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Third Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact
Teleconference, 3-4 June 2021

Agenda Item 7: Conclusions and Recommendations**Initial draft conclusions and recommendations**

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Note by the Secretariat

1. This document provides a set of initial draft conclusions and recommendations put forward to the Third Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, to be held on 3-4 June 2021, for its consideration. The document, prepared by the Secretariat, is of a tentative nature and may be modified by the Meeting, as appropriate

Initial draft conclusions and recommendations

The Third Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, which was held online on 3-4 June 2021, hereinafter referred to as the “Meeting”:

1. acknowledged the consultative approach adopted, leading to extensive revisions and improvement of the Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the basis of the comments received by Contracting Parties (CPs) and partners after its presentation and deliberation during the 2nd OFOG meeting in 2019;
2. reviewed [and agreed upon] the revised Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines for the Conduct of EIA for submission to the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Focal Points Meeting and for 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties’ (COP 22) consideration;
3. provided essential feedback on the proposed way forward with respect to the amendments of the Annexes to the Offshore Protocol. In this respect, the Meeting acknowledged the need to keep under review the technical content of the annexes to the protocol and make relevant recommendations, in accordance with the OFOG Terms of Reference;
4. recognised the progress that has been achieved on the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan since the 2nd OFOG meeting in 2019, highlighting specific achievements related to the finalization of the guidance of EIA, ongoing development of the regional offshore monitoring programme and efforts by the Secretariat to mobilize resources through establishing cooperation with international organizations and associations;
5. took note of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, including limited dedicated financial and human resources, which resulted in limited progress, in particular on objectives related to the ratification of the Offshore Protocol, the provision of technical support and capacity building and the regional transfer of technology;
6. emphasised the importance of increasing the number of CP ratifications and reporting under Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), in particular by CPs that are parties to the Offshore Protocol, and by CPs with ongoing or planned oil and gas activities in their national waters;
7. recognised the importance to adopt different operational modalities to establish a more effective and sustainable process for the implementation of the Offshore Action Plan, as presented in the comprehensive plan of actions, including the resource mobilization strategy;
8. concurred with the proposed design of the training programme, as specified in the comprehensive plan of actions, and expressed priority to the following topics for training in biennium 2024-2025:
 - a) []
 - b) []
9. welcomed the proposed changes in the operational modalities for the further implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, including:
 - a) conducting training courses using online facilities or back-to-back to the regular in-person OFOG meetings, if possible;
 - b) capitalizing on strengthened partnerships with industry parties and international organizations for the delivery of online training courses and other technical support;
 - c) development of outputs and documents e.g. guidelines etc. under the leadership of CPs through the establishment of correspondence groups;

- d) stronger level of engagement by CPs, e.g. through a dedicated longer-term OFOG chair appointed for a minimum of two years;
- e) securing continuity through a fixed-term staff position on the Offshore Protocol at the Secretariat.

10. showed its commitment to increase the level of leadership and engagement by the CPs in achieving the specific objectives of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan by proposing to take the lead in the development of concrete action/outputs [name specific standards and guidelines] and/or in tasks related to the organization of the OFOG work in general [e.g. dedicated chair for a minimum period of 2 years etc.];

11. agreed on the election of the chair until the next OFOG meeting to be scheduled in the second quarter of 2023;

12. approved the establishment of a correspondence group and its Terms of Reference (ToRs) (to be annexed to the conclusions and recommendations) under the leadership of the elected chair with the active participation of CPs and the support of the Secretariat;

13. provided guidance to the Secretariat on the next activities to be undertaken in the implementation of the Offshore Protocol, and the inclusion of relevant activities into the Programme of Work 2022-2023, with a special focus on the topic of removal of installations to be addressed in the upcoming biennium 2022-2023;

14. agreed upon the activities proposed in the Programme of Work, as amended by the Meeting, i.e. definition of the training to be included in the final version of the PoW (to be annexed to the conclusions and recommendations) to be submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting for approval prior to its adoption by COP;

15. thanked the chair of the Meeting, REMPEC, as Secretariat, and partner organizations for providing essential technical and strategic support in the preparation of the working documents for this meeting or through their interventions during the meeting, and for their interest in sustaining their support and cooperation in the further implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan.

Actions requested by the Meeting:

16. The Meeting is invited to examine and provide comments, as required on the proposed initial draft conclusions and recommendations and in particular on the text in between brackets subject to the discussion of the Meeting.