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19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Videoconference, 7–9 June 2021

**Agenda item 10: Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD**

\* reissued for technical reasons

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## **Introduction**

1. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) was virtually hosted by Slovenia through videoconference from 7 to 9 June 2021.
2. The list of participants is provided in Annex I of the present report.

## **Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. The outgoing President of the MCSD, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro), welcomed the participants, highlighted the Mediterranean region's challenges in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and acknowledged the efforts to establish and strengthen regional mechanisms within the MCSD to foster integration with global processes.
4. Ms. Tatjana Hema, Acting Coordinator, UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat, congratulated Montenegro on a productive mandate as MCSD President, and commended Slovenia's commitment to advancing the sustainability agenda in the Mediterranean region. She observed that the year 2021 coincides with the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Barcelona Convention and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MCSD, which is "the most inclusive body of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system". The Acting Coordinator mentioned that the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD virtually hosted by Slovenia is taking place a few weeks before the country assumes the Presidency of the European Union (EU) in the second half of 2021, representing a unique opportunity to amplify calls for a green renaissance in our region.
5. In a recorded video message, H.E. Andrej Vizjak, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia, invited the MCSD to formulate clear proposals for the transition to a sustainable blue economy in the pursuit of a green renaissance in the Mediterranean. Calling for a fair and active cross-border cooperation, Minister Vizjak stated that "Slovenia will do everything to strengthen the partnership with [the MCSD and UNEP/MAP] to achieve our common goal in the sea we share".
6. The texts of welcome addresses and opening statements are reproduced in Annex II of the present report.

## **Agenda item 2: Organizational Matters**

- a) *Election of the Steering Committee*
- b) *Adoption of the Provisional Agenda*
- c) *Organization of Work*

7. In compliance with the MCSD Constitutive Documents (Decision IG.22/17), the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD elected the MCSD Steering Committee, as described in the conclusions below.
8. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.493/1 and annotated in document UNEP/MED WG.493/2. The agenda of meeting is included in Annex III of the present report.

## **Conclusions:**

9. **The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD expressed gratitude to the outgoing President, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro), and to the other Members of the MCSD Steering Committee, i.e. Ms. Valentina Mauriello, Italy; Mr. Evangelos Raftopoulos (Rapporteur), Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN); Mr. Mohammed Maktit, Morocco; Ms. Bahar Özögüt, Turkey; Mr. Jean Baptiste Buffet, United**

**Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); Ms. Alessandra Sensi, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), acknowledging with appreciation the work done under their guidance in 2020-2021.**

**10. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD elected the MCSD Steering Committee in accordance with the MCSD Constitutive Documents, Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure, as follows:**

- **President: Mr. Mitja Bricelj, Slovenia**
- **Vice-President: Ms. Samah Saleh, Egypt**
- **Vice-President: Ms. Bahar Özögüt, Turkey**
- **Vice-President: Mr. Emad Adly, Egyptian Forum on Sustainable Development (ESDF)**
- **Vice-President: Mr. Michael Scoullou, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)**
- **Vice-President: Ambassador Sergio Piazzini, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)**
- **Rapporteur: Ms. Anne-France Didier, France**

**Agenda item 3: Report by the Coordinator on Sustainable Development  
Activities for the period June 2019 – May 2021**

11. The Acting Coordinator presented the progress report, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.493/3, focusing on activities deriving from Decisions IG.24/3 and IG.24/4<sup>1</sup> adopted at the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) and included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021.

12. Members of the MCSD provided positive comments on the results achieved after the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019) and reported on their sustainable development activities and own efforts in support to the MSSD implementation and to the work of the MCSD, as summarized below by order of intervention.

13. MedPAN reported about technical support to managers of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including training and experience sharing at local level. In cooperation with SPA/RAC, the network of Mediterranean MPAs has updated the MAPAMED database of Mediterranean MPAs in view of preparing a new edition of the Mediterranean MPA Status Report. MedPAN, SPA/RAC, WWF, the Foundation of Prince Albert II of Monaco and other partners are preparing the third edition of the Mediterranean MPA Forum to develop a Post 2020 Mediterranean MPA Roadmap through a large mobilization of the Mediterranean MPA community.

14. Italy reported about national mechanisms in support to sustainable development, including the implementation of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) adopted in 2017, the establishment of a national forum and regional fora for sustainable development gathering governmental and non-governmental actors with the support of the scientific community, the project on policy coherence “Mainstreaming SDGs in Italian decision-making process” with the preparation of a roadmap leading to legislative and structural reforms, the coordinating role of the inter-ministerial committee for economic planning, the integration of SDGs in academic courses in several universities, and a mapping showing the links between global SDGs, the NSSD, and the Italian COVID-19 recovery plan.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31701/19ig24\\_22\\_2403\\_eng.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31701/19ig24_22_2403_eng.pdf);  
[https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31702/19ig24\\_22\\_2404\\_eng.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31702/19ig24_22_2404_eng.pdf)

15. The Mediterranean network of municipalities, Med Cities, acknowledged the presentation of the important work done and called for more awareness raising and communication targeting local authorities and civil society organizations, as well as for more action-oriented activities involving municipalities and the general public in the protection and integrated management of cities' surrounding environment.
16. Hon. Alain Perea, Member of the Parliament of France, Rapporteur on the Environment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) reported about PAM's commitment to raising climate awareness among Mediterranean policy-makers, and about partnerships to promote science-policy interfaces on environmental affairs, encouraging intersectoral and transnational coordination in the Mediterranean. Committed to represent the parliamentary dimension within the MCSD, PAM is engaged in the creation of a regional coalition for climate neutrality and for the application of an additional carbon tax among its member States. Hon. Perea outlined the findings of the report on climate change he presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> PAM Plenary Session, emphasizing the necessity to bring climate action on the top of national political agendas.
17. ANIMA Investment Network reported about the EDILE project, which aims at assessing and improving local impacts of investments, and the THE NEXT SOCIETY project, which targets policy-makers, research innovators, start-ups and clusters for strengthening innovation ecosystems in the Mediterranean through networking and support to beneficiaries towards international markets. ANIMA insisted on the role of investment agencies in catalyzing private sector finance to meet climate mitigation ambitions.
18. The Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN) presented its contribution to the implementation and promotion of the MSSD on four interrelated topics: 1. the launch of two MSSD Flagship Initiatives promoting environmental democracy and innovation, including a Memorandum of Understanding signed with MIO-ECSDE in October 2020; 2. Participation as Rapporteur in the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee held in May and December 2020, as well as in other UNEP/MAP events; 3. Outreach, information and communication through the MEPIELAN website and e-bulletin; 4. Educational programmes at the Panteion University of Athens, Greece, related to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, with reference to the MSSD and Mediterranean sustainability governance.
19. Greece introduced the follow-up of its Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented in 2018 at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), including the establishment of a national set of SDG indicators endorsed by all Ministries and by the National Statistical Authority of Greece. A new institutional set-up has been put in place to coordinate the SDGs implementation, including a national multi-stakeholder platform. Greece launched relevant actions for SDGs 7 and 13 (National Energy and Climate Plan), SDGs 12 and 14 (National Circular Economy Action Plan), and SDGs 14 and 15 (Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency).
20. Morocco congratulated the MCSD and the Secretariat for the work done in the last two years, insisting on communication and awareness raising to target the general public in joining efforts in support of sustainable development at all levels in the Mediterranean.
21. Dr. Moh Rejdali, Member of the Parliament of Morocco, President of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), reported on the support provided to the implementation of two MSSD Flagship Initiatives in cooperation with MIO-ECSDE, as well as on the regional meeting of Mediterranean Parliamentarians and Stakeholders, hosted at the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco on 17 December 2019, on the following theme: "Launching a new decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean". COMPSUD updated the meeting

participants about the forthcoming revision of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and its Action Plan.

22. Reminding that COP 22 will hopefully take place face-to-face in Antalya in December 2021, Turkey reported about the national SDG Action Plan 2019-2023 and the Zero Waste Initiative.

23. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) highlighted messages from the review of SDG progress in the pan-European region, mentioning that the region is on track to achieving only 23 of the official SDG targets by 2030; progress in 57 targets would need to accelerate, trends need to be reversed for 9 targets, and there is no sufficient national data to track change for 80 targets. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis has hit the region hard, with negative consequences for multiple SDGs, but also created opportunities to accelerate SDG progress while embarking on a green COVID-19 recovery, including by directing the tourism sector towards a more sustainable path.

24. The UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN ESCWA) introduced outcome of the 2021 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development on “Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda Post-COVID”, with the following recommendations: Supporting the private sector, especially SMEs which have played an important role in responding to the pandemic; Expanding social protection systems, noting that most affected groups by the pandemic are those that were most vulnerable before the crisis; Reinforcing political commitment to end wars and conflicts; Enhancing mobilization of financial resources in line with national development plans; Ensuring access to technology for all, improving R&D, enhancing technological capacity of researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs, especially women and youth.

25. France stated that we must get out of the crisis by realizing the 2030 Agenda, by jointly addressing human and nature health, and by changing consumption and production patterns. France updated the meeting participants about the “Plan for an exemplary Mediterranean”, which has been presented at the One Planet Summit on Biodiversity in Paris on 11 January 2021 and which will be launched during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2021 in Marseille, France.

26. UfM reported about the recent Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on the Blue Economy, the involvement of the UfM Secretariat in the implementation of two MSSD Flagship Initiatives, the collaboration with UNEP/MAP in supporting Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC), and specific actions implemented at local level with Med Cities.

27. Referring to the follow-up of its 2019 VNR, Israel explained that the national implementation of SDGs focuses on a few strategic issues the government adopted on the recommendation of the National Economic Council which advises the Prime Minister. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environmental Protection were charged with the task of assisting ministries which had roles in giving the strategic issues practical expression, so that they incorporate relevant SDGs into their work. Regarding marine and coastal areas, Israel had to deal in 2021 with the tragic oil spillage at sea which had devastating impacts on coastal flora and fauna; several responses were taken, including a new bill “Preparedness and Response to Marine Oil Pollution, 2021” submitted for government approval.

28. The Egyptian Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF) stated that the experience of this multi-stakeholder national forum can be inspirational for other Mediterranean countries as a model of cooperation and experience sharing on SDGs and MSSD implementation at national and local levels.

29. Albania indicated that the EU’s commitment to improve the state of the environment is introduced with the EU Green Deal, translated to the Green Agenda for the Western Balkan countries, an innovative approach built on initiatives addressing climate, circular economy, waste management, biodiversity and forest protection that all together contribute towards reaching out the SDGs.

30. The European Environment Agency (EEA) mentioned the EU's determination to strengthen its strategic partnership with its Southern Neighborhood in view of addressing common challenges, take advantage of shared opportunities, and unlock the region's economic potential for the benefit of its people. Spurring sustainable and long-term socio-economic recovery and job creation in the Southern Neighborhood is a key shared priority and the innovative cornerstone of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean.

#### **Conclusions:**

**31. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed with appreciation the progress report presented by the Secretariat on the various and considerable activities undertaken since the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD and related to the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD (Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) indicators); MSSD Flagship Initiatives; Mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan; Regional assessment studies on the interactions between environment and development; Structures and processes for sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean countries; UNEP/MAP strategic response to the COVID-19; Partnerships and cooperation, and outreach and communication.**

**32. Appreciating the substantial statements delivered in session and the forum discussion, the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD acknowledged the efforts and initiatives of its Members and Observers, with the support of the Secretariat, as an important contribution to the work of the MCSD towards the delivery of SDGs, the MSSD, and other global and regional processes on environmental affairs and sustainability issues.**

**33. Looking at the great interest and the rich information provided by the Members and Observers of the MCSD who took the floor, the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD reaffirmed the importance of this body, in pursuance of its authoritative role in Sustainable Development, established under the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention as a regional multi-stakeholder platform for experience sharing and peer learning, to contribute substantially to the promotion and achievement of SDGs and to use those best practices at national, subregional, regional levels and beyond.**

#### **Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)**

##### ***a) Promoting the MSSD in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Peer Learning from Voluntary National Reviews***

34. Mr. Julien Le Tellier, UNEP/MAP Programme Management Officer in charge of Socio-Economic Affairs, introduced document UNEP/MED WG.493/7, which provides a synthesis of the inputs collected from MCSD Members representing Contracting Parties – as compiled in document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.8 – based on their respective experiences on transposing, implementing, and monitoring SDGs at national level.

35. MCSD Members commended the quality of the document, which captures commonalities among structures and processes on sustainable development in the Mediterranean countries, as well as national specificities and good practices that can be inspirational through a peer learning approach.

36. MCSD Members representing Contracting Parties took the floor to report on their national policies and initiatives which contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD, as well as on their respective VNR presented at the HLPF – to which all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention went through, some of them having repeated the exercise a second and third time.

**Conclusions:**

**37. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD appreciated the exchanges of experiences on the transposition, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at national level, taking note of the document prepared by Secretariat “Peer Learning: Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries” as a contribution to the synthesis of lessons learned from Voluntary National Reviews and from the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) on national policies for sustainable development.**

**38. Reaffirming the value of SIMPEER as an innovative and cost-effective incentive for promoting dialogue among Mediterranean countries and for supporting volunteer Contracting Parties in streamlining their national policies in synergy with the MSSD and SDGs, the MCSD highlighted the need for a stronger support from the Secretariat to allocate the necessary resources for relaunching this activity in 2022-2023, encouraging at the same time the Contracting Parties to participate in SIMPEER future editions.**

*b) MSSD Flagship Initiatives*

39. The President of the MCSD reminded that the status of implementation of the eleven MSSD Flagship Initiatives is included in document UNEP/MED WG.493/3.

40. Paying tribute to the leaders of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, as well as to the MCSD Steering Committee’s engagement in their regular monitoring, the Acting Coordinator explained that the implementation of those initiatives by MCSD Members and Observers, partners and the Secretariat, illustrates the collective process and the cumulative efforts of all stakeholders, as instrumental towards the delivery of the MSSD. Indicative of regional actions that carry significant potential for results and visibility, the MSSD Flagship Initiatives demonstrate the vision of the Strategy in an exemplary way.

41. Short presentations of main achievements, challenges, and perspectives have been provided by meeting participants on the following MSSD Flagship Initiatives:

- The MedFund for Mediterranean marine protected areas, presented by MedPAN;
- Promote the “Green list” in Mediterranean countries, presented by IUCN Med;
- Promote the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award, presented by the Secretariat;
- Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean – MedUrbanTools, by Med Cities;
- Regional assessments and knowledge exchanges of solutions to achieve waste reduction, presented by COMPSUD and MIO-ECSDE;
- Create a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation, the WeMed Sustainability Award, presented by SCP/RAC;
- Encourage the adoption 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), presented by MIO-ECSDE and MEPIELAN; and,
- Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements – Public Trust Approach, by MEPIELAN.

42. Webpages dedicated to MSSD Flagship Initiatives are available in the UNEP/MAP website<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/what-we-do/mediterranean-strategy-sustainable-development-mssd>



**Conclusions:**

**43. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed the presentations of the activities undertaken by MCSD Members and Observers, partners and the Secretariat under the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, noting with appreciation the advanced status of implementation of those initiatives.**

**44. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD acknowledged the efforts provided by MCSD Members and Observers, partners and the Secretariat in support to the promotion of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, encouraging them to pursue such communication and capitalization actions.**

***c) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard***

45. Mr. Antoine Lafitte, Plan Bleu Programme Officer in charge of Observation of the Environment and Sustainable Development, provided a presentation on the work done in 2020-2021 to update the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, including the preparation of indicator analytical factsheets (see document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.3), as well as perspectives to strengthen the Regional observatory on the environment and development by integrating the dashboard in the UNEP-administrated World Environment Situation Room (WESR) platform, as described in document UNEP/MED WG.493/4. Ms. Magali Outters, SCP/RAC Team Leader Policy Area, complemented this presentation by introducing the update of the SCP indicators, which have been calculated with the most recent available data, allowing to prepare analytical factsheets and to inform the indicator-based mid-term evaluation of SCP Regional Action Plan.

46. The President of the MCSD insisted on the relevance of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard to support the monitoring and follow-up of the MSSD implementation, based on the mandate given by the Contracting Parties. He commended the work done by the Secretariat, under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, for regularly updating the dashboard. He invited the meeting participants to provide advice about the integration of the dashboard into the WESR towards the best use of data and indicators by Contracting Parties and partners.

47. In the ensuing discussion, MCSD Members representing Contracting Parties highlighted the need for technical assistance to countries, e.g. methodology for data collection and verification.

48. Based on experience with MPAs' managers, MedPAN invited the Secretariat to consider local providers of data through collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors.

49. EEA insisted on the new design and "politization" of indicators, which aim in premise at measuring progress towards policy targets, as well as on the necessary convergence between various monitoring and reporting frameworks: i.e. UN system, MSSD, EU, etc. Indicators should have concrete targets, qualitative or quantitative, and be measurable with available data.

50. MEPIELAN invited Plan Bleu to integrate legal indicators in the dashboard in view of measuring progress towards inclusive, fair, and peaceful societies.

**Conclusions:**

**51. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD took note of and welcomed the work done by the Secretariat (Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC) for updating and populating the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, including the integration of SCP Indicators which complement the dashboard under the MSSD Objective 5 "Transition towards a green and blue economy".**

**52. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) and the MCSD Steering Committee were encouraged to continue working towards the optimal alignment and consistency of the dashboard with ongoing global processes on SDGs indicators and to ensure that all indicators are regularly measured**

**and adequately communicated within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and beyond.**

**53. Reminding the living nature of the list of indicators of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the need to keep it under review under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, and with the technical support of Plan Bleu, as international work on SDG indicators progresses, the MCSD took note of the migration of the Regional observatory on the environment and development, which is managed by Plan Bleu, to the global UNEP-administered platform World Environment Situation Room (WESR), appreciating this opportunity for an efficient monitoring of progress towards sustainable development in the Mediterranean, including a larger access to quality-ensured relevant data for the Contracting Parties and partners, and encouraging the Secretariat to inform and consult the MCSD and its Steering Committee on those relevant perspectives.**

***d) Mid-Term Evaluations of the MSSD and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)***

54. After having mentioned that the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan have been mandated by COP 21, the President of the MCSD gave the floor to the Secretariat, which reminded the objective of the evaluations, i.e. making the implementation of these strategic and forward-looking policies more efficient, focusing on gaps, shortcomings, and opportunities, and further aligning those policy frameworks with the SDGs in the post-COVID era.

55. The Acting Coordinator explained that consultants have been mobilized to conduct a literature review and prepare a State of Play and Gap Analysis Report, which were discussed in depth during a wide stakeholder consultation involving MCSD Members, UNEP/MAP Partners, UNEP/MAP Components, and key stakeholders through bilateral interviews, focus groups (online workshops), and a wide online survey (see results of the stakeholder consultation in document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.4).

56. The consultants presented the draft final reports of the mid-term evaluations (documents UNEP/MED WG.493/5 and WG.493/6), focusing on draft recommendations, for consideration and comments by the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD in view of their finalization.

57. MCSD Members expressed support to key findings of the MSSD mid-term evaluation, in particular to the recommendation aiming at further aligning the MSSD with relevant SDGs, with more action-oriented targets.

58. MCSD Members raised the issue of visibility and attractiveness of the MSSD as a regional incentive to support ownership by governments and stakeholders not only at the regional but also at the national level.

59. MCSD Members discussed about financing the implementation of the MSSD, including on the field at the local level. Mapping of funding opportunities, sustainable finance criteria and strategies, and conditionality for investment have been considered as relevant tools in that regard.

**Conclusions:**

**60. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD took note with interest of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat and SCP/RAC through independent experts to proceed with the indicator-based and participatory mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan, in parallel of the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027.**

61. The MCSD recommended the Secretariat to consider and take into account the comments and advice expressed by the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD in view of finalizing in due time the final reports of the mid-term evaluations, as well as to prepare executive reports focusing on achievements, gaps, opportunities and recommendations towards the full delivery of those strategic and forward-looking policy documents in the forthcoming period of implementation.

**Agenda item 5: Recent and Future Assessment and Foresight Studies**

***State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED)***

***Roadmap on MED 2050 Foresight Study: State of Play and Next Steps***

62. The Acting Coordinator stated that SoED produced by Plan Bleu is the most comprehensive regional assessment of its kind in a decade, reminding that it was released in October 2020 as a UNEP publication: see references in document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.1. SoED production entailed a two-year effort of knowledge compilation undertaken by 150 experts from across the region, including experts recommended by Contracting Parties, MCSD Members and Observers. Aimed at decision-makers and all actors in the fields of environment and development in the Mediterranean region, SoED warns that the Mediterranean basin is facing environmental and developmental challenges of an unprecedented scale: the Mediterranean region is on a collision course with nature and current trajectories can lead to irreversible environmental damage in the basin. The required transformation should be achieved through a joint endeavour that involves not only governments but also all stakeholders in the region, including parliamentarians, local authorities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the scientific community, which are represented in the MCSD.

63. Ms. Lina Tode, Plan Bleu Deputy Director, introduced key findings and messages from the SoED report, focusing on environmental issues and drivers of environmental degradation from key economic sectors. Plan Bleu also introduced levers of action that decision-makers can ‘activate’ to achieve a green transition and a resilient, inclusive recovery for reversing current trajectories (*switch the green*).

64. Plan Bleu also presented the work done in the framework of the MED 2050 Foresight Study, as well as next steps towards the inclusion of the MCSD in this participatory exercise.

65. Tunisia expressed thanks to Plan Bleu for the organization, on 16 February 2021, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment and SPA/RAC, of a national dissemination event on SoED, focusing on decentralisation, development planning, integrated approach of sustainable development, and youth and women inclusion.

***First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR 1) of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)***

66. The President of the MCSD welcomed Prof. Wolfgang Cramer, MedECC Coordinator, as invited speaker, giving him the opportunity to present the main findings and key messages of MAR1 titled “Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future” (see references in document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.1), as well as to introduce the most recent developments and perspectives of the MedECC work.

67. The Acting Coordinator reminded that MedECC corresponds to an important MSSD Flagship Initiative that supports several aspects of the UNEP/MAP work on assessment of human-made and natural pressures and impacts on the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean. She reminded that this independent network of scientific experts aims at gathering, updating and

consolidating the best scientific knowledge about climate change in the Mediterranean basin and render it accessible to policymakers, key stakeholders and citizens, insisting on the fact that MedECC replies to needs for scientific evidence expressed by various UNEP/MAP bodies for addressing adequately climate and environmental issues in the Mediterranean region and countries.

68. The Acting Coordinator explained that the Secretariat, through Plan Bleu which hosts the MedECC Secretariat, has supported the development of the network since its creation in 2015, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the UfM which also played an important role for the promotion of MedECC.

69. The MedECC Coordinator delivered a presentation on the main findings of MAR1, focusing on drivers of environmental change in the Mediterranean, temperatures', precipitations' and sea-level rise's projections until 2100, coastal urbanisation, water scarcity and possible consequences for food security, change in marine and terrestrial ecosystems, ocean acidification, energy and carbon management, associated risks for human health and adaptation goals, including short policy messages for each of those topics. He also reported on perspectives to strengthen the science-policy interface, as well as about three on-going thematic reports on 1. coastal risks; 2. water, energy, food, ecosystems nexus, and 3. environmental change, conflict and human migration.

70. In the ensuing discussion, Croatia commanded the relevance of the Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) of MedECC MAR1, as a well-tailored document to support the definition of policy responses to climate change issues, such as reduction in water availability and sea level rise. Croatia appreciated the forward-looking approach to anticipate on what will happen in the future if action is not taken now.

71. France and Italy were joined by other MCSDD Members on the support expressed to MedECC in view of bringing science-based messages to the attention of relevant regional and national fora. They pledged for a stronger recognition of this science-policy interface which replies to needs for knowledge formulated by Contracting Parties.

72. Morocco commended the preparation of the MedECC thematic report on environmental change and migration in view of supporting adequate policy responses to the migratory crisis in the Mediterranean, including through North-South and South-South cooperation.

#### **Conclusions:**

**73. Welcoming the SoED and MedECC MAR1 reports, the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSDD invited its Members and the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system to build on existing knowledge to define science-based policy recommendations for sustainable development.**

**74. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSDD acknowledged with appreciation the UNEP's publications of the SoED, its Summary for Policy-Makers and Key Messages, and the important efforts provided by the Secretariat and UNEP/MAP Components, in particular Plan Bleu, to disseminate this major regional assessment study on the interactions between environment and development.**

**75. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSDD encouraged Contracting Parties to fully consider the SoED key findings as important inputs for the definition of relevant regional and national policies and strategies in the post-COVID era, and to take concrete steps to incorporate the concerns and challenges raised by the report in their environmental and sustainable development policies.**

**76. The MCSDD welcomed and expressed its appreciation to the work done by MedECC, and recommended to the Secretariat to submit the Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) of the**

**MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) for consideration by UNEP/MAP Focal Points and possible endorsement at COP 22.**

77. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD encouraged the Contracting Parties to provide adequate and long-term support to MedECC, as a successful regional initiative which replies to their needs in terms of scientific knowledge for informing evidence-based policies, and as a recognized science-policy interface by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including further collaboration with the MCSD and its Steering Committee on climate and environmental matters.

78. Taking note of the work done in the framework of the MED 2050 Foresight Study, and reaffirming its willingness and interest to take part in an inclusive manner in the participatory dimension of MED 2050, the MCSD encouraged the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) to strengthen its efforts for delivering MED 2050 in a timely manner to inform the MSSD Review process and the preparation of the MSSD 2026-2035.

**Agenda item 6: Roundtable – Achievement of the SDGs and Transition towards a Sustainable Blue Economy for a Post-COVID Green Renaissance in the Mediterranean**

79. The President of the MCSD explained that, under this agenda item, a roundtable was organized to foster discussions on a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future through a sustainable blue economy for a post-COVID green renaissance in the Mediterranean, indicating that the outcome of the panel discussions are expected to represent the first elements that the MCSD may consider in view of feeding the relevant discussions at COP 22 and in the preparation of its Declaration. The roundtable's concept note is included in Annex IV of the present report.

80. As moderator of the roundtable, Ambassador Sergio Piazzzi, PAM Secretary General, highlighted the strategic importance of close cooperation at national and regional levels among parliamentarians, governments, local authorities, the scientific communities and financial institutions to ensure the implementation of the measures required to address environmental and climate change challenges, including the most effective use of the financial resources allocated through COVID-19 green recovery plans. Ambassador Piazzzi highlighted the PAM's commitment to closely work with its network of partners to support effective science-policy interfaces to promote policies based on scientific evidence.

81. Mr. Julien Rochette, Director of the Ocean Programme, IDDRI, introduced impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on marine regions: i.e. increase in ocean pollution (e.g. face masks entered in the marine environment), increase in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfishing due to lack of on board observers and enforcement; quarantine measures affecting food security and livelihoods of small-scale fishers; decline in coastal tourism due to travel restrictions, impacting negatively revenues for local communities and marine conservation; cruise industry and seafood trade harmed by port closures; demand for seafood fallen due to reduced tourists and restaurant closures; low demand, disrupted supply of feed, and fall in prices affecting aquaculture. He highlighted COVID-19 crisis' impacts on regional marine governance, such as: postponing of important events and decisions; reduction of governments' contributions and delays in payment; lack of monitoring, control and surveillance. Taking note that the Ocean has been absent in most recovery plans, Mr. Rochette pledged for reframing the ocean as a "critical national infrastructure", creating the legal environment for public-private partnerships with adequate financial support, and supporting innovation and science. He stated that the sustainable blue economy should be an integral part of

recovery processes through “no-regret” measures that help to meet jointly regional environmental and socio-economic sustainability targets: e.g. ecosystems restoration and nature-based solutions.

82. Ms. Isabelle Viallon, European Commission, DG MARE, introduced practical aspects related to the maritime affairs in the EU Green Deal, putting the emphasis on the recent Communication on a new approach for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the EU “Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future” (COM/2021/240 final). Considering that “there is no green without blue”, she stated that transitioning to sustainable blue economy can contribute to the recovery of sectors affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Ms. Viallon mentioned that the sustainable blue economy should preserve natural capital (environment), provides benefits for current and future generations (society), and be profitable, innovative and resilient to shocks (economy). Reminding the necessary conditions to reach this objective (i.e. ocean knowledge; research and innovation; investments; maritime security), she insisted on the importance of breaking silos and joining forces by combining *inter alia* marine spatial planning, ocean literacy, and sea basin strategies.

83. Mr. Najib Saab, AFED Secretary General, provided insights into the Arab countries’ situation and challenges that decision-makers are facing for paying a “green premium” beyond emergency programmes and towards long-term green recovery plans, putting the emphasis on environmental sustainability considerations. He recommended to prepare a set of concrete legal elements, based on the MSSD, to be presented to Parliaments of Mediterranean countries, considering that this legal component of structural changes should be complemented by grants and aid conditional on adhering to green economy principles, attached to strict compliance mechanisms. Mr. Saab called for a stricter control on the expanded activities of gas and oil exploration and exploitation in the Mediterranean.

84. Mr. Simone Cresti, Manager of SDSN Med, presented key findings of the Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Report 2020 “Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, published in November 2020. He introduced the following recommendations, which are structured around six transformation hubs<sup>3</sup>: Endorsement of the SDGs in official statements, regulations, and sectorial plans and programmes; Collaborations between public authorities and the private sector; Businesses expected to fully embracing sustainability as a driver principle; Digital revolution as a multiplier of opportunities for life and businesses; and, Domestic implementation of the SDGs without undermining other countries’ ability to achieve the goals. Considering the upgrade and diversification of the policy mix, the development of collaborative frameworks, and the promotion of experience sharing and peer review mechanisms as key factors for adaptive policies, Mr. Simone stated that partnerships are crucial for resilient and healthy societies addressing climate and environmental challenges in the Mediterranean. He also updated the meeting participants with the forthcoming SDSN Med Youth Solutions Report 2021, prepared in collaboration with UNEP/MAP.

85. Ms. Magali Outters, SCP/RAC, introduced two main initiatives aiming at accelerating the development of sustainable businesses in a post-COVID setting, namely the TheSwitchers.org online platform and a set of regional policy measures, mandated by COP21. TheSwitchers.org online platform constitutes an innovative platform to boost sustainable entrepreneurship. It enables interactions among key stakeholders of the sustainable business ecosystem and gathers all methodologies and tools developed by SCP/RAC since 2014. Ms. Outters also presented the set of regional measures to support green and circular businesses, based on a detailed analysis of the current situation in the region, building on country factsheets, sub-regional baseline assessment reports, an inventory of international best practices on policy instruments that promote enabling environments for green and circular businesses, and a wide stakeholder consultation process.

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<sup>3</sup> Six transformation hubs: 1. Education, gender, inequality; 2. Health, wellbeing and demography; 3. Energy and decarbonisation; 4. Food, land, water and oceans; 5. Cities and communities; 6. Digital revolution.

86. Ms. Valentina Mauriello, Ministry of Ecological Transition, Italy, focused her intervention on the Italian response to greenhouse gas emissions from maritime activities, including nautical and coastal tourism and cruise, as a major risk for the marine and coastal environment in a region which represents a major road of global shipping, including oil transportation lines. Italy recently launched important measures and actions to decarbonize the maritime sectors through innovative technology, renewable energy and alternative fuels within ships and in ports, replying to global calls and to the regional commitment towards the declaration of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for Sulphur oxides (Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA) (Decisions IG.24/8 adopted at COP 21).

Ms. Valentina described the Italian “green ports” initiative, which is included in the national COVID-19 recovery plan, aiming at adapting port infrastructure to environmental and sustainability standards, reducing energy consumption (transport of goods, enlightening systems, etc.), improving buildings’ energy efficiency, ensuring treatment of fuels from ships at port, and docks electrification.

87. Mr. Iztok Škerlič, Director of the Public Institute for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Development Projects of the Municipality of Izola, Slovenia, presented cooperation projects on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), including the creation of green infrastructures at the local level in the framework of EUSAIR. Based on successful pilot cases from the Slovene Istria coast, he demonstrated how participatory and bottom-up mechanisms are instrumental in an innovative ecosystem-based governance from local contexts to transnational cooperation.

#### **Conclusions:**

**88. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD appreciated the meaningful panel discussions and the various, complementary key notes, not only from an informative point of view but also on the necessary synergies to be established in practical terms among relevant processes, policies and mechanisms to support a green renaissance and the achievements of the SDGs at all levels in the Mediterranean.**

**89. The panel discussion considered that, happening during the COVID-19 pandemic that erupted in the midst of an unprecedented triple planetary crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD was timely to engage in further work on the One Health approach for reconciling socio-economic development and the preservation of natural resources for human health and livelihoods of current and future generations, confirming the urgency for creating synergies between complementary regional initiatives towards a green renaissance and to leave no one behind in the post-COVID era.**

#### **Agenda item 7: Integrating Sustainability Considerations into the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention System: draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, draft Programme of Work 2022-2023, Inputs for COP 22 Ministerial Declaration**

90. The President of the MCSD explained that, during this agenda item, the MCSD was expected to produce opinions on the overall draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) for 2022-2023, which is the first biennial PoW of the forthcoming UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027. He added that the MCSD should seize this opportunity to launch the consultation on the preparation of the draft Ministerial Declaration of COP 22, the MCSD being expected to facilitate the identification of issues of relevance to the Ministerial Session and Declaration of COP 22.

91. After a presentation of the sustainability dimension of the draft UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.493/8, the Acting Coordinator

presented the draft PoW for 2022-2023 in view of stimulating discussions within the MCSD on further integrating sustainability considerations into the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention System.

92. Having considered the comprehensiveness of the draft PoW, MCSD Members emphasized the importance of the foundational programme 5 “Governance” for ensuring integration (vs. isolation) among the various programmes and to “deliver as one” (vs. silo approach). This Governance cross-cutting programme could encompass environmental democracy, governments’ accountability, and transparency for sustainable management of natural resources and intergenerational equity.

93. Regarding the enabling programme 7 “Advocacy and Communication”, MCSD Members referred to SDG 4 “Education for all” and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as enablers for all SDGs implementation. It was recommended to consider the relevance of knowledge coming from practitioners, e.g. participatory knowledge, citizen science.

#### **Conclusions:**

**94. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed the presentation of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) 2022-2023 and considered that the overall draft PoW adequately integrates sustainability considerations.**

**95. MCSD Members welcomed important sustainability aspects fully imbedded in the proposed PoW, highlighting the need for further reflection on integrated implementation of SDGs, interaction and synergies between complementary activities and initiatives, intersectoral and interinstitutional dialogue at governance level, as well as more emphasis on building and bridging with existing works and initiatives, including on education for sustainable development and public trust approach building on environmental democracy, and requested the Secretariat to describe these reflections in the Report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD and in the proposed PoW, as appropriate.**

**96. Based on the outcome of the discussions related to the reports of the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and SCP Regional Action Plan, the roundtable and other agenda items, the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD took note of and agreed with the proposed possible elements described in the Appendix to these Conclusions [see Annex V of the present report] and mandated the MCSD Steering Committee, with support from the Secretariat, to finalize it in consultation with the MCSD in view of submission to COP 22 in line with its mandate.**

**97. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD strongly encouraged the Secretariat and all MCSD Members to actively contribute to further enhancing MSSD/MCSD profile and visibility in the region and beyond with a particular focus on the key global and regional events related to sustainable development.**

#### **Agenda item 8: MCSD Membership**

98. The President of the MCSD gave the floor to the Secretariat for presenting the MCSD membership’s proposal for non-Contracting Parties Members (i.e. groups of stakeholders), based on written expressions of interest received by the Secretariat and appreciated by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (videoconference, 15-16 December 2020), as included in document UNEP/MED WG.493/3 and reproduced in Annex VI of the present report, for approval by the MCSD towards submission to the UNEP/MAP Focal Points and to COP 22.

99. The Secretariat also introduced a specific issue about the membership of the group of Parliamentarians, as described in document UNEP/MED WG.493/3. In line with the conclusions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee on that matter, with a view to enable the



functioning of the MCSD, the Secretariat proposed to the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD to proceed with the election of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE), following its written expression of interest, as a new MCSD Member under the group of Parliamentarians, and to consider the extension of the current membership of COMPSUD and PAM for a duration of two biennia, renewable for one additional term, based on Paragraph 9.II of the MCSD Composition (Decision IG.22/17).

100. In addition, the Secretariat proposed to review, as appropriate, the paragraph 9.II of the Composition of the MCSD – MCSD Constitutive Documents, as below in italic:

Three representatives from each of the six categories, shall be selected for a duration of two biennia by the meeting of the Contracting Parties. Their mandate is renewable for one additional term. *For the group of Parliamentarians, if no interest has been expressed to proceed with the renewal of the membership to the group, as per paragraph 6 [4], the MCSD and its Steering Committee may consider the possibility to extend the membership of the group for two biennia, renewable for one additional term, and recommend it to COP.*

#### Conclusions:

101. **The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD congratulated and thanked its outgoing Members after having completed three consecutive mandates, acknowledging with appreciation their contribution to the work of the Commission, namely: United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); ANIMA Investment Network; the *Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Economiques* (FEMISE – Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Institutes of Economic Sciences); the Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN); the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Med-SDSN); the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM); the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM).**

102. **The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed the proposal of the MCSD Membership, including for the group of parliamentarians, as contained in Document UNEP/MED WG.493/3, and recommended to the Secretariat to submit it for adoption by the Contracting Parties at COP 22.**

#### **Agenda item 9: Any Other Matters, Including Date and Venue of the Next Meeting of the MCSD**

103. The President of the MCSD invited the participants to consider other issues that may be raised. There was no other issue raised by the meeting participants.

#### Conclusion:

104. **The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD discussed the time and venue of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD, to be set for May or June 2023. The Secretariat will communicate exact venue and dates in due course.**

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 6 reads as below: *The Contracting Parties, MCSD members and the Secretariat (in consultation with UNEP/MAP Components, as appropriate) may nominate members of the Commission, other than those representing the Contracting Parties, based on written expressions of interest (...). (...) Each biennium, the Steering Committee of the Commission, with the assistance of the Secretariat, shall review the list of the MCSD members, particularly in the light of those members whose mandate may be drawing to a close, and decide on any changes required. The list of candidates shall be submitted for adoption by the next Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.*

### **Closure of the Meeting, including Conclusions and Recommendations**

105. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD agreed on the draft Conclusions and Recommendations, which are presented in their final form in the present report of meeting.

106. In her closing remarks, Ms. Kerstin Stendahl, Chief of the Ecosystem Integration Branch, UNEP Ecosystem Division, reminded that the MCSD represents a unique, inclusive regional mechanism in the panorama of the Regional Seas, noting that the Mediterranean Action Plan has played a pioneering role within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. She invited the meeting participants to seize the opportunities created in the framework of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, in the context of the last decade of action to achieve the SDGs by 2030, which would allow advocating for the One Health approach to build back better and prepare a Green Renaissance in the post-COVID era. She announced the nomination, from 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2021, of Ms. Tatjana Hema as UNEP/MAP Coordinator, who was warmly congratulated by meeting participants.

107. The President of the MCSD closed the meeting at 14:30 on Wednesday 9 June 2021.

#### **Conclusions:**

**108. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD paid tribute to the Government of Slovenia for having virtually hosted the meeting.**

**109. The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD requested the President of the MCSD and the Secretariat to inform the forthcoming Meeting of UNEP/MAP Focal Points and COP 22 about its conclusions and recommendations.**

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**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**

## Annex I: List of Participants

<p><b>MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD)</b> 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Videoconference, 7-9 June 2021</p> <p><b>COMMISSION MÉDITERRANÉENNE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (CMDD)</b> 19<sup>e</sup> Réunion, vidéoconférence, 7-9 juin 2021</p>	
<p><b>MCSD MEMBERS REPRESENTING CONTRACTING PARTIES</b> <b>MEMBRES DE LA CMDD REPRÉSENTANTS LES PARTIES CONTRACTANTES</b></p>	
<b>ALBANIA / ALBANIE</b>	<b>Ms. Klodiana Marika</b> Director Department of Development Programmes of Environment Ministry of Environment
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE</b>	<b>Mr. Tarik Kupusovic</b> Director HEIS Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo
<b>CROATIA / CROATIE</b>	<b>Ms. Branka Pivcevic Novak</b> Head of Department for Sustainable Development Ministry of Environment
<b>CYPRUS / CHYPRE</b>	<b>Ms. Georghia Solomonidou-Christofidou</b> Director of Planning, Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development Ministry of Environment
<b>EGYPT / ÉGYPTÉ</b>	<b>Ms. Samah Saleh</b> Head of Sustainable Development Unit Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency Ministry of Environment
<b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE</b>	<b>Ms. Isabelle Viallon</b> European Commission, DG MARE, Deputy Head of Unit, Sea-Basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security  <b>Ms. Eleni Hatziyanni</b> European Commission, DG MARE, Policy Officer, Sea-Basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>Ms. Anne-France Didier</b> Conseillère politiques territoriales Pilote ODD14-DGITM/DAM/Délégation à la Mer et au Littoral Ministère de la Transition Écologique et Solidaire
<b>GREECE / GRÈCE</b>	<b>Ms. Papaioannou Maria</b> Officer/National Expert Dept.of European and International Environmental Affairs Directorate of International and European Activities Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy
<b>ISRAEL / ISRAËL</b>	<b>Ms. Rotem Shamay</b> Head of Strategic Planning Unit Ministry of Environmental Protection

<b>ITALY / ITALIE</b>	<b>Ms. Valentina Mauriello</b> General Directorate for Sea and Coasts Ministry of Ecological Transition
<b>LEBANON / LIBAN</b>	<b>Ms. Sally Sassine</b> Environmental Specialist, Environmental Policy Dept. – Service of Planning & Programming Ministry of Environment
<b>MALTA / MALTE</b>	<b>Mr. Richard Blundell</b> Senior Officer International Affairs Environment and Resources Authority, Marsa
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>	<b>Ms. Ivana Stojanovic</b> Adviser, Department for Sustainable Development and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism
<b>MOROCCO / MAROC</b>	<b>Mr. Mohammed Maktit</b> Chef de la Division des Etudes et de la Planification Secrétariat d’Etat auprès du Ministre de l’Energie, des Mines et du Développement Durable, chargé du Développement Durable
<b>SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE</b>	<b>H.E. mag. Andrej Vizjak</b> Minister, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning  <b>Mr. Mitja Bricelj</b> Environment Directorate Water Department Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning  <b>Ms. Nataša Bratina</b> EU Coordination and International Affairs Service Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning  <b>Mr. Iztok Skerlic</b> Public Institute for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Development Projects of the Municipality of Izola, EUSAIR Facility Point Slovene Project Partner
<b>SPAIN / ESPAGNE</b>	<b>Mr. Alberto Campos</b> International Affairs Ministry for Ecological Transition
<b>TUNISIA / TUNISIE</b>	<b>Mr. Lotfi Ben Said</b> Director General, Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment
<b>TURKEY / TURQUIE</b>	<b>Ms. Bahar Özögüt</b> Environmental Expert Ministry of the Environment

<b>MCSD MEMBERS – THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES GROUP MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – LE GROUPE DES AUTORITES LOCALES</b>	
<b>AVITEM : AGENCE DES VILLES ET TERRITOIRES MEDITERRANEENS DURABLES (AGENCY OF SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND TERRITORIES)</b>	<b>Mr. Pierre Massis</b> Avitem
<b>FAIC: FORUM OF ADRIATIC AND IONIAN CITIES (FORUM DES VILLES ADRIATIQUES ET IONIENNES)</b>	<b>Mr. Davide Frulla</b> Municipality of Fano Vice Presidency of FAIC
<b>UCLG / CGLU : UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS / CITES ET GOUVERNEMENTS LOCAUX UNIS</b>	<b>Mr. Jean-Baptiste Buffet</b>
<b>MCSD MEMBERS – THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS GROUP MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – LE GROUPE DES PARTIES PRENANTES SOCIO-ÉCONOMIQUES</b>	
<b>ANIMA INVESTMENT NETWORK (COOPERATION PLATFORM FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN / PLATEFORME DE COOPÉRATION POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE EN MÉDITERRANÉE)</b>	<b>Ms. Philomena Meli</b> Malta Enterprise Vice-présidente  <b>Mr. Aurélien Baudoin</b> Director, Network and Development
<b>ESCG: THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF GREECE / LE CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL DE LA GRÈCE</b>	<b>Mr. Apostolos Xyrafis</b> Secretary General
<b>MCSD MEMBERS – THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS GROUP MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – LE GROUPE DES ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES</b>	
<b>ECO UNION</b>	<b>Ms. Laia Segura Cueto</b>
<b>ESDF: EGYPTIAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM (FORUM EGYPTIEN SUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE )</b>	<b>Mr. Emad Adly</b> Chairperson of the Board
<b>MedPAN: MEDITERRANEAN PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK / RESEAU DES GESTIONNAIRES D'AIRES MARINES PROTEGEES EN MEDITERRANEE</b>	<b>Ms. Marie Romani</b> Executive Secretary / Secrétaire Exécutif

<b>MCS D MEMBERS – THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – LE GROUPE DE LA COMMUNAUTE SCIENTIFIQUE</b>	
<b>MED-SDSN: MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK / RESEAU MEDITERRANEEN DE SOLUTIONS DE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE</b>	<b>Mr. Simone Cresti</b> Manager of SDSN Med University of Siena
<b>MEPIELAN: MEDITERRANEAN PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND NEGOTIATION (PROGRAMME MEDITERRANEEN POUR LE DROIT INTERNATIONAL DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET LA NEGOCIATION)</b>	<b>Mr. Evangelos Raftopoulos</b> Director, Professor of International Law Panteion University of Athens, Greece
<b>MCS D MEMBERS – THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS GROUP MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – LE GROUPE DES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES</b>	
<b>AFED: THE ARAB FORUM FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (LE FORUM ARABE POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT)</b>	<b>Mr. Najib Saab</b> Secretary General
<b>GWP-MED: THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP – MEDITERRANEAN / LE PARTENARIAT MONDIAL POUR L'EAU – MÉDITERRANÉE</b>	<b>Prof. Michael J. Scoullos</b> Chairman  <b>Mr. Vangelis Constantianos</b> Executive Secretary & Regional Coordinator
<b>UFM / UPM: SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN / SECRETARIAT DE L'UNION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE</b>	<b>Ms. Alessandra Sensi</b> Head of Sector – Environment and Blue Economy Water Environment Blue Economy Division
<b>MCS D MEMBERS – PARLIAMENTARIANS MEMBRES DE LA CMDD – PARLEMENTAIRES</b>	
<b>COMPSUD: CIRCLE OF MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT / CERCLE DES PARLEMENTAIRES MÉDITERRANÉENS SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE</b>	<b>Mr. Mohamad Rejdali</b> Président Président de la Commune de Témara
<b>PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (PAM) / ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (APM)</b>	<b>H.E. Ambassador Sergio Piazzi</b> Secretary General of the PAM <b>Mr. Alain Perea</b> Member of the French Parliament Rapporteur on the Environment of the PAM <b>Ms. Irene Pasqua</b> Program Officer

<b>OBSERVERS, INCLUDING FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MCS OBSERVATEURS, Y COMPRIS LES ANCIENS MEMBRES DE LA CMDD</b>	
<b>UN-ECE / CEE-ONU: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE / COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'EUROPE</b>	<b>Mr. Michael J. Kunz</b> Economic Affairs Officer Office of the Executive Secretary Sustainable Development and Gender Unit United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UN ESCWA / CESA-ONU: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA / COMMISSION ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ASIE OCCIDENTALE</b>	<b>Ms. Lara Geadah</b> Associate Coordination Officer, Sustainable Development Policies Division  <b>Mr. Rami Sabella</b>
<b>EEA / AEE: EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY / AGENCE EUROPEENNE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT</b>	<b>Mr. Ronan Uhel</b> Adviser to Executive Director  <b>Ms. Cécile Roddier-Quefelec</b>
<b>IUCN-MED / UICN-MED: CENTRE FOR MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE / CENTRE POUR LA COOPERATION MEDITERRANEENNE DE L'UNION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE</b>	<b>Mr. Maher Mahjoub</b> Regional Programme Coordinator
<b>MED CITIES / MED CITES</b>	<b>Mr. Josep Canals Molina</b> Secretary General  <b>Mr. Oriol Barba</b> Executive Director
<b>MIO-ECSDE: MEDITERRANEAN INFORMATION OFFICE FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (BUREAU D'INFORMATION DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT, LA CULTURE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE)</b>	<b>Ms. Anastasia Roniotes</b> Head Officer
<b>WWF Med: WORLD WILD FUND FOR NATURE – MEDITERRANEAN MARINE INITIATIVE / FONDS MONDIAL POUR LA NATURE – INITIATIVE MARINE MÉDITERRANÉENNE</b>	<b>Mr. Mauro Randone</b> Regional Projects Manager  <b>Ms. Camille Loth</b>



<b>INVITED SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS INVITES</b>	
<b>IDDDRI: Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales (Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations)</b>	<b>Mr. Julien Rochette</b> Ocean programme Director
<b>MedECC: Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (Experts méditerranéens sur le changement climatique et environnemental)</b>	<b>Mr. Wolfgang Cramer</b> Coordinator  <b>Ms. Kasia Marini</b> Science Officer
<b>UNEP/MAP REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES CENTRES D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONAUX DU PNUE/PAM</b>	
<b>INFO/RAC – CAR/INFO</b>	<b>Ms. Lorenza Babini</b> Director
<b>PAP/RAC – CAR/PAP</b>	<b>Ms. Zeljka Skaricic</b> Director
<b>Plan Bleu/RAC – CAR/Plan Bleu</b>	<b>Mr. Francois Guerquin</b> Director  <b>Ms. Lina Tode</b> Deputy Director  <b>Mr. Antoine Lafitte</b> Observatory of the Environment and Development
<b>SCP/RAC – CAR/CPD</b>	<b>Ms. Magali Outters</b> Team Leader Policy Area  <b>Ms. Ananda Alonso Nacher</b> Policy Area Project Manager,
<b>SPA/RAC – CAR/ASP</b>	<b>Mr. Khalil ATTIA</b> Director
<b>UNEP/MAP COORDINATING UNIT – BARCELONA CONVENTION SECRETARIAT UNITÉ DE COORDINATION DU PNUE/PAM – Secrétariat de la Convention de BARCELONE</b>	
<p><b>Ms. Tatjana Hema</b> Acting Coordinator</p> <p><b>Mr. Julien Le Tellier</b> Programme Management Officer – Socio-Economic Affairs</p> <p><b>Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis</b> Programme Management Officer – Governance</p> <p><b>Mr. Jihed Ghannem</b> Public Information Officer</p> <p>Consultants: <b>Mr. Jeremie Fosse</b> and <b>Mr. Manuel Clar-Massanet</b></p>	

**Annex II**  
**Welcome Addresses and Statements**

## **Welcome Address (recorded video message) – H.E. Andrej Vizjak, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia**

Dear participants,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development on the Slovenian coast in Izola. I am convinced that in cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), representatives of our ministry, the local community of Izola and you, the participants of this important meeting, will do our best to formulate and adopt clear proposals for the transition to a Sustainable Blue Economy. Moreover, this should be visible in the Mediterranean Action Plan Medium Term Strategy 2022-2027 and the Work Program 2022-2023, which will be discussed at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Turkey in December this year.

Slovenia will do everything to strengthen the partnership with you to achieve our common goals in the sea we share. It is right now, in the post-pandemic period, that we need new, fair and active cross-border cooperation to transition to a Sustainable blue economy for the green “renaissance” of the Mediterranean. I would like to recall some of our achievements, which are the basis for changing the trends that are causing the degradation of the environment, human health and the quality of life on the shores of the common sea. These achievements include the adoption and implementation of:

- Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, adopted at COP 14 in Slovenia 2005, which is the first Sustainable Development Strategy for a regional sea at the global level;
- Protocol for Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Slovenia ratified it first on the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2009. Due to this action, 25 September is international Mediterranean Coast Day;
- the Ecosystem Approach in coastal and marine management in the Adriatic and Ionian ecoregions with the proposal of the Pilot Project in the Mediterranean Action Plan and The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region to strengthen regional and subregional synergies.

Slovenia in cooperation with local communities on the coastal area managed to prepare a modern Maritime Spatial Plan which combines comprehensive coastal management with spatial planning at sea. This plan includes consideration of green infrastructure and consists of blue and green corridors, which enable ecological connectivity. It is the basis for achieving good ecological status when planning blue sustainable development. The Blue Economy takes blue and green infrastructures into account due to the economic importance of coastal and marine ecosystem services as they enable water, food and climate security of people along the common sea.

I can proudly say that the most advanced wastewater treatment plant in the Adriatic and Ionian river basins is already operating in Slovenia in Nova Gorica. It also removes microplastics and the quality of treatment reaches the bathing water standard. This is upgraded with an EU Intereg project Slovenia and Italy named “Grevislin” on the importance of green infrastructure in the international river basin, coast and sea. It is these projects that have encouraged a new form of bottom-up cooperation at local and cross-border level.

At the 6<sup>th</sup> EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region Forum in Portorož in May 2021, we also presented our achievements in cross-border integration in the Danube region in the case of establishing a blue-green corridor between the Alps and the Black Sea including river Mura, Drava and Danube, as well as good practices in the Sava River Basin.

We especially emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the young generation and the Parliament of the Sava River Basin Youth, which has been operating regularly within the International Sava Commission for 12 years. The International Teachers' Conference Landscape and Sustainable Development in April 2021 in Slovenia emphasized the importance of education for sustainable development at all levels and therefore recommended the establishment of the Adriatic Youth and Ionian Youth Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are proud of these achievements, which strengthen cross-border cooperation among the Alps, the Danube region and the Mediterranean, and we will present them appropriately during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council. We will be happy to report on the conclusions of **the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development in Slovenia** within the framework of the EU meeting of water and maritime directors in June 2021 under the item Regional Cooperation among Barcelona, Bucharest, Helcom and Ospar Conventions.

I believe that these conclusions will be innovative, concrete and feasible and will become a guide and inspiration for other regional processes as well.

I wish you successful work and welcome to the Slovenian coast, hopefully in person as soon as the conditions will allow us.

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## **Opening Statement – Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro), President of the MCSD (June 2019 – June 2021)**

Dear Ms. Hema,

Dear Minister Vizjak, Dear Mr. Bricelj

Dear Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development,

Dear partners and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is my great pleasure to greet you and welcome you to the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development as the President of MCSD for the past two years. Montenegro has been honoured with the opportunity to participate and lead the work of the MCSD and contribute to the functioning of this important regional body, in close cooperation with the Mediterranean Action Plan.
- I would like to recall that back in 2002, at the Second Summit on Sustainable Development, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development was recognised as a body relevant to supporting the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. During that period, cooperation between Montenegro and the MCSD resulted in the creation and adoption of the first National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2007-2012, establishing a strategic framework for supporting sustainable national development in accordance with the constitutional commitment to develop Montenegro as an ecological state.
- By adopting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, almost 6 years ago, political leaders committed themselves to make efforts to build a world of universal respect for ecological sustainability, human rights, rule of law, justice and equality, without any form of discrimination. Building on these achievements, the most significant step towards the sustainability of Montenegrin society was made by the adoption of a new 2030 National Sustainable Development Strategy, which aims to build a society based on continuous, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, natural resources protection, improving the state of human resources, strengthening social inclusion, and supporting these values, norms and patterns of behaviour. This National strategy integrates MAP policies, especially the MSSD.
- In the past two years, the MCSD has worked towards establishing mechanisms that should put our Mediterranean context of action into service of overall efforts in achieving the objectives and tasks defined by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. During the Montenegrin presidency of the MCSD, we strived to provide an adequate contribution to the achievement of this ambition.
- Monitoring measurable effects towards achieving sustainable development goals is demanding, as it implies a reorganisation of the existing system of expert methodological and statistical monitoring of the state-of-play, processes and outcome indicators in all segments of society's development. Although Montenegro has made significant progress in this respect, a complicated process of introducing sustainable development indicators in line with the National Strategy's Action Plan is ahead of us, in order to be able to round out the reporting system in accordance with the requirements of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, work of the MCSD in 2020-2021 was focused on the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and integration of SCP Indicators within the Regional Observatory on the Environment and Development.

- The use of various information platforms, as well as their testing and application should be coordinated, in order to facilitate the generation of data from national and regional levels aimed at reaching measurable effects towards achieving sustainable goals. Unfortunately, at COP21 in December 2019 no budget was allocated to support the implementation of mechanisms for analysing the compatibility of national strategies and the institutional framework for sustainable development with the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) of National Strategies for Sustainable Development. SIMPEER is an integral part of the MCSD Reform adopted by COP 19, which also adopted the MSSD in 2016. Stemming from the experience of Montenegro gained in this process during 2016 and 2017, I would like to highlight the need for stronger connections of SIMPEER with reporting mechanisms within the scope of preparation of global reports on the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, including sustainable development indicators. Therefore, I would like to recommend for this exercise to be introduced again in the next biennium in order to allow for the remaining Contracting parties to participate and benefit from it, as well as for MCSD to play a role in the process.
- In the previous two years, the focus has been also on the very important processes of mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan, which draft results and recommendations will be presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> MCSD Meeting, for consideration and comments by the MCSD in view of their finalization and submission to UNEP/MAP Focal Points and to COP 22, with proposals on the way forward for the next period of implementation.
- In the 2020-2021 biennium, MCSD has also paid attention to the preparation and consultations process for the assessment studies. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of the SoED report, which is the most comprehensive Mediterranean assessment of its kind in a decade and which was released in October 2020. Its key recommendations and results will be presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD, with focus on actions for decision-makers. In addition, in 2020-2021, a lot of work has been done in the framework of the MED 2050 Foresight Study, and we will hear in the following days on the next steps and perspectives towards the inclusion of the MCSD in this participatory exercise.
- This biennium has also been productive in terms of the work done under MedECC (Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change) and I would like to encourage you to engage in the discussion and formulate conclusions on MedECC's perspectives, including in view of a long-term support to this successful regional initiative, as a recognized science-policy interface within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and for further collaboration with the MCSD on climate and environmental matters. It is expected for of the MAR1 Summary for Policy-Makers to be submitted for consideration and possible endorsement by the MAP Focal Points and by COP 22.
- In terms of implementation of the priority measures from the Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, I consider especially important the development of optimal practical models for the application of integrated coastal zones management principles, in synergy with the application of an ecosystem approach in the planning of intended use of marine areas. In this context, we expect that the MCSD will continue contributing to the integration of priorities into the Mediterranean Action Plan's programme of activities and the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy.
- In addition, fully aligned with the MSSD approach on stakeholders' engagement, I would like also to pay tribute to key partners for the work done on MSSD Flagship Initiatives, giving concrete form to practical approaches to the implementation of priority actions and sustainable development measures. I also believe that in the period ahead, we need to strengthen that part of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, while encouraging science-policy interface as an asset for the implementation of a sustainable development policy, and evidence-based decision making. We suggest that this approach be strengthened by ensuring that all groups of members of the MCSD

play an active role in this process, while promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among numerous entities, which is one of the basic tasks of Mediterranean Commission's work.

- Without forgetting the contribution of the MCSD to building an institutional framework for sustainable development both in Montenegro and throughout the Mediterranean, we are aware of the importance of its role in the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional and national level. Additionally, uniqueness of this regional body based on the commitment to the sustainable development of coastal areas of the Mediterranean in accordance with the Barcelona Convention and the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean provides a unique institutional and programme context for the implementation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), as well as SDGs 6, 11, 12, 13 and 15. Such uniqueness opens up new opportunities for Mediterranean countries to implement, within the frameworks of their national sustainable development policies, integrated coastal zone management instruments to limit the rising pressures on natural resources of the sea and coastal areas, while maintaining the trend of positive economic effects.

- Last but not least, it is necessary to say a few words about efforts invested in the moving forward towards a strategic response to the COVID-19. Numerous reports have shown that environmental dimension play a critical role in both understanding the origins of the COVID-19 crisis and successfully rebuilding a post-pandemic world, addressing the inadequacy of the global response to environmental degradation challenges. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals represent our best existing global road map for the future. In the current situation of Covid-19 pandemic and the post-Covid recovery, it is necessary to strengthen even more our endeavors towards a sustainable and smart growth in line with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its goals. Now it is the right moment to maximize our efforts in transforming the world into a resource-efficient and competitive economy where economic growth is decoupled from resource use, "by turning environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all" (EU Green Deal). To foster discussions on a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future through a sustainable blue economy for a post-COVID recovery in the Mediterranean tomorrow will be organized a Roundtable with experts from important regional organizations on Achievement of the SDGs and Transition towards a Sustainable Blue Economy for a Post-COVID Green Renaissance in the Mediterranean.

- Prior to conclude, I would like to warmly thank the members of the MCSD Steering Committee with whom Montenegro worked in 2020-2021 for a fruitful cooperation: Italy, MEPIELAN, Morocco, Turkey, UCLG, and UfM. It has been a pleasure for myself personally to be part of the team and a big thank you goes also to the Secretariat and I must specifically mention Julien, for their great support and guidance in the last 2 years.

- Wishing a good luck to my Colleague and Friends from Slovenia, I expect a great 19<sup>th</sup> MCSD meeting and a very successful and productive biennium ahead of us.

- Thank you.

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## **Welcome Statement – Ms. Tatjana Hema, Acting Coordinator, UNEP/MAP**

Ms. Ivana Stojanovic, President of the MCSD,

Mr. Mitja Bricelj, National Focal Point for Slovenia, Representative of the host country,

MCSD Members and Observers,

Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, I wish to thank you for being with us this week.

I express my gratitude to the Government of Slovenia for virtually hosting this 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD).

This year coincides with the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Barcelona Convention and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MCSD. And 16 years ago, in 2005, the initial version of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2005-2015 was adopted in Portoroz, Slovenia, by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on the occasion of their 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting (COP 14).

This MCSD Meeting hosted by Slovenia is taking place just a few weeks before the country ensures the EU Presidency in the second half of 2021. For us, this represents a unique opportunity to amplify our calls for a green renaissance in the Mediterranean, considering the new EU Mediterranean Agenda and the European Green Deal. In practical terms, this would include the deployment of a sustainable blue economy and the pursuit of investment paths that decouple development from pollution towards the achievement of the SDGs in our region.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the substantive contribution and commitment Slovenia is playing in the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, as well as an active role at the sub-regional level through its important efforts in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Through this role, Slovenia is advancing key instruments under the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, including Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

Mesdames et Messieurs,

La Convention de Barcelone pour la protection du milieu marin et du littoral de la Méditerranée (Convention de Barcelone) est un traité international de l'ONU. Cet Accord multilatéral régional pour l'environnement réunit, depuis 45 ans, les 21 pays riverains de la Méditerranée et l'Union européenne, en tant que Parties contractantes, ainsi qu'un grand nombre de partenaires, dont certains sont présents aujourd'hui en tant que Membres et Observateurs de la CMDD.

Les pays méditerranéens ont construit l'un des cadres normatifs les plus avancés au sein du Programme des mers régionales du PNUE et la SMDD correspond à un document prospectif orienté vers l'action et aligné sur le Programme universel 2030, les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) et l'Accord de Paris sur le Changement climatique.

Notre mandat principal se concentre sur la protection du milieu marin et des zones côtières, mais la Convention de Barcelone englobe aussi les dimensions sociales et économiques du développement durable.



La gestion durable de la mer Méditerranée et du littoral a toujours été notre priorité fondamentale pour découpler le développement socio-économique de la dégradation de l'environnement, limitant ainsi les pressions exercées sur notre environnement commun.

Chers Collègues,

Cette 19<sup>e</sup> Réunion de la CMDD se déroule dans une période très difficile, au cours d'une pandémie qui a surgit au milieu d'une triple crise environnementale planétaire sans précédent de pollution, de perte de biodiversité et de changement climatique, une crise qui a des impacts aigus sur la Méditerranée.

Le Rapport sur l'état de l'environnement et du développement en Méditerranée (RED), préparé par notre Centre d'activités régionales Plan Bleu, et le premier rapport d'évaluation de la Méditerranée (MAR1) des Experts méditerranéens sur le changement climatique et environnemental (MedECC) mettent en garde quant au lourd tribut que la crise environnementale fait peser sur la région méditerranéenne.

Les inégalités croissantes, la perte de biodiversité, l'impact du changement climatique et la pression incessante exercée sur les écosystèmes par les secteurs économiques peuvent entraîner des dommages environnementaux irréversibles.

La région n'est pas sur la bonne voie pour atteindre les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD), confirmant l'urgence d'une renaissance verte dans l'ère post-COVID : à moins que des mesures urgentes et ambitieuses ne soient prises pour infléchir les tendances actuelles, la dégradation de l'environnement pourrait avoir de graves conséquences sur la santé humaine et les moyens de subsistance.

Malgré ce contexte plutôt sombre, notre région a des raisons d'espérer. Tous les ingrédients d'une renaissance verte sont en place : une base scientifique solide avec des institutions de recherche de premier plan et des niveaux d'éducation élevés, une technologie verte en évolution rapide et des flux financiers abondants pour la reprise. En outre, l'opinion publique est de plus en plus consciente du besoin de transformation, notamment par des changements radicaux dans les modes de production et de consommation.

Bien sûr, il existe des différences dans les contextes et les capacités nationales. Dans plusieurs pays, les économies étaient en difficulté avant même que la pandémie ne frappe. Mobiliser des fonds pour une relance verte est donc particulièrement ardu et en même temps nécessaire. D'où l'importance de la notion de solidarité régionale inscrite dans le système PAM-Convention de Barcelone.

En février 2021, la Commission européenne a annoncé un nouvel « Agenda pour la Méditerranée », qui comprend un plan économique et d'investissement dédié pour stimuler la reprise socio-économique à long terme dans « l'intérêt mutuel de l'UE et de ses voisins du Sud ». C'est une évolution particulièrement bienvenue dans notre région. Ce nouvel Agenda prévoit que « Les efforts se poursuivront pour renforcer la coopération régionale, avec l'Union pour la Méditerranée (UpM) en tant que point focal, et soutenir la coopération sous-régionale et interrégionale, notamment avec les partenaires africains ».

Transformer les paroles en actes sera crucial et les forums politiques, tels que ceux proposés par nos partenaires de l'Union pour la Méditerranée et d'autres membres de la CMDD, pourraient faciliter une plus grande intégration des instruments juridiques et des outils de mise en œuvre offerts par le système PNUE/PAM – Convention de Barcelone.

Dear Colleagues,

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD held in Budva, Montenegro, in June 2019, important progress has been made within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the MCSD under the presidency of Montenegro.

Through the Naples Ministerial Declaration adopted at COP 21 in December 2019, the Contracting Parties committed to take concrete action to enhance the level of safeguard of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal region, as a place of peace, dialogue and solidarity, as a bridge between civilizations and as a model for environmental protection in the context of sustainable development and multilateral cooperation. They considered that the resources of the Mediterranean should trigger economic prosperity and contribute to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities for the sectors of the maritime economy, in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern, supported by the implementation of the MSSD.

We must seize a unique chance to put the Mediterranean region and countries on sustainable trajectories that prioritize economic opportunity, poverty reduction and planetary health at once. This is not only crucial, but also within the region's reach.

Our meeting will deepen our reflection on activating a green renaissance in the Mediterranean, including through a circular economy and more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

In December 2021, UNEP/MAP will submit a raft of pollution prevention/reduction/phase out, pro-sustainability regional plans and decisions for adoption by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) to be held in Antalya, Turkey.

COP 22 will also adopt the UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027, echoing the priorities set by UNEP while considering the specificities of the Mediterranean.

COP 22 will serve as a regional forum to take stock of this year's major conferences, including UNEA-5, Climate and Biodiversity COPs, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and the High-level Political Forum in the context of the decade of action for the SDGs and to discuss pathways to "flick the green switch" for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future in the Mediterranean.

As an important milestone on the way to COP 22 and as the most inclusive body of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, the contribution of the MCSD will be essential to a successful meeting of the Contracting Parties in December that addresses the burning issues and paves the way for the green renaissance we wish to see in our region.

Dear Colleagues,

A few weeks ago, the UNEP/MAP family also has lost Dr. Charalambos Hajipakkos, a great friend, MCSD Member from Cyprus. I would like pay tribute to his commitment and contribution to the work of the MCSD.

He loved the Mediterranean and he demonstrated it consistently through his life and work, which had been punctuated by wisdom and kindness.

He contributed to pushing forward the ambitious agenda for the protection of the Mediterranean environment and its sustainable development.

My deepest condolences go to his family and colleagues. He shall be remembered with the fondest of memories.

I cannot possibly conclude my statement without applauding what our former Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, who has recently retired after a long career with the United Nations, including eight years at the helm of UNEP/MAP in Athens, has accomplished.

Gaetano brought a lot to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and left us a strong legacy. He deftly delivered three successful COPs where important and forward-looking and stronger commitments were taken by the Contracting Parties: COP 19 in Athens in 2016, COP 20 in Tirana in 2017, and COP 21 in his home city, Naples, Italy in 2019. His leadership, special contribution to the strengthening of MAP-Barcelona Convention system, considering strongly the development issues strictly related with environmental sustainability, reaching out to solid partnerships and enhancing the impact of our work in the region will continue inspiring us in the future.

We are committed, now more than ever, to fulfil this vision that guides us towards peace, prosperity, and healthy ecosystems in our Mediterranean region.

I count on this MCSD Meeting to be a meeting of delivery, and I invite you all of MSCD Members to continue to be more than ever an active part of the Mediterranean's and MAP-Barcelona Convention system's response to sustainable development challenges, for implementing our common agenda in the region.

Best wishes for a fruitful and successful meeting.

Thank you.

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**Annex III**  
**Agenda of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD**

### **Annex III: Agenda of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD**

**Agenda item 1      Opening of the Meeting**

**Agenda item 2      Organizational Matters**

- a) Election of the Steering Committee
- b) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
- c) Organization of Work

**Agenda item 3      Report by the Coordinator on Sustainable Development Activities for the period June 2019 – May 2021**

**Agenda item 4      Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)**

- a) Promoting the MSSD in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Peer Learning from Voluntary National Reviews
- b) MSSD Flagship Initiatives
- c) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard
- d) Mid-Term Evaluations of the MSSD and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

**Agenda item 5      Recent and Future Assessment and Foresight Studies**

- a) State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED)
- b) First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR 1) of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)
- c) Roadmap on MED 2050 Foresight Study: State of Play and Next Steps

**Agenda item 6      Roundtable: Achievement of the SDGs and Transition towards a Sustainable Blue Economy for a Post-COVID Green Renaissance in the Mediterranean**

**Agenda item 7      Integrating Sustainability Considerations into the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention System: draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, draft Programme of Work 2022-2023, Inputs for COP 22 Ministerial Declaration**

**Agenda item 8      MCSD Membership**

**Agenda item 9      Any Other Matters, Including Date and Venue of the Next Meeting of the MCSD**

**Agenda item 10     Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Annex IV**

**Agenda item 6 – Roundtable: Achievement of the SDGs and Transition towards a Sustainable Blue  
Economy for a Post-COVID Green Renaissance in the Mediterranean**

**Concept Note**

## **Annex IV: Agenda item 6 – Roundtable: Achievement of the SDGs and Transition towards a Sustainable Blue Economy for a Post-COVID Green Renaissance in the Mediterranean. Concept Note**

1. The report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean ([SoED](#)) and the First Mediterranean Assessment Report ([MARI](#)) of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) warn of the hefty toll that the global triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution is taking on the Mediterranean region.
2. Rising inequality, biodiversity loss, growing impact of climate change and unrelenting pressure on ecosystems from economic sectors can lead to irreversible environmental damage. The region is not on track to achieve the SDGs, confirming the urgency of a green renaissance in the post-COVID era: unless urgent and resolute action is taken to halt current trends, environmental degradation could have serious consequences for human health and livelihoods.
3. Those ‘twin reports’ during a global pandemic of zoonotic origin provide a “wake-up call” in favor of the One Health approach to bolster the region’s resilience, a renewed call for “Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development” (MSSD subtitle) – echoing the scope of 2021 major global conferences, i.e. UNEA-5, Climate and Biodiversity COPs, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and the High-level Political Forum for “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”.
4. In June 2020, the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat published its [Strategic Response to the COVID-19: a blueprint for action](#). The document identified two complementary priorities: ensuring that the COVID-induced disruptions do not result in a lax approach to environmental regulations; and, advocating for practical ways in which Mediterranean countries can recover in a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient fashion.
5. UNEP/MAP has undertaken advocacy for a green renaissance, based on the arguments for “building back greener” laid out in the above-mentioned Strategic Response document. At the heart of this endeavor lies the importance of compliance and enforcement. The full implementation of obligations by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, supported by all stakeholders and partners, constitutes a crucial building block for a sustainable future which leaves no one behind.
6. The MSSD, which encompasses the SDGs and contextualizes them in the Mediterranean context, provides a blueprint for a green action towards a better a world where basic needs, healthy food, adequate housing, access to education, health, culture, are guaranteed to all, a world where solidarity open the path to further possibilities and perspectives.
7. In a nutshell, the road to a green renaissance in the Mediterranean starts with a new impetus for compliance and enforcement of the legal framework and the full implementation of the MSSD. The unprecedented mobilization of resources (stimulus packages) and policymakers’ attention devoted to recovery from COVID-19 present opportunities to accelerate enforcement, compliance and implementation at a hitherto unprecedented pace and scale in the region.
8. Recent developments have set the stage for a pro-sustainability push in the context of recovery from COVID-19: 1) In line with the EU Green Deal, the EU’s long-term budget, coupled with NextGenerationEU, the temporary instrument designed to boost the recovery, represent the largest stimulus package ever financed in Europe; and, 2) A new ‘Agenda for the Mediterranean’ announced

by the European Commission, including a dedicated Economic and Investment Plan to spur the long-term socio-economic recovery in the Southern Neighbourhood, in line with the principle of regional solidarity enshrined in the Barcelona Convention.

9. To foster discussions on a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future through a sustainable blue economy for a post-COVID green renaissance in the Mediterranean, a roundtable is envisaged with the following speakers:

- **Introduction by the moderator: Parliamentary diplomacy in support of regional multilateralism and solidarity for the environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean region:** Ambassador Sergio Piazzi, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM).
- **From regional marine governance in times of crisis to strategic outlook:** Mr. Julien Rochette, Ocean Programme Director, Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI).
- **Practical aspects and implementation of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean in the context of the EU Green Deal:** Ms. Isabelle Viallon, European Commission, DG MARE, Deputy Head of Unit, Sea-Basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security.
- **Green Recovery plans in the Arab world:** Mr. Najib Saab, Secretary General of the Arab Forum for the Environment and development (AFED).
- **The SDGs in the Mediterranean:** Mr. Simone Cresti, Manager of SDSN Med.
- **Regional measures to support green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean:** Ms. Magali Outters, SCP/RAC.
- **From global and regional commitments to national initiatives and policies on Sustainable Blue Economy – the Italian approach:** Ms. Valentina Mauriello, Ministry for Ecological Transition, Italy.
- **Promotion of Green Entrepreneurship at the local level in the framework of EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR):** Mr. Iztok Škerlič, Public Institute for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Development Projects of the Municipality of Izola, EUSAIR Facility Point Slovene Project Partner.

10. The outcome of this panel discussions and respective reactions from the MCSD Members may represent the first elements that the MCSD may consider in view of feeding the relevant discussions at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 22) (Antalya, Turkey, December 2021) and in the preparation of its Declaration.

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**Annex V**

**Possible elements for MCSD consideration to COP 22 attention  
(draft as discussed at the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD)**

## **Annex V: Possible elements for MCSDD consideration to COP 22 attention (draft as discussed at the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSDD)**

- The increasing impacts of the maritime sector have become a serious reality to face. **Effective measures to strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of Mediterranean coastal infrastructure and ports, with the view to foster the decarbonization and the reduction of greenhouse gas and pollutants represent a key response to the threats posed by the maritime economy.**
- With the maritime economy projected to double in size by 2030, the financial community, in particular private financing, has a key role to play to pivot the global economic system towards rebuilding sustainable ocean and sea prosperity and regenerating the health of the ocean and seas. **It is therefore essential to enhance the engagement of the financial sector, as well as to increase public private partnerships to mobilize and unlock innovative sustainable blue finance.**
- The COVID-19 crisis provides a unique opportunity for strengthening the support to SCP and sustainable businesses in the Mediterranean. **There is an urgent need to adapt human activities to the carrying capacity of the Mediterranean ecosystem. redesigning our resource intensive and linear economy. The implementation of a regional framework to support the development of green and circular businesses and strengthen the demand for sustainable products in the Mediterranean comes at a timely moment, as an opportunity to catalyze action and partnerships.**
- **The 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSDD highlighted the strategic importance of close cooperation at national and regional levels among governments, parliamentarians, local authorities, business communities, civil society organizations, scientific experts, and financial institutions to ensure the implementation of the measures required to address environmental and climate change challenges, including the most effective use of the resources allocated through post-COVID green recovery plans.**
- **Integrate the recommendations from the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan in an short operational policy document** to be coordinated by the Secretariat with inputs from MCSDD Members and Observers, validated by the MCSDD Steering Committee, and submitted to COP 22;
- **Call for accelerating the MSSD implementation**, promoting cross-sectoral approaches, including by channeling resources mobilized for the recovery from COVID-19 to achieve the required **change recommended by SoED (synergies should be sought between (a) securing compliance with and enforcement of existing obligations and (b) transforming socio-economic systems for a post-COVID green renaissance)**. Ensure adequate interfacing between the entire endeavor led by UNEP/MAP, including the MSSD, and existing systems in place in Mediterranean countries for the pursuit of 2030 Agenda/SDGs;
- **Explore mechanisms to increase the visibility/attractiveness of the MSSD** (communication component): **the private sectors and citizens must become directly involved in the MSSD implementation, through communication campaigns and ad-hoc events;**
- **Further identify and enhance** funding opportunities and potential donors: the MSSD should be better funded, visible and attractive for all stakeholders;
- **Further promote experience sharing**, including through an online platform/repository (website gathering relevant initiatives) and scale up MSSD Flagship Initiatives;
- **Enhance monitoring mechanisms** (scope, update, accessibility): Review the level of update of indicators according to current needs and capacities for the Mediterranean sustainability agenda, including the MSSD, 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

### **Major forthcoming global events – to be completed** (e.g. UfM agenda/Ministerial, Pre-COP in Milan, Italy):

- HLPF 2021, NY, 6-15 July 2021 – Theme: “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”
- IUCN WCC, Marseille, France, 3-11 September 2021
- CBD COP 15, Kunming, China, 11-24 October 2021
- UNFCCC COP 26, Glasgow, UK, 1-12 November 2021

**Annex VI:**  
**Composition of the MCSD for June 2021 – June 2023, non-Contracting Party Members,**  
**as approved by the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD**

## **Annex VI: Composition of the MCSD for June 2021 – June 2023, non-Contracting Party Members, as approved by the 19th Meeting of the MCSD**

New MCSD Members are indicated in bold below:

- The Local Authorities Group: the *Agence des Villes et Territoires méditerranéens durables* (AVITEM – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian cities (FAIC – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), and the **Mediterranean Cities Network (Med Cities)**
  - The Socio-Economic Stakeholders Group: the Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), and the Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESCG – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), and the ***Fondation Mohammed VI pour la protection de l'environnement***
  - The Non-Governmental Organizations Group: ECO UNION (2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), the Egyptian Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), and the Network of Marine Protected Areas managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate)
  - The Scientific Community Group: the **Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)**, the ***Centre International de Droit Comparé de l'Environnement (CIDCE)***, and **Dr. Fatima Driouech (Vice-Chair of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I, University Polytechnic Mohammed VI, Morocco)**
  - The Intergovernmental Organizations Group: the Arab Forum for the Environment and Development (AFED – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med – 2<sup>nd</sup> mandate), and the **Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Med)**
  - Parliamentarians: the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), and the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (PA OSCE)**.
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