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Agenda item 3: Work of the MCSD and MSSD Implementation. Review of Progress for the Period May – October 2020

Progress Report

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Progress Report

1. The adoption at COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) of Decisions IG.24/2 “Governance”, IG.24/3 “Implementation and Monitoring of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development [MSSD] 2016-2025 and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean [SCP Action Plan]”, and IG.24/4 “Assessment Studies” paved the way for the work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and its Steering Committee during the biennium 2020-2021. On-going activities deriving from those decisions are included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021 (Decision IG.24/14).
2. First, the present document includes inputs provided by Members of the MCSD Steering Committee about significant actions that contribute to the work of the MCSD, implementation of the MSSD at regional or national level, and/or implementation of relevant COP 21 Decisions.
3. This document also provides information on the work done for the period May – October 2020, following-up on conclusions and recommendations of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (videoconference, 13-14 May 2020).
4. Based on the progress described in the present document, issues for consideration are introduced in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/4 “Report on Specific Issues”.

A. Significant actions undertaken by Members of the MCSD Steering Committee

(by alphabetical order)

Italy – Policies, measures and activities undertaken nationally to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

5. In line with the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs at national level, including through the MSSD, the 2017-National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) is under revision, through an open-ended participatory process involving all levels of government and main stakeholders, with the support of the academic and research sector. This process will benefit from a project financed by the European Commission (EC) within the Structural Reform Programme 2017-2020, called “Policy coherence for sustainable development: mainstreaming the SDGs in Italian decision-making process”, submitted by the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) in October 2019. The project, carried out in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), aims at defining a possible roadmap leading to a legislative and structural reform to strengthen policy coherence in achieving the SDGs in Italy.
6. Local and regional authorities have endorsed the NSSD and are active in the implementation process through the definition of their own strategies for sustainable development. In order to support their efforts, IMELS has established a coordination mechanism with Regions, Autonomous Provinces and metropolitan cities, providing also financial support, with the aim of exchanging experiences and comparing methodological approaches to increase coherence in the implementation of regional and metropolitan strategies. In order to guarantee effective synergy with the National Forum for Sustainable Development, launched by IMELS to strengthen the engagement of civil society and stakeholders, local authorities are currently establishing regional fora for sustainable development.
7. As for the priorities identified in the Political State Agenda, with reference to the implementation of SDG 14 “Life below water”, and in line with COP 21 Decisions, Italy is promoting policies for the reduction of marine litter, as well as innovative technologies and actions to foster the decarbonization and the reduction of greenhouse gas and pollutants from the maritime sectors. The project of law *Salva Mare* (save the sea), favoring the collection in the sea, lakes and rivers, and disposal in the ports, of accidentally

fished waste, mostly marine plastic litter, without any fee to be paid by fishermen, is under final approval by the Italian Parliament. In this context, the “green ports” initiative intends to adapt port infrastructures to environmental sustainability standards, e.g. docks electrification and use of alternative technologies and energies for the reduction of energy consumptions in ports. The guidelines for ports energy transition, recently established by IMELS in compliance with the National Integrated Plan for Energy and Climate, respond to this challenge. Finally, Italy is keeping high commitment towards the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for Sulphur Oxides – Med SO_x ECA initiative¹, though its promotion in all relevant international and regional fora, and the financing of specific research projects on this theme.

MEPIELAN – MSSD Flagship Initiative under Objective 6 “Governance”

8. As a follow-up of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, and in view of implementing the MSSD Flagship Initiative “Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)”, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in October 2020 between MEPIELAN Centre/Panteion University of Athens, Greece, and MIO/ECSDE (UNEP/MAP Partner, MCSD Observer). The parties agreed to cooperate with the UNECE-Aarhus Convention and UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariats on the organization of a capacity building activity in support of this flagship initiative, to promote the engagement of relevant NGOs and to strengthen the implementation capacity of public authorities. More details are provided below under “D. MSSD Flagship Initiatives”.

9. In addition, in view of launching the MSSD Flagship Initiative “Develop Capacity Building Programmes on Issues related to Implementation and Compliance with Environmental Obligations and Agreements, including Environmental Impact Assessments”, based on the concept note prepared by MEPIELAN and discussed at the 18th Meeting of the MCSD (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019), and following discussions with the Secretariat in July and September 2020, MEPIELAN submitted to the Secretariat a Public Trust Approach (PTA) Project Proposal for implementing this MSSD Flagship Initiative. More details are provided below under “D. MSSD Flagship Initiatives”.

Montenegro – Evaluation Process and GEF-funded projects

10. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism started in the second half of 2019 the preparation of the First National Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030 (NSSD until 2030) for the period 2016-2019. This report will also reflect the level of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Montenegro. The National Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management of Montenegro (NS ICZM, 2015-2030) will be an integral part of the First National Report on the Implementation of NSSD until 2030. In addition, in the first quarter of 2020, the Ministry launched the preparation of the First National Report on the Implementation of the UN New Urban Agenda, focusing especially on SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities”; the official deadline for preparing this report is March 2021.

11. In line with the MSSD Strategic Directions 1.2 “Establish and enforce regulatory mechanisms, including Maritime Spatial Planning, to prevent and control unsustainable open ocean resource exploitation” and 2.1 “Promote the sustainable use, management and conservation of natural resources and ecosystems”, and in the context of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and of the European Union (EU) legislation in the field of marine environment protection and management, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism has implemented different Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded projects, such as the GEF Adriatic and GEF C / MPA projects². The GEF Adriatic

¹ Decision IG.24/8 adopted at COP 21: *Road Map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention.*

² GEF Adriatic: Implementation of Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning:

project is a sub-regional project implemented in Albania and Montenegro. It supports the implementation of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol) and Maritime Spatial Planning EU Directive through the preparation of the Draft Maritime Spatial Plan in Montenegro by applying the ecosystem approach. The GEF C / MPA project supports effective establishment and management of first Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Montenegro, contributing to their designation and proclamation, but also to the preparation of the management plans, trainings for the future managers, management infrastructure, and exploration of touristic potential of those areas.

Morocco – The Administration Exemplary Pact

12. The first strategic axis of the NSSD aims at encouraging the public administration to deploy an exemplary eco-responsible approach in order to encourage and promote sustainable development practices among all economic and social stakeholders at national level. An Administration Exemplary Pact has been developed and several actions have been undertaken, including the development of a methodological guide and a toolbox for ministerial departments; the adoption of the Pact during the first meeting of the Strategic Committee for Sustainable Development (22 February 2019) under the leadership of the Head of Government; the distribution of the Circular No 08/2019 from the Head of Government to all public administrations urging them to prepare environmental audits of their buildings; the introduction of a new section in the Hassan II Prize for the Environment dedicated to administrations which have made the Pact a reality; the decision to introduce green vehicles in the public administration fleet to reach at least 10% of new acquisitions from 2019. Actions undertaken by the Department in charge of the Environment focused on environment-friendly use of resources such as energy, water and paper; the Department reduced consumption of water by 50% by installing taps with infrared sensors; produced 22% of its electrical energy consumption from renewable energies (photovoltaic panels); reduced fuel consumption by purchasing five electric cars in 2019; contributed to recycling by setting-up a paper sorting system at source. See more details in Annex I.

Turkey – Zero Waste Initiative

13. In line with the MSSD Strategic Direction 3.4 “Promote sustainable waste management within the context of a more circular economy”, the Zero Waste Initiative is implemented in Turkey since 2017. Zero waste legislation and legislation on marine litter prevention were published in 2019. In accordance with the legislation, all coastal provinces prepared their own marine litter action plans and started to implement it. Plastic bags are subject to fee starting from 1 January 2019. To date, plastic bag use has decreased by 80% in Turkey. Deposit system on bottles will be mandatory starting from January 2021. All these practices aim at both reducing waste and the rate of waste reaching the sea. In addition, the Zero Waste Blue movement was initiated in 2019 under the auspices of the esteemed wife of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Mrs. Emine Erdoğan. All citizens, NGOs, relevant institutions and press organs were invited to contribute to the protection of the marine and coastal environment and to increase awareness-raising efforts. The public awareness activities are still on-going under the Zero Waste Blue movement.

B. Mid-Term Evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan

14. As mandated by Decision IG.24/3, and under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Secretariat is undertaking the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan. Consultancy services have been mobilized to assist the Secretariat (Coordinating Unit and SCP/RAC) in preparing and conducting the participatory and indicator-based mid-term evaluations.

<https://www.thegef.org/project/implementation-ecosystem-approach-adriatic-sea-through-marine-spatial-planning>
GEF C / MPA: Promoting Protected Areas Management through Integrated Marine and Coastal Ecosystems
Protection in Coastal Area of Montenegro: <https://www.thegef.org/project/promoting-protected-areas-management-through-integrated-marine-and-coastal-ecosystems>

15. At its 21st Meeting, the MCSD Steering Committee encouraged the Secretariat to make synergies between the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations, which are developed in parallel, and the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027.

16. MSSD: In July and November 2020, the Secretariat updated the committee on activities undertaken and the preliminary results achieved, including the following draft deliverables related to the MSSD mid-term evaluation: “Workplan and Timeline, Methodology, Sources of Information and List of Stakeholders to be consulted” and “State of Play and Gap Analysis – Draft Report” (Information Documents UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.3 and Inf.4).

17. SCP Action Plan: The detailed methodology for the indicator-based mid-term evaluation was prepared in June-July 2020. Further details on this methodology are provided in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/4.

C. Assessment Studies

MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) and its Summary for Policymakers (SPM)

18. Following the online consultation³ of policymakers and stakeholders on the draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) elaborated by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC – www.medecc.org), and as per Annex IV of Decision IG.24/4, Members of the MCSD Steering Committee, Plan Bleu Focal Points, Members of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group (CCEG) and of the UfM Environment Task Force, the MedECC Secretariat, Steering Committee and Coordinating Lead Authors, as well as UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu and UfM Secretariat representatives participated remotely, on 22 September 2020, in the MedECC Plenary consultation on the revised draft SPM.

19. The aim of the MedECC Plenary consultation was to ascertain that MAR1 findings, as presented in the revised draft SPM, are fully comprehensible and unambiguous, and that the comments from the previous online consultation were well addressed. At the Plenary discussion, the findings of the revised draft SPM were reviewed and discussed to ensure that the results are formulated in a clear and understandable way and that the assessment of literature is transparent, objective, complete, and can be easily communicated to decision-makers.

20. The meeting was opened by Ms. Samia Ghali, Senator and Second Deputy Mayor of Marseille, France. Mr Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, delivered a statement during the introductory segment. Following its expression of interest as Vice-President of the MCSD and Plan Bleu Focal Point, Italy designated Ms. Valentina Mauriello to chair the morning session. The afternoon session was chaired by Mr Grammenos Mastrojeni, UfM Deputy Secretary General (Energy and Climate Action). Statements were also delivered by representatives of the UfM Co-presidency representatives (Jordan and EC) and Mr Isidro González, UfM Deputy Secretary General (Water, Environment and Blue Economy).

21. This event was an important step in reinforcing the science-policy dialogue in our region. Approximately 100 participants contributed to a productive and meaningful discussion that resulted in a set of conclusions and recommendations, as reproduced in Annex II, and a final version of the SPM, which will be formally submitted for consideration to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention and UfM respective advisory and governing bodies, i.e. 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and Climate Change expected to be held in Egypt in 2021, Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting (May 2021), 19th

³ April-June 2021: see Working Document UNEP/MED WG.479/4 – 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (videoconference, 13-14 May 2020). The MedECC Secretariat received 453 comments on the draft SPM (268 comments on the substance and 185 editorial comments) from 21 governments, decision-makers and partner organizations. In addition, 196 comments were received on the MAR1 full report.

Meeting of the MCSD (June 2021), and Meeting of MAP Focal Points (September 2021) in view of a possible formal endorsement at COP 22 (December 2021).

22. The revised SPM is included in Information Document UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.6.

Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED)

23. With reference to a specific conclusion of the 89th Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (22-23 April 2020, videoconference), UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu Focal Points were invited to check for any technical or scientific inaccuracies in the draft SoED full report. A total of 68 comments were received from seven Contracting Parties and addressed by Plan Bleu, which ensured the follow-up of that process.

24. The Secretariat liaised with UNEP headquarters to obtain International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) as per standard procedure for reports approved by the UNEP Publishing Board. ISBN numbers were subsequently issued and integrated into the SoED publications.

25. Three SoED publications, namely the SoED full report (English), the SoED Summary for Decision-Makers (English and French) and Key Messages (English and French) were published as UNEP publications: see Information Document UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.1/Rev.1. At the request of the Secretariat, the SoED resource page on the UNEP website points to the download page on the Plan Bleu website, thus making it the main go-to location for the SoED publications, infographics, flyer, video and other accompanying communication material. See: <https://planbleu.org/soed/> and <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/state-environment-and-development-mediterranean>.

26. The Secretariat requested that SoED receives adequate visibility with support from the UNEP Communication Division, highlighting the fact that the report will equip decision-makers with insights they can use to orient policy towards more sustainable paths and to build back greener in the context of the recovery from the economic contraction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. An opportunity to present the report to regional and international media during a media briefing co-organised by UNEP and the EC during the EU Green Week (20-22 October 2020) was identified.

27. SoED was presented to representatives of international and regional media organisations on 21 October 2020 during a media briefing co-organised by UNEP and the EC in the context of EU Green Week under the theme “Biodiversity on the international agenda”⁴, and moderated by Mr Chris Burns, an international media expert⁵.

28. The Secretariat worked with UNEP on preparing the press release⁶, which was issued on 19 October 2020 along with the press kit prepared by Plan Bleu. The press release and press kit capture the main findings of SoED and reiterate a call for a green renaissance in the Mediterranean, based on evidence contained in the report. The issuance of the press release, coupled with the presentation of SoED by Mr Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, and Mr Francois Guerquin, Plan Bleu Director, during the media briefing, generated significant media coverage, including from media outlets covering east and south Mediterranean countries.

29. SoED has also received global attention when the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General mentioned the report in the noon briefing⁷ and through coverage on the global UN website and social media accounts⁸. In addition, the Secretariat has received a request to upload SoED on the global UN iLibrary.

⁴ <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/green-week-eu-un-briefing-towards-a-new-global-biodiversity-framework-tickets-123002745523>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/cwburnstorm>

⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/mediterranean-basin-facing-irreversible-environmental-damage-warns>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/31GFECL>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/UN/status/1318961746954969089>

30. Plan Bleu organized an event on the launch of the French version of SoED during the virtual science-policy videoconference having a strong focus on climate and environmental change: Med2020 virtual conference, 16-18 November 2020. This three-day event will provide a unique opportunity for an extensive exchange between scientists and policymakers, with substantial discussion towards filling knowledge gaps identified in SoED.

MED2050 Foresight Study

31. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) is implementing the revised roadmap for the MED 2050 foresight study, as included in Annex III of Decision IG.24/4 adopted at COP 21.

32. Due to difficulties in mobilizing external financial resources, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in reduced availability of staff, complications to recruit a senior expert and impossibility to hold face-to-face meetings (travel restrictions), the implementation of the roadmap has been delayed. Therefore, finalization of Module 1 “Trends, disruptions and weak signals”, of which the preparation of final outputs was expected in the first semester 2020, will be delayed to 2021.

33. MED 2050 being a participatory exercise, Plan Bleu has structured the involvement of experts and Contracting Party representatives as below:

(i) A Steering Committee has been set up. Contracting Parties are invited, based on the representation scheme of the Barcelona Convention’s Compliance Committee, to take part in this committee, which will work on the preliminary results of the MED 2050 exercise, mainly on the technical reports produced for MED 2050’s four modules;

(ii) A Foresight Group has been constituted, which brings together more than 25 experts working on various topics linked to sustainable development. The group also includes youth representatives from relevant networks. During two virtual workshops (6 May and 13-14 October 2020), the Foresight Group members brainstormed about the main trends, disruptions and weak signals for the future of the Mediterranean region. Results are being compiled in the MED 2050 Module 1 Technical Report. A third virtual meeting of the Foresight Group is planned on 2 December 2020; and,

(iii) MED 2050 network: Contracting Parties are invited to identify interested national stakeholders to contribute to the MED 2050 network, by getting involved via the MED 2050 platform and newsletter, and through participation in MED 2050 surveys or workshops.

34. Plan Bleu has strengthened its human resources dedicated to MED 2050: a full-time senior programme officer (October 2020) and a doctoral programme (September 2020).

35. Plan Bleu has produced a number of MED 2050 outputs and publications: the MED 2050 logo, the first edition of the MED 2050 newsletter, the MED 2050 online platform, the MED 2050 conceptual systemic framework, a MED 2050 Technical Report on demographic outlook for the Mediterranean, a MED 2050 Technical Report comparing the forecasts made in Plan Bleu’s 2005 foresight exercise with the current situation, the MED 2050 compendium of long-term trends⁹.

36. Plan Bleu has continued resource mobilization for MED 2050. Support is granted from the French Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition for staff costs. In addition, the French *Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur* provided co-funding for a replication of MED 2050 at the local scale of this region, and potentially in another region of a Southern Mediterranean country. Plan Bleu remains engaged in additional fundraising activities.

⁹ <https://planbleu.org/en/projects/med-2050-towards-a-shared-vision-on-a-sustainable-mediterranean-in-2050-and-transition-issues/>

D. MSSD Flagship Initiatives

Mediterranean Green Business Award

37. Following Decision IG.24/3 that requests the Secretariat to launch the first edition of the Mediterranean Green Business Award, the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) continued to proceed according to the work plan discussed at the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee.

38. SCP/RAC prepared terms of reference for the recruitment of a communication team that will support the definition of the Award's visual identity and the dissemination and stakeholders' engagement strategy. The recruitment has been completed. Proposals for the name and logo of the Award are under preparation. Initial proposals for the name of the Award were made and decision was taken to further develop proposals for an "abstract" name, accompanied by a specific tagline. The logo of the Award will be developed once the name will be agreed.

39. The selection criteria and the online platform for applicants are also under further development. Regarding the criteria for the evaluation of the candidatures, SCP/RAC is currently working with a legal expert to finalize their development and make sure that they will be appropriated to the context and allow a solid evaluation of the applications. As recommended during the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, MedCities will be consulted for the criteria concerning local authorities.

Regional Assessments and Knowledge Exchanges of High- and Low-Tech Solutions successfully Implemented to Achieve Waste Reduction

40. Supporting the work of the UfM and UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariats, MIO-ECSDE continues the preparation of activities envisaged under the EU funded WES Regional Project¹⁰ for launching the MSSD Flagship Initiative on *Regional Assessments and Knowledge Exchanges of High- and Low-Tech Solutions Successfully Implemented to Achieve Waste Reduction*.

41. Efforts were concentrated on the preparation of terms of reference to mobilize consultant services for preparing a regional assessment report on the best available practices and their further uses on waste prevention and management in the Mediterranean, including a possible on-line repository to be fed by existing solutions, case studies, programmes and projects, in synergy with other relevant initiatives.

42. Consultancy services will be mobilized in 2021 to carry out this regional assessment.

Environmental Governance: Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

43. Supporting the work of the UfM and UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariats, MIO-ECSDE in collaboration with MEPIELAN continued the preparation of activities under the EU funded WES Regional Project for launching this MSSD Flagship Initiative on Environmental Governance to encourage the accession to and implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Mediterranean countries.

44. As a follow-up of conclusions of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, MEPIELAN has prepared in collaboration with MIO/ECSDE and the Secretariat a three-task project comprising:

- (i) A research component aiming at producing a "Foundation Discussion Document (FDD)" (discussion paper) on the legal, governance and policy aspects of the Mediterranean Accession Agenda to the Aarhus Convention, identifying all aspects of the beneficial interaction between the Aarhus Convention and the Escazu Regional Agreement;

¹⁰ The Water and Environment Support (WES) project in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean. www.wes-med.eu; <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/projects/wes-water-and-environment-support-eni-southern-neighborhood-region>

(ii) A workshop component, with the organization of a two-days interdisciplinary expert workshop to discuss the FDD and identify the priorities and implications of the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Mediterranean countries, as well as the options for an effective negotiation of the Mediterranean Accession Agenda;

(iii) A communication component, aiming to develop a report to the MCSD based on the above two tasks, to launch the Mediterranean Accession Agenda, and to disseminate opinion pieces and promote publications, including a side event to launch the Mediterranean Accession Agenda.

45. These activities will be implemented in the context of the MoU recently signed between MEPIELAN Centre/Panteion University of Athens, Greece, and MIO/ECSDE.

Environmental Governance: Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments

46. The MEPIELAN project proposal tentatively entitled “Mainstreaming the Public Trust Approach (PTA) in the Barcelona Convention System for the Implementation of the MSSD Flagship Initiative 6.3.5” is built on a three-stage process:

(i) Analysis of the PTA and its applicability to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system (research component);

(ii) Identification of priorities for the PTA application to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention policies and instruments for its sustainable integration through an international expert workshop (workshop component);

(iii) Developing and promoting an “Agenda for Applicability of PTA to the Sustainability Governance of the Barcelona Convention System”, including a report to the MCSD, effective dissemination by all available means, and a relevant publication with a prestigious publisher (report and communication component).

Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award – Third Edition (2020-2021)

47. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of Turkey generously confirmed its continuous support by funding the Award for the third edition in 2020-2021, as per UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021 (Decision IG.24/14).

48. The Secretariat is proceeding with the implementation of the *Draft Roadmap, Tentative Timeline and Communication of the Nomination and Selection Process of the Third Edition (2020-2021) of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award*, as welcomed and took note of by the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee. That includes various communication items and activities to maximize the audience and the number of applicant cities.

49. The call for applicant cities has been launched on the occasion of the Mediterranean Coast Day on 25 September 2020, along with communication actions through social media. The application period is open until 25 January 2021. See: <https://www.unenvironment.org/uneppmap/istanbul-environment-friendly-city-award>.

50. The documents related to the Award are being translated in French to reach more interest from francophone countries.

E. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators

51. As per Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21, the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard contains a revised list of 28 indicators, most of which corresponding or being linked to SDG indicators. Through Decision IG.24/3, the Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) to populate the indicators,

using existing sources of information and data. COP 21 requested also the Secretariat, through Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC, to integrate the list of SCP indicators in the dashboard.

52. Based on this mandate, Plan Bleu engaged the work to produce in 2021, in view of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD, an updated version of the indicator analytical factsheets.

53. SCP/RAC mobilized external expertise to support the work in updating and populating the list of SCP indicators, in light of the latest development at the global level. The SCP indicators are being calculated in view of producing technical and analytical factsheets, which will feed the Mediterranean Observatory of the Environment and Development managed by Plan Bleu¹¹. While avoiding any overlapping between the two lists of indicators, the integration of SCP indicators should reinforce the dashboard and the observatory on green, blue and circular economy subjects.

54. Following conclusions of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Secretariat (Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC) continue to explore data availability at national level, considering *inter alia* the global indicator framework as included in the 2020 Comprehensive Review conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), national reports on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation, UNEP Environment Live Portal, etc.

55. In May 2020, Plan Bleu published a “4-page document” (in French) entitled “*La crise du COVID-19 en Méditerranée : nouveau risque majeur ou opportunité de reconstruction?*” (*The COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean: new major risk or opportunity towards recovery?*). Although statistics remain provisional, this document delivers a cautious analysis of the health crisis affecting the Mediterranean countries. This document is a basis for launching the first thoughts on the development of indicators to monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean region and countries, as recommended by the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee.

56. Complementing the work on the MSSD and SCP indicators, the Secretariat, including MED POL, Plan Bleu and Info/RAC had several exchanges, in June and July 2020, with the UNEP Capacity Development and Innovation Branch (SDGs and Statistics Unit) and Big Data Branch (World Environment Situation Room / WESR Unit) to engage collaboration on Monitoring and Evaluation, e.g. reporting, indicators, foresights, etc. Opportunities for further collaboration cover the following topics: interconnexion between the UNEP/MAP information system (Info MAP system) (e.g. data and knowledge sharing platforms and their interoperability, data dictionaries, harmonization of indicator methodology and of data collection and processing, etc.); SDG monitoring and assessment studies, in particular on SDG indicators for which UNEP is the custodian agency; possible Foresight Brief on MED 2050. The Secretariat will follow up on those promising perspectives.

F. Peer Learning Experiences: Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries

57. Following a specific conclusion of the 21st Meeting of the MSCD Steering Committee, the Secretariat liaised with eight Contracting Parties to collect their inputs in view of completing the online consultation of MCSD Members on the transposition of SDGs at national level. Based on the evidence collected from 16 Mediterranean countries, the Secretariat drafted a synthesis paper, which is submitted to the Committee for review under Agenda item 4: Specific issues (see Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.483/4 and WG.483/5).

58. The Secretariat will follow up with Cyprus, Libya, Monaco, Slovenia and Spain to conclude this process and to finalize the paper in view of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD.

¹¹ <http://obs.planbleu.org/en/>

G. Cooperation and Partners

59. Since May 2020, the Secretariat participated in the monthly meetings of the UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) Coordination Group, established by the Marine and Fresh Water Branch, Ecosystems Division. Working with Regional Seas and other partners, the SBE Coordination Group supports the development of UNEP's SBE work, coordination, integration and synthesis of work streams, consolidation and communication of results across UNEP. The SBE Coordination Group supports the UNEP's Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative, which aims to facilitate sustainable ocean-based economic, social and environmental benefits. An important focus of the initiative is to support UNEP's strategic response to COVID-19, building a recovery that uses oceans within safe operating space of planet for humanity and helps deliver the Paris Agreement on climate change.

60. In Spring 2020, the Secretariat was invited to provide feedback on the draft Strategy for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and its draft Communication Strategy, coordinated jointly by UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Inputs were provided by the Secretariat, including all UNEP/MAP Components, and submitted to the UN Decade team. On 15 September 2020, the Secretariat attended the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Webinar "Strategy Reveal and Engagement Kickstarter"¹², which introduced the strategy and its partner engagement opportunities. UNEP/MAP is also in contact with the Best Practices Task Force, set up by FAO, and will follow-up towards possible collaboration, in particular on how UNEP/MAP best practices could be disseminated further as part of the Decade, and more generally, how to promote exchange of best practices across regions. The Secretariat will follow-up with UNEP and FAO.

61. Following the Mediterranean Workshop "The Mediterranean Sea We Need for the Future We Want"¹³ co-organized on 21-23 January 2020 in Venice, Italy, by the Italian Oceanographic Commission (COI), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC), EC, Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM), and UNEP/MAP, in collaboration with the BlueMed Initiative, as part of the preparatory phase for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the Secretariat is following-up to proceed with the implementation of recommendations related to the UNEP/MAP Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) and the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report, as a basis for Mediterranean countries towards harmonized and common assessment of marine and coastal environment, including implementation and reporting on SDG 14 implementation.

62. The Secretariat, including UNEP/MAP Components (MED POL and SPA/RAC), contributed to the preparation of the SDG14 Regional Seas Report in view of the next UN Ocean Conference. Mediterranean cases studies related to the Marine Litter Regional Plan and the Roadmap towards an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas will be included in that report and detailed in its supplementary annex.

63. In September 2020, the Secretariat contributed with substantial inputs, based on commitments of the Naples Ministerial Declaration and other relevant UNEP/MAP strategic documents, to the UfM consultation (online questionnaire) on common post-2020 priority thematic areas for the UfM Environment and Climate Action Agenda. Main thematic axes and key actions will be part of the post-2020 Environment Agenda, i.e. UfM 2030 "Greener Med Agenda" and UfM Climate Action Plan.

64. In August 2020, the Secretariat joined the EU4Ocean platform as a founding member. The [European Ocean Coalition](#) (EU4Ocean) has been launched on 8 June 2020, on the occasion of the World Ocean Day. Supported by the EC, the initiative connects organizations, projects and people that

¹² <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/webinar/un-decade-ecosystem-restoration-strategy-reveal-and-engagement-kickstarter>

¹³ <https://www.cnr.it/it/news/9212/un-decade-of-ocean-science-for-sustainable-development-2021-2030-mediterranean-workshop-the-mediterranean-sea-we-need-for-the-future-we-want>

contribute to ocean literacy and to the sustainable management of the ocean, boosting public awareness and advocacy for a healthy ocean across the EU.

H. Outreach, Information, and Communication

65. The UNEP/MAP revamped website, including a new layout, a revised structure and new content, is online since June 2020. The revamped website includes webpages dedicated to the MSSD¹⁴ – with emphasis on MSSD Flagship Initiatives, the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) –, and to the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award¹⁵. A letter was sent in October 2020 to inform the Contracting Parties and Partners, including MCSD Members, that the new website is accessible at www.unepmap.org and www.unep.org/unepmap, asking them for their reactions and feedback as primary users of the website.

66. Launched in October 2019 with the hashtag #BarcelonaConvention, the UNEP/MAP twitter account is approaching the milestone of 1,000 followers, consisting mainly of environment and development researchers, practitioners and institutional accounts. By securing a digital presence on Twitter, the account is boosting the visibility of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the work of the MCSD, on an important social media platform on where most institutional actors of environmental governance in the Mediterranean region are present.

67. On the occasion of the Mediterranean Coast Day (25 September), under the exceptional circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat coordinated a digital campaign¹⁶ based on a thematic web page developed by PAP/RAC and Info/RAC, with a wealth of information on the state of the Mediterranean coasts and on what the public can do to help reduce the pressure being exerted on them.

68. On 21 September 2020, the report jointly prepared by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and UNEP/MAP “Towards a cleaner Mediterranean Sea: a decade of progress” was launched¹⁷. This is the second joint EEA–UNEP/MAP assessment under the EU funded UfM Horizon 2020 initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean (H2020).

69. On 15 September 2020, on the occasion of the 7th UfM Working Group on Blue Economy, the UNEP/MAP strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis was presented by Mr Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention.

70. On 7 September 2020, on the occasion of a global online event organized by UNEP to mark the first edition of [International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies](#), Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen commended the commitment of the Mediterranean Ministers of the Environment and paid tribute to the ongoing endeavor undertaken by the Contracting Parties to improve air quality in the Mediterranean through the *Roadmap for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention* (Med SOx ECA) approved at COP 21. The Secretariat also marked the first edition of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies through the following article: [Beating the drum for better air quality in the Mediterranean coasts](#).

71. On 26 August 2020, the Secretariat published an open edition (op-ed) by the Coordinator on [The breeze that may herald a green renaissance in the Mediterranean](#). In addition, the op-ed [A beacon of hope](#), by Mr Gaetano Leone, first appeared in Spanish in [El País](#), on 12 August 2020.

¹⁴ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/what-we-do/mediterranean-strategy-sustainable-development-mssd>

¹⁵ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/istanbul-environment-friendly-city-award>

¹⁶ <http://www.info-rac.org/coastday>

¹⁷ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/press-release/stronger-joint-efforts-needed-achieve-cleaner-mediterranean>

72. On 15 July 2020, Ms. Leticia Carvalho, Head of the Marine and Fresh Water Branch, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, and UNEP/MAP Components (SPA/RAC and REMPEC) contributed as speakers to the 2020 edition of the [Forum Mondial de la Mer](#), Bizerte, Tunisia. The forum was chaired by Mr Pascal Lamy, President of the Healthy Ocean mission from the EC.

73. On 15 July 2020, Ms. Tatjana Hema, Deputy Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, participated in a virtual event organized by the Moroccan Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to discuss the environment and developmental challenges facing the Mediterranean region.

74. From July to October 2020, the Secretariat submitted several progress reports related to the SDG14 Voluntary Commitments registered on the occasion of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference. See the registry of voluntary commitments online at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>.

75. On 24 June 2020, the Secretariat announced the “[Mediterranean Sea Programme \(MedProgramme\): Enhancing Environmental Security](#)”, a 43 million USD endeavor funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the aim of reducing major environmental stresses, strengthening climate resilience and water security, and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations in the Mediterranean region.

76. On 8 June 2020, marking the [World Oceans Day in the Mediterranean](#), the Secretariat published a message from Mr Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, who also participated in the webinar *What solutions to fight against plastic pollution in the ocean?* organized by IDDRI (*Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales*, France), with the participation of Ms. Brune Poirson, former Secretary of State, French Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition, France.

77. In June 2020, the Secretariat published the [UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to the COVID-19 crisis](#). See details in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/4.

78. In June 2020, the quarterly newsletter of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system [MED News 02/2020](#) was published online through the Info/RAC website.

79. Finally, the Secretariat has initiated a series of advocacy activities focusing on the theme of “building back greener” towards recovery from COVID-19 crisis. “Green renaissance” was coined as part of this effort and appeared in advocacy products. The message on the need to invest into a more sustainable and resilient future in the Mediterranean has consistently been conveyed in UNEP/MAP messaging, including statements made by the Coordinator at regional events. A web feature titled “six ways in which the UNEP/MAP system can support a green renaissance in the Mediterranean” reaffirmed the system’s relevance and ability to support Contracting Parties in building back greener¹⁸.

¹⁸ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/news/six-ways-which-unepmap-can-support-green-renaissance-mediterranean>

Annex I

Morocco – The Administration Exemplary Pact (in French)

Maroc – Le Pacte de l'Exemplarité de l'Administration

Annex I: Morocco – The Administration Exemplary Pact (in French). *Maroc – Le Pacte de l’Exemplarité de l’Administration*

La Stratégie Nationale de Développement Durable (SNDD) du Maroc vise à accélérer la transition vers une économie verte et inclusive d’ici 2030. Pour concrétiser cette vision, la SNDD a identifié 7 enjeux qui ont été déclinés en 31 axes stratégiques et 137 objectifs.

Le premier axe stratégique de la SNDD vise à inciter l’administration publique à être exemplaire en matière de développement durable. En effet, elle doit donner l’exemple et déployer une démarche éco-responsable pour encourager et promouvoir les bonnes pratiques de développement durable auprès de l’ensemble des acteurs économiques et sociaux à l’échelle nationale.

Pour ce faire, un Pacte de l’Exemplarité de l’Administration (PEA) a été élaboré en fixant six objectifs stratégiques à atteindre, à savoir :

- Objectif n°1 : Généraliser les démarches environnementales au sein des bâtiments publics ;
- Objectif n°2 : Inscrire les administrations publiques dans la logique de gestion et valorisation des déchets ;
- Objectif n°3 : Renforcer les initiatives d’un « État employeur responsable » ;
- Objectif n°4 : Intégrer une approche participative et améliorer la transparence ;
- Objectif n°5 : Promouvoir une commande publique durable et responsable ;
- Objectif n°6 : Développer l’exemplarité des acteurs publics en matière de mobilité.

Pour opérationnaliser le PEA, plusieurs actions ont été entreprises notamment :

- ✓ L’élaboration d’un guide méthodologique et des fiches d’orientation constituant une boîte à outils et mis à la disposition des départements ministériels ;
- ✓ L’adoption du PEA et son guide méthodologique lors de la première réunion du Comité Stratégique de Développement Durable tenue le 22 février 2019 sous la présidence de Monsieur le Chef du Gouvernement ;
- ✓ L’envoi de la circulaire n° 08/2019 de Monsieur le Chef du Gouvernement à toutes les administrations publiques les incitant à élaborer l’audit environnemental de leurs bâtiments et à proposer un Plan Ministériel de l’Exemplarité de l’Administration (PMEA) ;
- ✓ L’introduction d’une nouvelle rubrique dans le prix Hassan II pour l’Environnement dédiée aux administrations qui ont concrétisé les objectifs du PEA ;
- ✓ La prise de la décision d’introduire les véhicules verts dans le parc de l’administration publique pour atteindre au moins 10% des nouvelles acquisitions à partir de 2019.

Les actions entreprises en relation avec le PEA au niveau du Département de l’Environnement ont permis de rationaliser l’utilisation des ressources dont l’énergie, l’eau et le papier. En effet, le Département de l’Environnement a pu :

- ✓ Réduire sa consommation des ressources en eau de 50% en mettant en place des robinets à capteur infrarouge ;
- ✓ Produire 22% de sa consommation en énergie électrique à partir des énergies renouvelables (panneaux photovoltaïques) ;
- ✓ Réduire sa consommation de carburant à travers l’achat de cinq voitures électriques pour l’année 2019 ;
- ✓ Contribuer au recyclage en mettant en place un système du tri de papier à la source ;
- ✓ Rationaliser l’utilisation du papier à travers la mise en place d’une application de gestion électronique.

Annex II

Conclusions and Recommendations adopted at the Plenary consultation on the draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) elaborated by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)

22 September 2020 (Marseille, France, and online)

Annex II: Conclusions and Recommendations adopted at the Plenary consultation on the draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) elaborated by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC). 22 September 2020 (Marseille, France, and online)

The Focal Points of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Climate Change Expert Group (CCEG) and the UfM Environment Task Force, the Focal Points of Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan – UNEP/MAP), the Members of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), as participants to the Plenary consultation on the draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) elaborated by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC),

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and the Paris Agreement of 12 December 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Recalling also the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution of 15 March 2019, UNEP/EA.4/Res.23 entitled “Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook”,

Recalling further the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 and its Objective 4 “Climate change as a priority in the Mediterranean”, the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for Marine and Coastal Areas, and the 1st UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change (Athens, Greece, 13 April 2014),

Having regard to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, and in particular Article 4 thereof on general obligations,

Recalling Decision IG.24/4 on Assessment Studies adopted at the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019), approving the elements of the “Roadmap for the Consultation of Decision-Makers and Stakeholders on the First Assessment Report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean (MAR1)” as set out in Annex IV of that Decision,

1. *Welcome and express appreciation* for the work undertaken by members of the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC), in particular its coordinators, authors and secretariat, for the preparation of the MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) and its Summary for Policymakers (SPM);
2. *Acknowledge* the importance of the Science – Policy – Society Interface developed by MedECC in cooperation with the UfM and UNEP/MAP Secretariats and Plan Bleu, and *welcome* the inclusive process undertaken to consult the scientific community, governments representatives, policymakers and stakeholders on the findings of MAR1;
3. *Agree*, on a consensual basis, that the Plenary consultation did not identify any factual inaccuracy or error in the SPM;
4. *Invite* the Secretariat of the UfM to submit the SPM to for the consideration and endorsement by the next UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action expected to be held in Egypt;

5. *Invite also* the Secretariat of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention to submit the SPM for the consideration and endorsement by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their 22nd Meeting to be held in Antalya, Turkey, in December 2021;
 6. *Encourage* the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system to consider the results of MedECC work in the preparation of the draft decisions for the COP 22 and of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027;
 7. *Encourage also* the MedECC secretariat, supporting institutions and partners to proceed with a timely publication of the SPM and use its key messages toward a broad dissemination and communication campaign, targeting decision-makers, other stakeholders and citizens, supporting policy-making processes and awareness of the public at regional, national and local levels in the Mediterranean region.
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