

ANTALYA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

We, Ministers of the Environment and Heads of Delegation of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols, meeting in Antalya, Turkey, on 9 December 2021,

Celebrating with pride the 45 years of the regional cooperation framework established through the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and its significant contribution towards achieving a healthy and sustainable Mediterranean Sea and its coasts;

Aware that the Mediterranean Sea has played an irreplaceable function for the economy of coastal communities and States since ancient times and has been vital for the prosperity of current and future generations, thanks to its unique environmental characteristics, resource richness and cultural diversity;

Recognizing that the Mediterranean region has great potential to contribute to and accelerate the implementation of global strategies and agendas for sustainable development;

Recalling the outcome document of United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The Future We Want” and the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”;

Recalling further the relevant United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolutions, as well as Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other international instruments, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and instruments regulated under the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS);

Welcoming the Kunming Declaration adopted by the CBD COP 15 part 1 (Kunming, China, 11-15 October 2021) towards the development, adoption and implementation of an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted by the UNFCCC COP 26 (Glasgow, UK, 31 October-13 November 2021) towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement objectives as crucial milestones for addressing the threats of biodiversity loss and climate change universally;

Recalling the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declarations on Sustainable Blue Economy and on Environment and Climate Action, aiming at joining efforts and stepping up the implementation of relevant global and regional commitments in the Mediterranean;

Deeply concerned by the unfolding interrelated global climate, biodiversity and pollution crises and their results in the Mediterranean, in particular the current state of the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean region, for the adverse effects of human activities, natural disasters, climate change, land and sea-based pollution, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, which have serious economic and social implications;

Deeply concerned by the deterioration of the situation in the Mediterranean over the last decade, due to an increase in the release of oil, hazardous and noxious substances, sulphur, and nitrogen oxides as well as greenhouse gas emissions with inevitable impacts on its marine and coastal biodiversity;

Deeply concerned also about the grave impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, as well as on economies and societies, which are further threatening our efforts to

overcome the triple pollution-biodiversity-climate crisis and to achieve sustainable development in our region;

Alarmed by the outcome of various monitoring and assessment processes depicting widening anthropogenic changes in the environment of the Mediterranean basin, as a fragile region expected to remain a hotspot of climate change, such as recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report (SoED) and the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on “Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future”;

Recognizing the knowledge gaps, including projections, of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and the urgent need to strengthen efforts to bridge those gaps through building upon and reinforcing existing mechanisms;

Having heard the calls for action expressed by partners, civil society, and especially youth for decisive, urgent and effective change towards a sustainable and greener future;

Noting the national and regional actions taken and pledges put forward by Contracting Parties in line with their national capacities;

Acknowledging with satisfaction the substantial progress made in strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing coordination in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and *committed* to continue and further enhance working in this direction through *inter alia* enhancing regional synergies and collaborations for optimizing the effective and efficient use of resources;

Committed to the implementation of the ambitious outcomes of the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, and the decisions taken on this occasion as the embodiment of our collective vision for the Mediterranean Sea and Coastal Areas;

Recognizing the key role of the regional cooperation, namely in the framework of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, in addressing existing and emerging environmental challenges and supporting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular the ocean related SDGs as well as relevant goals and targets set at global level;

Noting the ongoing process to develop, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/249 (2017), a legally binding international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction¹ (BBNJ), as an effective instrument for the implementation of the international targets for the conservation and preservation of 30% of the oceans by 2030;

1. *Renew our commitment* to achieving a healthy, clean, sustainable and climate resilient and Mediterranean Sea and Coast, with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, where the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved for the benefit of people and nature leaving a prosperous legacy for future generations, with full respect to gender and youth considerations;

¹ A/RES/72/249 “International legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction” (24.12.2017)

2. *Embrace* the full implementation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027 as the framework for working together with all partners in the region, for fostering opportunities and action towards achieving the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and for contributing to the full implementation of major global instruments, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and other relevant processes;

3. *Renew our commitment* to the achievement of the Good Environmental Status and the Mediterranean Ecological Objectives set in the framework of UNEP/MAP and the Barcelona Convention and to the full implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme and the ecosystem-based approach, to allow informed decision making, and effective implementation;

4. *Call upon* Contracting Parties to communicate domestic and regional action for nature and for implementing the entire body of instruments that make the Barcelona Convention, driving strengthened accountability and implementation mechanisms, and supporting robust monitoring and reporting;

Switching to a Climate Resilient, Resource Efficient and Sustainable Mediterranean

5. *Reiterate* our firm commitment to the achievement of the Paris Agreement objectives and to pursuing efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels as well as to further integrate adaptation into local, national, and regional planning;

6. *Commit* to a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery, tailored to the Mediterranean region, and its specificities, with Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) as the key factor for building back better and transitioning to a sustainable blue economy, by shifting to innovative green and circular business models, developing enabling policies, creating green jobs, and providing for more diverse, distributed, flexible, and resilient supply chains taking into account national abilities and circumstances;

7. *Renew* the pledge of our full support to the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and its Protocols objectives and vision as we design our collective plans for the green recovery of the Mediterranean Region, to secure a sustainable, resilient, inclusive and gender-responsive recovery, that promotes equity and accelerates progress in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs;

8. *Call for* more ambitious commitments of Contracting Parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible contributing to the achievement of the goal of climate neutrality by mid-century, as well as the commitment of the Contracting Parties at the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow to work with all involved international and regional partners and stakeholders to increase climate ambition, build resilience and lower emissions through strong collective actions;

Leaving a Pollution and Litter-free Legacy

9. *Applaud* the engagement of Contracting Parties to take appropriate measures to prevent, abate, combat and to the fullest possible extent eliminate pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, and to this aim *commit* to:

a) encourage the swift implementation of adopted measures for the reduction of air pollutant emissions, as well as measures helping the transition to de-carbonization, energy efficiency and sustainability of ports and coastal cities along the Mediterranean;

b) submit to the International Maritime Organization for consideration by mid-2022, the joint and coordinated proposal to designate the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area

for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), with an ambitious entry into force date to timely improve the health of the Mediterranean ecosystem and its people;²

c) encourage the Contracting Parties to start further work exploring the feasibility of a NOx ECA in the Mediterranean Sea during the 2022-23 to minimize shipping emissions and achieve significant health and environmental benefits;

d) effectively implement the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) contributing to the objective of clean and healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal environment, through a sustainable and pollution-free maritime sector, supported by a rigorous enforcement system and strengthened multi-sectoral cooperation;

e) enhance action in synergy with other relevant regional and global initiatives, in particular for the establishment of an International Negotiating Committee at UNEA 5.2, with a mandate to develop a legally binding global agreement to address plastic pollution, to prevent and reduce marine litter, including micro-plastics, and their harmful effects through the effective implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean as adopted by COP22, and to this aim recognize and encourage the work of the Marine Litter Collaboration Platform, established in the Mediterranean region to maximize synergies, complementarities, and positive impacts on the ground, while taking into consideration national needs, and the BlueMed Initiative and its pilot action on A Healthy Plastic Free Mediterranean Sea;

f) further efforts to tackle the regional challenges in dealing with urban wastewater treatment and sewage sludge management by effectively implementing the updated Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management by Contracting Parties in the agreed timelines;

Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity and Ecosystems

10. *Call upon* Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures to effectively implement the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, to protect and preserve biological diversity, fragile ecosystems, as well as species of wild fauna and flora which are rare, depleted, threatened or endangered and their habitats, and adopt strategies, plans and programmes for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of marine and coastal biological resources, and in this respect *commit to*:

- a) fully and effectively implement the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Mediterranean Post-2020 SAP BIO), as regional contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted in 2022, and *encourage* its streamlining into the national biodiversity regulatory frameworks, in particular in the new/updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans;
- b) take effective measures to implement the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPA) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) in the Mediterranean, in full accordance with the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, in coordination with other regional and international organizations with the aim to effectively achieve its strategic outcomes and targets;
- c) make every effort to protect and conserve at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030 through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of MCPA and OECM,

² As agreed at COP 22, by Decision IG. 25/14

with enhanced and concrete protection and conservation measures, contributing to the achievement of the target of protection of 30% of the global ocean by 2030;

- d) encourage the observance by Contracting Parties of the first edition of the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) Days in 2022 and related tools;
- e) enhance efforts to protect and preserve threatened or endangered species, and in this respect to take the necessary measures for the effective implementation of key species and habitats Action Plans aiming *inter alia* at the restoration of vulnerable and degraded marine and coastal ecosystems, recognizing their ecological services and their role in climate change adaptation and mitigation;

Raising ambition for common achievements

11. *Recognize* the various challenges faced by countries around the Mediterranean basin, and *commit* to strengthen our international cooperation towards sustainable development, supporting concrete partnerships, technology transfer, and the exchange of knowledge;

12. *Pledge to* widen our engagement in active dialogue and promote common initiatives, supporting regional responses to our shared environmental challenges in order to amplify their impact across and beyond the basin, and contributing to coordinated action across sectors and levels of government through the implementation of integrated approaches stipulated in the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management;

13. *Endeavour* to reduce the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation, especially on vulnerable groups and people living in poverty, by designing policies and programs that leave no one behind and support social justice, economic empowerment as well as gender and age equality, in addition to enhancing international cooperation and provision of predictable and appropriate support in this regard;

14. *Commit* to increase our efforts towards full, equal and meaningful participation in the MAP - Barcelona Convention system decision-making of women, youth, and disadvantaged communities, recognising their critical role as agents of change;

15. *Welcome* the wide and inclusive participatory process of Contracting Parties and partners leading to COP 22, including the effort promoted by the host country Turkey, the Presidency, the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, the MAP Focal Points, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSO) and the MCSO Steering Committee, and the “Let’s Meet at Success Stories in the Mediterranean” Youth Event (Istanbul, Turkey, 15-18 November 2021);

16. *Expresses gratitude* to the Government of Turkey for its hospitality during COP 22.