



Mediterranean Action Plan  
Barcelona Convention



**Regional Workshop for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for  
Sustainable Development 2021-2030**

**Venice, UNESCO-IOC, 21-23 January 2020**

**Closing Remarks by Mr. Gaetano Leone  
UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat Coordinator**

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

On behalf of the entire UNEP/MAP system, that was so well represented here, I am glad to express our great satisfaction with the results of this Workshop. We have contributed to and benefitted from vibrant discussions and important conclusions that confirm the relevance of the Decade for our work, mandate, and strategies. Congratulations to the co-organizers and most importantly to all participants.

The past three days have strengthened our commitment towards deeper, mutually-beneficial science-policy links for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention. Many of the points made at this Workshop will feed into our thinking as we define the new 2022-2027 MTS of UNEP/MAP.

There is no lack of initiatives, projects, institutions, resources in and for our region. This bodes well for the work towards a quantitative understanding of ocean ecosystems and their functioning, on the basis of which policy-makers can take ever more effective decisions.

Science needs to be connected in a more consistent, reliable and structured way to existing legal frameworks. This is essential to deliver on our obligations regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting of marine environment data.

As we all compete for financial resources, and for support and interest in our activities, synergies need to be explored; connections established – maybe through institutional twinnings that we could promote and support for the implementation of UNEP/MAP mandate in specific substantive areas; and existing resources put together for strongest impact and to avoid duplication and fragmentation.

Working together is the pre-requisite also to ensure that knowledge benefit all sub-region and countries equally. In this sense, the need for sharing knowledge, identifying best



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practices and new, cost-effective technologies, enhancing education for sustainable development, and facilitating capacity-building and technology transfer continues to be urgent in our region – we intend to do more to respond to it. Social science needs to be brought more prominently into the inter-disciplinary conversation of the Decade.

UNEP/MAP priorities, mandated and supported by our Contracting Parties, focus increasingly on the implementation of IMAP – this is a crucial step forward in the region for the medium term and we count on the scientific community's support to make it happen and function. Where possible, UNEP/MAP will stimulate closer and better interaction between the research communities and the governmental bodies responsible for monitoring.

Our efforts must continue also in addressing emerging and priority issues. Innovative tools and techniques will be looked at for the delivery of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report, and to address research and innovation gaps towards the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean.

The MAP system has embraced the strategic option to reach out to science and establish long-term collaborations with institutions and mandates, rather than continue to privilege segmented projects approaches, in particular when supporting Southern Mediterranean Countries, to build trust and consistency. We also follow with interest citizen science and its role in filling knowledge gaps.

We look at supporting voluntary networks of scientist and experts, such as MedECC, in other thematic fields, such as integrated assessment of marine environment that interrelates the drivers and impacts of cumulative stressors with the state of marine environment and marine protected areas management.

Inspired by the working group recommendations, UNEP/MAP would like to express its great interest to host the implementation of the Decade's actions that will be related to the coordinated and harmonized data and information management around the entire Mediterranean. And our commitment to support knowledge management at regional level through enhanced policy and science interface and partnerships. In practical terms, UNEP/MAP is very interested in joining hands with UNESCO/IOC and other actors to present the outcome of this workshop to the UN 2020 Ocean Conference in June in Lisbon.

Thank you again, we look forward to continuing this dialogue and to the successful implementation of the ambitious goals of the Decade.