, “*Center for Energy, Environment and Resources (CENER21)*” and “*OceanCare*” for accreditation as MAP Partners, and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21 for consideration and endorsement;

(d) The Bureau endorses the proposal by the Secretariat to renew the accreditation as MAP Partners of “*Greenpeace International*”, “*International Centre of Comparative Environmental Law (CIDCE)*”, “*The ARAVA Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)*”, “*Oceana*”, “*Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN)*”, “*International Association for Mediterranean Forests (AIFM)*”, “*EcoPeace Middle East*”, “*Mediterranean Coastal Foundation (MEDCOAST)*”, “*Tour du Valat Foundation*” and “*Fondazione IMC-Centro Marino Internazionale ONLUS*” following the applications submitted by these organizations, and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21 for consideration and endorsement;

(e) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to adopt a code of conduct on the collaboration between MAP components and MAP Partners and report on a regular basis on the activities carried out by the MAP Partners, including financial information.

- I) Outreach, Information and Communication

72. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the information and communication activities and plans for the biennium in this area, emphasizing that there is an increased interest in the work of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system in the Mediterranean and beyond. He expressed appreciation to Italy for the support provided during the current biennium for the post of Information and Communication Officer and stressed that this covers a key capacity required in the Coordinating Unit; therefore, it is proposed in the draft PoW that this post is funded in the next biennium through the MTF.

73. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat and highlighted that human capacity on information and communication is fundamental for the efficient operation of MAP and the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and Protocols.

74. Conclusion:

(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation for the efforts and results of the information and communication work and requests the Secretariat to further progress in this direction. In this context, the Bureau stressed the importance of including the post of the Information and Communication Officer of the Coordinating Unit in the proposed Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021 as a core post under the MTF.

VI. Agenda item 6: Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 89th Meeting of the Bureau

75. The Bureau agreed that its 89th Meeting, which will be the first of the next biennium, will be held in spring 2020, preferably in April, in Athens, Greece.

VII. Agenda item 7: Any Other Matters

76. No other matters were raised by the Bureau members.

VIII. Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

77. The Bureau adopted the set of conclusions as set in this report.

IX. Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

78. The meeting was closed by the President of the Bureau at 18:00 on Wednesday, 22 May 2019.

Annex I
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Annex II

Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1** **Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2** **Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3** **Progress Report for October 2018 – April 2019**
- Agenda item 4** **Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**
- Agenda item 5** **Specific Issues:**
- a) Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
 - b) Compliance and Reporting
 - c) Main Elements of the 2020-2021 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget
 - d) Roadmap for the Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and the Preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy
 - e) Preparations for COP 21: Theme of Ministerial Session, Draft Decisions and Main Documents, Main Elements of the Ministerial Declaration, Organization and Host Country Preparations
 - f) Preparations for upcoming MAP Meetings: Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity, 18th MCSD Meeting
 - g) Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs
 - h) Cooperation and Partners: MoUs/Agreements, MAP Partners, Joint Cooperation Strategy
 - i) Outreach, Information and Communication
- Agenda item 6** **Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 89th Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 7** **Any Other Matters**
- Agenda item 8** **Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 9** **Closure of the Meeting**