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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 10-11 February 2009

REPORT

**OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT
AND THE COASTAL REGION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS PROTOCOLS**

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Introduction

1. The 68th meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols was held, following the decision taken at the previous Bureau meeting, at the Hotel Crowne Plaza, Athens, on 10 and 11 February 2009.

Participation

2. The meeting was chaired by Mr Jose Buceta, Head of the Marine Environment Protection and Pollution Prevention Division, Directorate General for the Sustainability of the Coast and the Sea, Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs of Spain. The following members of the Bureau attended: Ms Odile Roussel, Deputy-Director for the Environment, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (France) (Vice-President), Mr M. Abdelfetah Sahibi, Head of the Division for International Cooperation, Secretariat of State for Water and Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Directorate of Partnership, Communication and Cooperation (Morocco) (Vice-President), Mr. Nouredine Ben Rejeb, Director General, and Mr. Habib Ben Moussa, Director, at the National Agency for Environment Protection, Agence Nationale de Protection de l'Environnement (Tunisia) (Vice-President), Ms Valerie Brachya, Senior Deputy Director General for Policy and Planning, and Ms Ayelet Rosen, Acting Director, Division of International Relations, Ministry of the Environment (Israel) (Rapporteur).

3. The meeting was also attended by Ms Jacqueline Alder, Coordinator of the Marine Ecosystem and Coastal Branch (MECB) of the Division for Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

4. Mr Paul Mifsud, Coordinator, and Ms Tatjana Hema, MEDU Programme Officer, represented the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP).

5. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

6. The meeting was opened by Mr Jose Buceta Miller, Head of the Marine Environment Protection and Pollution Prevention Division, Directorate General for the Sustainability of the Coast and the Sea, Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs of Spain. Welcoming recent developments in MAP legal instruments, he stressed the efforts of the Spanish Government, as Depositary of the Convention and its Protocols, to achieve their ratification and entry into force and to promote implementation of their policies nationally and internationally. It was hoped that the new Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) would enter into force by the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

7. Among the activities and issues covered in the Progress Report by the Secretariat on activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau, he drew particular attention to the implementation of the Governance Paper, improving the visibility, transparency and efficiency of the MAP system and its components, the important role of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP), the template for a Host Country Agreement for the Regional Activity Centres (RACs), the impact of climate change on the Mediterranean environment, cooperation and participation in regional projects, particularly MAP's relationship with the Union for the Mediterranean, the work of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) and the implementation of national strategies for sustainable

development (NSSDs), and the crucial activities of the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and MED POL.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work

8. Following a request for clarification of the position on the agenda of a number of matters not specified in the provisional agenda before the Bureau, the Coordinator explained that most of those matters would be discussed under the relevant chapters in the progress report. Regarding a special session for dialogue with the MAP staff that had been requested by the Bureau and was the reason why the Bureau had decided to meet in Athens, the Coordinator stated that he had raised this matter with the Director of DEPI and was advised that personnel matters should be dealt with by UNEP, not by the Contracting Parties.

9. The meeting adopted the agenda (UNEP/BUR/68/1) and the organization of work set out in the annotated agenda (UNEP/BUR/68/2). The agenda is attached as Annex II to the present report.

Agenda item 3: Progress report by the Secretariat on activities carried out during the period July – December 2008 and specific issues (UNEP/BUR/68/3 and Add.)

10. The Coordinator introduced the sections of the progress report dealing with the legal component, implementation and compliance with obligations, including reporting, and the development of effectiveness indicators.

Legal component: status of ratification and entry into force

11. The Coordinator reported on efforts made to promote ratification and entry into force of MAP legal instruments, referring in particular to the ICZM Protocol, which required only six ratifications to enter into force. An interesting example of a Contracting Party initiative had been the meeting hosted by France in Nice in December 2008 to promote the ICZM Protocol. The Bureau called upon Contracting Parties to speed up the ratification process for all MAP instruments, in particular the new ICZM Protocol. The success of the Nice meeting was applauded by Bureau members, and members representing France, Tunisia and Morocco reported that ratification procedures for that Protocol were under way in their countries, which gave cause for optimism that the Protocol might enter into force by the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties. It was noted that the European Commission (EC) on behalf of the European Community had signed the Protocol in December 2008. As a way of inducing Contracting Parties that had not yet ratified the legal instruments to do so, it was suggested that the Depository country might send a periodic letter, annually or biennially, informing Contracting Parties of the status of ratification and entry into force of the Convention and its Protocols. The Bureau further requested the Secretariat to provide assistance and support for ratification to any Contracting Party that so requested.

Implementation, compliance and reporting

12. Following the introduction by the Coordinator of the relevant sections of the progress report, members stressed the crucial importance of effective implementation and hence the significance of effectiveness indicators in determining what had been achieved. The Bureau invited the Contracting Parties to participate actively in the consultation process for finalizing the set of effectiveness indicators that had been developed. Emphasizing the need for a coherent set of environmental indicators, it welcomed the information that the indicators will be further developed in coordination with the Horizon 2020 initiative and the GEF Project,

and further recommended coordination with the European Environment Agency (EEA) in that connection. Members were informed by the representative of UNEP that, with a view to harmonizing reporting systems, the forthcoming UNEP General Assembly would be discussing national, regional and global reporting frameworks for assessing the marine environment. That exercise could provide guidance to MAP for Contracting Parties to report on their performance in a wider context. Bureau members further requested that there should be a clearer differentiation between general performance indicators and specific results-based indicators in order to assess concrete achievements on the ground, pointing out that the overriding objective was to effectively improve the environmental status of the marine and coastal area of the Mediterranean. Some concern was expressed about the lack of technical means in some countries to effect measurements in response to indicators, and it was agreed that assistance should be available to those in need.

13. Bureau members expressed satisfaction that the on-line reporting system was now operational and hoped that that would speed up the submission of reports. Noting the low rate of return, they called upon Contracting Parties to submit their 2006-2007 implementation reports by the extended deadline of 15 March 2009, possibly on line. Reports from some Contracting Parties about what appeared to be uncoordinated requests for data from various MAP sources prompted the Bureau to recommend that the Secretariat and the RACs should harmonize the reporting exercise, particularly in terms of timing, in order to avoid any unnecessary duplication of work. By way of general comment, it was pointed out that failure to comply with reporting obligations or to make data available had wider implications in terms of non-compliance and liability and compensation, for which mechanisms were now in place. However, as the Coordinator stressed, the purpose of establishing the various reporting and compliance mechanisms was not to "name and shame", but to help Contracting Parties comply with their obligations.

14. In connection with the membership of the Compliance Committee, the Coordinator reported that the Lebanese authorities had given assurances that its alternate member would soon be designated.

Liability and compensation

15. Following the presentation by the Coordinator of progress in the implementation of the MAP/Barcelona Convention liability and compensation Guidelines and the update on the main outputs of the third meeting of the Working Group on Liability and Compensation, contained in the addendum to the progress report, the Bureau took note of the Working Group's conclusions. In response to the Secretariat's request for a mandate to proceed with work on implementing the Guidelines, the Bureau invited Contracting Parties that had not yet replied to the questionnaire to do so by the agreed deadline in order to ensure that the assessment report was as comprehensive as possible before submission to the Parties. Having noted that there was no need for another meeting of the Working Group but that further work on the implementation of the Guidelines was needed, including capacity-building and studies, it agreed that the funds allocated for such a meeting would be used to provide assistance to Contracting Parties at their request for related activities. The representative of Israel stated that her country had reservations on the proposed Guidelines, which provided for a very different liability and compensation regime from that in force in her country.

Institutional arrangements and coordination

Implementation of the Governance Paper

16. Bureau members, while welcoming the preparation of a draft model Host Country Agreement (HCA), observed that the HCA and the mandates of the RACs, which were closely linked, should not be too restrictive but should allow for initiative and innovative

action. The HCA should be flexible enough to enable the RACs to engage in activities not strictly confined to the MAP system but relating, for example, to other regional or international environmental conventions, for reasons of added value and funding. In any event the model was but a first draft and would require examination at the national level, with Contracting Parties' comments taken into account in the final version.

17. The draft mandates of the MAP components, set out in document UNEP/BUR/68/Inf.4, prompted a number of comments. It was pointed out that there were significant discrepancies between the mandates as drafted, including the core principles common to all components, and the strategic vision and Strategy Declaration prepared by the Working Group of the Contracting Parties established by the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points held in Catania in 2006 and the principles and requirements of the Governance Paper. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to revise the draft mandates and core principles to bring them into line with those documents.

18. Bureau members acknowledged the specificity of the components' tasks, linked as they were to the respective legal instruments for which they were responsible, but drew attention to the unduly restrictive concept of the mandates; to the lack of a holistic, integrated vision, with the attribution of certain tasks to one component that should more properly be assigned to another; to the need in general for a clearer statement of outputs and, in the case of BP/RAC, for a more focused presentation of tasks; and to the absence of a draft mandate for INFO/RAC. Another matter raised was the question of inadequate coordination among national Focal Points, which might be resolved by merging the functions of the BP/RAC and INFO/RAC Focal Points with those of the MAP Focal Points.

19. The Coordinator assured members that those comments would be taken up by the ECP and with the respective components. In response to questions about the meaning of the "differentiated approach" adopted by MED POL, he explained that it did not apply to the obligations under a Protocol, but to the timeframe for compliance. The drafting of a mandate for INFO/RAC had been kept on hold pending a final decision by the competent Italian authorities on the status of the centre.

20. The Bureau considered that both the components' Focal Points and the MAP Focal Points should be involved from the outset in drafting the mandates in order to ensure that both the individuality of the components and effective integration among them were taken into account.

21. The Bureau noted that its recommendation that the President of the Bureau should attend ECP meetings had not been followed up and requested the Secretariat to ensure that an invitation to attend was extended to the President in future. The President expressed his interest in participating in the ECP meetings. The Coordinator informed the Bureau that the ECP had expressed reservation about this decision because the President had a political role while the ECP was a management meeting.

22. The Bureau pointed out the absence of the all-important theme of biodiversity from the main themes selected for the five-year strategic programme of work. It should feature as a central, separate area of work and not be subsumed under climate change or resources.

Organization of the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

23. The Bureau agreed with the proposed dates of the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties: 4-6 November 2009 and further agreed with the proposed calendar of the other main institutional meetings of MAP in 2009. The representative of Tunisia observed with regret that the dates of the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties coincided with elections in his country. The representative of Morocco confirmed that all Contracting Parties would be able

to participate in the Marrakesh meeting. After a discussion on the theme of the ministerial segment, the Bureau, while acknowledging the importance of cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean and of determining MAP's role in that regard, opted for the theme "Adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean: challenges and experiences", for which discussions at the MCSD meeting in June 2009 would provide useful input. In addition, a suggestion was raised to consider the "greening of economy of the Mediterranean" as a possible topic for the ministerial segment of the Contracting Parties meetings in the future.

INFO/RAC

24. The Coordinator briefed the Bureau on the latest developments in the situation regarding the Italian regional activity centre (INFO/RAC) (paragraphs 39-43 of the progress report), updated by the receipt, on the previous day, of a copy of the formal agreement signed between the Italian Ministry of Environment, Territory and Sea and the Regional Department for Industry of the Sicilian Region providing for funding by the Ministry for agreed 2008-2009 activities pending the transfer of the centre's functions to the Italian Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA).

25. Bureau members again expressed regret about the unfortunate situation that had arisen over INFO/RAC and stressed the continued need for a high-quality information technology system, delivered by a qualified centre, for the whole of the MAP system in order to provide all Contracting Parties, MAP and its components and the public with a sound information base. For that purpose, it recommended that a needs assessment should be carried out by the Secretariat with a view to implementing the relevant decisions taken by the Contracting Parties in Catania, Portoroz and Almeria, and in particular the Governance Paper, with regard to the information and communication component of MAP.

26. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to thank the Italian authorities for making the funding available for implementing the programme of activities approved for 2008-2009, but also to inform them that a long-term strategic plan, including a programme of work for 2010-2011, together with a draft mandate for the centre, should be prepared for consideration by the meetings of the MAP Focal Points and the Contracting Parties, scheduled respectively for July and November 2009.

Auditing and financial management

27. The Bureau recommended that preparation of the Financial and Management Audit Report should be expedited and that the final report should be circulated without delay to Bureau members and be placed on the agenda of the next Bureau meeting. The representative of UNEP said that the audit was being taken very seriously by UNEP, that discussions had been held with officers in various MAP services and that UNEP saw the exercise as an opportunity to improve the performance of MAP.

Application of the ecosystem approach

28. The Coordinator, reviewing progress made in applying the ecosystem approach throughout MAP and in following up the recommendations of the Bureau at its previous meeting, drew attention in particular to the meeting of all MAP components held in Split in September 2008, to the endorsement of that meeting's conclusions by the third ECP meeting and to agreed EC funding for the relevant activities. He added, in response to a question, that a replicable pilot exercise was to be launched. The Bureau expressed gratitude to the EC for the allocation of funds and urged all Contracting Parties to participate actively in implementation. It also requested UNEP/DEPI to assist MAP in that process and received

assurances from the representative of UNEP that it could assist MAP in that project and could also offer capacity-building.

Cooperation and partnership

29. Following the Coordinator's presentation of cooperation with United Nations agencies, the European Union (EU) and regional initiatives (paragraphs 54-73 of the progress report), emphasis was placed on MAP's continued and strengthened involvement in, more particularly, UNEP's Regional Seas programmes, the GEF Project's Mediterranean initiative and EC initiatives. Among the latter, the Union for the Mediterranean recently established by the European Union, the Horizon 2020 initiative and the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive provided signal opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and synergies.

30. The Bureau, noting the policy paper on MAP/civil society cooperation (UNEP/BUR/68/3/Add.), agreed to give its views and advice to the Secretariat by mid-March 2009 on the policy paper which, revised accordingly, would be submitted to MAP Partners and the MAP Focal Points and re-submitted to the Bureau for further consideration at the next Bureau meeting. By way of preliminary comment, members considered that the paper, which was somewhat administrative and legalistic in tone, should make it clear how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be actively involved and harnessed to help promote and improve the environment in the Mediterranean. Their benefit to MAP should be a prime consideration. The important role of NGOs as relays at the national level was also stressed, as was the question of criteria for admission as a MAP Partner. The idea of preparing a charter of rights and responsibilities or a code of conduct for the MAP Partners was viewed favourably.

Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD)

31. With regard to the NSSD formulation process, the Bureau noted that little progress had been made in the first three of the four countries benefiting from AZAHAR funding – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Tunisia – and encouraged those three countries to embark on the development of their NSSDs. Regarding the studies launched on adaptation to climatic change in anticipation of the theme of the next MCSD meeting, one member remarked that it might be judicious to conduct such studies in countries which did not yet have NSSDs.

32. After a discussion regarding membership of the Commission representing the three new categories, it was recommended that the nomination procedure should be re-opened, with the deadline extended until the end of April 2009 in order to consider other candidates fulfilling the criteria approved at the 67th meeting of the Bureau and possessing expertise in climate change adaptation which is the theme of the MCSD meeting. In order to enable the nominated experts to participate in the June MCSD meeting, they would be approved by the Bureau following consultation by electronic means. The Bureau approved the nominations for the IGO category.

Information and communication

33. Noting the promotional activities carried out in Greece, the Bureau encouraged the Secretariat to pursue such activities to create awareness about the Convention and its Protocols, with assistance provided to the Parties at their request. It noted with pleasure the offer by Bosnia and Herzegovina to host such an event.

Financial, personnel and administrative matters

34. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the post vacancies regarding the Deputy Coordinator of MAP, now down to two short-listed candidates, and the GEF Project Management Unit, for which interviews were scheduled the following day. Regarding the Programme Budget of MAP, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to submit to it at its next meeting a breakdown of the budget allocation for MAP activities by Contracting Party, in order to ascertain the geographical balance of activities.

Components

MED POL

35. The Bureau took note of the activities of MED POL (paragraphs 121-132 of the progress report). Commending MED POL's work on monitoring and stressing the importance of monitoring for compliance, the Bureau urged Contracting Parties that had not yet established a monitoring programme to do so, and requested the Secretariat to provide financial support for that purpose if required. It further requested Contracting Parties to submit the monitoring data by the required deadlines, and in that connection emphasized the importance of measuring the effectiveness of implementation at the national level.

36. Ongoing work by MED POL on the development of indicators was welcomed as a crucial tool for focused monitoring, and further cooperation with other regional initiatives was encouraged.

37. Bureau members were reluctant to commit funds for a possible additional meeting of experts to finalize the text of the action plans and programmes required by article 15 of the LBS Protocol, but agreed that, if need be, an additional day would be added to the MED POL Focal Points' meeting to resolve any pending issues and finalize the text for approval by the MED POL Focal Points.

38. The Bureau requested that MED POL prepare and submit to the next Bureau meeting a paper clarifying the meaning of the proposed "differentiated approach", being of the view that the application of such an approach should relate to the timeframe only where that was strictly necessary for implementation and should not compromise the achievement of the overriding goal of reducing pollution in the Mediterranean. The Coordinator again confirmed that the proposed "differentiated approach" referred to the timeframe.

39. Following a discussion about whether MED POL was best fitted among MAP components to conduct activities relating to the pollutant resource and transfer register (PRTR), since PRTR related to all pollutants and wastes and not only releases to the marine environment, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to discuss at the next ECP meeting the issue of the handling by MAP components of PRTR-related activities. It was suggested that those tasks might more appropriately be entrusted to CP/RAC. The Coordinator pointed out that MED POL had a mandate to carry out those tasks under the MED POL Phase IV programme.

40. Several members advocated further work on the effects of desalination-related activities in the light of the water shortage in Mediterranean countries and the growth of such activities.

41. The Bureau approved the preparations for the Marine Litter Management Strategy, for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points. It further considered that MED POL should play an important role in developing the indicator on marine litter, considered a good

environmental status indicator, in the framework of implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

CP/RAC

42. The Bureau took note of CP/RAC's activities as presented in the progress report (paragraphs 133-154) and introduced by the Coordinator. In response to a question, members were informed that CP/RAC was carrying out activities within the SAICM framework for the sustainable management of chemicals.

REMPEC

43. The Bureau took note of REMPEC's activities as reported in the progress report (paragraphs 160-181) and outlined and updated by the Coordinator. He informed members, inter alia, that a solution had been found to the problem raised at the previous Bureau meeting about the non-eligibility of some countries for the GloBallast Partnerships project: the project would now also be open to participation by countries other than GEF-eligible countries. Noting that the return rate on questionnaires sent to Contracting Parties by REMPEC was very low, the Bureau requested the REMPEC Focal Points to do their utmost to ensure that the questionnaires in respect of preparedness and response (shoreline, clean-up assessment, waste management, sunken oil) were completed and sent back to REMPEC.

SPA/RAC

44. The Bureau took note of the activities of SPA/RAC as contained in the progress report (paragraphs 187-225) and presented by the Coordinator. Satisfaction was expressed with the work achieved. It was suggested that, in discussions on the effects of climate change on biodiversity, SPA/RAC might look into the impacts on biodiversity of action suggested for greenhouse gas reduction. Regarding invasive species, several members suggested that SPA/RAC might concern itself with jellyfish invasions, a major problem in the waters of many Mediterranean countries, especially in regard to tourism. The representative of Tunisia said that SPA/RAC had conducted some studies on the subject and would be asked to make that information available. In response to a question about long-term monitoring, he confirmed that such monitoring was in progress. Another member, recalling the recommendation in the Almeria Declaration about the need to put in place a coherent network of marine protected areas by 2012, noted some advances reported in the progress report, but expected to see more specific action taken in response to that recommendation. The Coordinator explained that the project would be launched shortly as soon as GEF Project funds were available and the project management was in place.

PAP/RAC

45. Noting PAP/RAC's activities as contained in the progress report (paragraphs 226-235) and introduced by the Coordinator, the Bureau welcomed the information that PAP/RAC had now received the funds to proceed with the SMAP Project. Bureau members asked if the position paper on financing sustainable development in coastal areas, referred to in paragraph 233 of the report, could be made available for information. In response to a question about the lack of sufficient funding of PAP/RAC's activities, which had given cause for concern, the Coordinator explained that no funding had been provided for in the previous budget because the ICZM Protocol had not yet been approved, and that GEF funding for capacity-building in the context of the CAMPs would be available once the GEF Project was launched.

46. In response to a question about delays in CAMP Morocco, the Coordinator responded that progress had been made and that he would report back on specific action.

Bureau members further requested that PAP/RAC make background information and promotional materials available to Contracting Parties to enable them to prepare for activities to celebrate Coastal Day.

47. The Bureau took note of the progress made in Spain, reported by the President speaking as representative of Spain, on the appointment of the General Coordinator of CAMP Levante de Almeria and requested Spain to finalize the process as soon as possible.

BP/RAC

48. Reviewing Blue Plan's activities as contained in the progress report (paragraphs 236-259) and introduced by the Coordinator, the Bureau considered that there should have been a clearer presentation of outputs and results, noting, for example, that in the case of some objectives a budget had been allocated but no spending was recorded. Members stressed the importance for national decision-makers of receiving the results of workshops and other activities, and some reported deficiencies in that regard.

49. Noting, in the constraints reported under the section "Sustainable agriculture and rural development", the problems encountered in data collection, members again stressed the importance of reliable data produced on the basis of effectiveness indicators.

50. Attention was drawn to objective 4 – "Impact of transport in the Mediterranean", a critical issue on which little specific information was given. The Bureau requested BP/RAC and other concerned components to work together in synergy and to broaden the scope of activities related to transport to include port expansion and, as an alternative where possible, efficient use of existing port infrastructure, and the impact of such expansion on biodiversity. Under the objective "Urban mobility", it was suggested that BP/RAC might look specifically into restraining the use of the private car as well as the use of public transport. Another suggested theme for study by BP/RAC, ideally suited to its mandate, was "greening the economy".

51. Regarding the report on climate change under preparation, it was recommended that the focus should be on climate change adaptation and mitigation, as input to the MCSD and the Meeting of the Contracting Parties. The representative of France, supported by other members, drew attention to the successful outcome of the seminar on climate change held recently in Marseille, as a first step towards the debate at the MCSD and Contracting Parties meetings.

52. Members highlighted the importance of the Report on Environment and Sustainable Development and the input it would provide for the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Synergies were likewise to be expected with the European Environment Agency (EEA), which was working on a new report on the status of the Mediterranean.

INFO/RAC

53. Bureau members acknowledged that, given the situation regarding INFO/RAC, its activities in the current biennium, which it was now committed to implement, would be reported on in the next progress report. It was noted that INFO/RAC could be credited with delivering the on-line reporting system, together with a guide for its use.

Agenda item 4: Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau

54. The Bureau agreed that the alternative dates for the next Bureau meeting would be between 8 and 10 June or 15 and 19 June 2009, to be determined after consultations. If no

offer to host the meeting was forthcoming from a Contracting Party, the venue of the meeting would be Athens.

Agenda item 5: **Any other business**

55. No matter was raised under this item.

Agenda item 6: **Conclusions and decisions**

56. The Bureau reviewed the draft decisions prepared by the Secretariat and adopted them with some amendments. The decisions are attached as Annex III to this report.

Agenda item 7: **Closure of the meeting**

57. The President commended the Bureau on the fruitful outcome of the meeting. He particularly welcomed the agreement reached on the theme of the ministerial discussion at the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties; the steps taken towards resolving the situation regarding INFO/RAC and putting in place the necessary information and communication activities to improve MAP's visibility and efficiency, including the on-line reporting system; advances made in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, the European Commission and other regional initiatives; progress made in the ratification, entry into force and ratification of the ICZM Protocol; and the work done by the MAP components. He concluded by urging support for the Bureau's decisions.

58. Ms Jacqueline Alder, representative of UNEP/DEPI, welcomed the opportunity to have attended the Bureau meeting, which had given her insights into the challenges and complexities faced in meeting the goals of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. She assured MAP of UNEP's continued support.

59. The President declared the meeting closed at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 11 February 2009.

ANNEX I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and organization of work
3. Progress Report by the Secretariat on activities carried out during the period July-December 2008 and specific issues
4. Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau
5. Any other business
6. Conclusions and decisions
7. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX III

Decisions

1. Legal component

Ratification and entry into force of MAP legal instruments

1. The Bureau calls upon the Contracting Parties to speed up the ratification process for all MAP legal instruments and especially urges them to take all necessary action towards ratifying the new ICZM Protocol with a view to its possible entry into force by the next Contracting Parties meeting.
2. The Bureau requests the Depository country to inform the Contracting Parties of the status of ratification and entry into force of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols on a regular basis, urging Contracting Parties that have not yet ratified them to do so.
3. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to provide assistance and support for ratification to any Contracting Party on request.

Other legal issues

1. The Bureau requests the Contracting Parties to participate actively in the consultation process for the finalization of the set of effectiveness indicators with a view to its submission for approval by the meetings of the MAP Focal Points and the Contracting Parties. It also recommended that there should be a clearer differentiation between general performance indicators and specific results-based indicators in order to assess concrete achievements on the ground and their effectiveness in improving the environmental status of the marine and coastal area of the Mediterranean region.
2. The Bureau calls upon the Contracting Parties to submit their 2006-2007 reports on measures taken to implement the Convention and its Protocols according to the format agreed by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties by mid-March 2009, possibly on line. It also requests the Secretariat and the RACs to harmonize the reporting exercise, notably in terms of timing, in order to avoid any unnecessary duplication.
3. The Bureau approves that the funds allocated by the Contracting Parties under the 2009 budget for the Working Group on liability and compensation will be used to provide financial, legal and technical assistance to the Contracting Parties upon their request for activities related to the implementation of the liability and compensation Guidelines.

2. Institutional arrangements and coordination

1. The Bureau agrees that the topic for discussion at the Ministerial Segment of the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties shall be "Adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean: challenges and experiences". The choice of this theme would enable the discussions at the MCSD to serve as input for the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

2. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to revise the draft mandates of the MAP components, in particular the common introduction, by fully reflecting the strategic vision and draft Strategy Declaration prepared by the Working Group of the Contracting Parties established by the Extraordinary Meeting of MAP Focal Points, 2006, as well as the principles and requirements contained in the Governance Paper.
3. The Bureau suggests to the Secretariat and the ECP that, in elaborating the mandates of each MAP component, both the individuality of the components and the need to ensure effective and realistic integration among them should be taken into account and any overlapping avoided. For this purpose the consultation process with regard to the mandates should, from the outset, involve the MAP Focal Points and the components' Focal Points.
4. The Bureau agrees with the calendar of the main institutional meetings of MAP in 2009 as proposed by the Secretariat.
5. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to undertake a needs assessment in the field of information and communication technologies with a view to implementing the relevant decisions taken in Catania, Portoroz and Almeria, and in particular the requirements of the Governance Paper with regard to the information and communication component of MAP.
6. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to express its thanks and appreciation to the Italian authorities for making available the necessary funding to the Regional Department for Industry of the Sicilian Region – INFO/RAC for the implementation of the programme of activities approved by the Contracting Parties.
7. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to inform the Italian authorities that a long-term strategic plan, including a biennial programme of work 2010-2011, together with a draft mandate for the information and communication technologies component of MAP, should be prepared for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and the Contracting Parties meetings, scheduled respectively for July and November 2009.
8. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to circulate to Bureau members the Financial and Management Audit Report as soon as the final version is available and agrees that the question should be on the agenda of the next Bureau meeting.

3. Application of the ecosystem approach

1. The Bureau thanks the EC for allocating funds to the Secretariat in order to carry out activities for the implementation of the road map for the application of the ecosystem approach by MAP.
2. The Bureau encourages all Contracting Parties to participate actively in the implementation of the road map for the application of the ecosystem approach. It also requests UNEP/DEPI to assist MAP in this process.

4. Cooperation and partnership

1. The Bureau supports and encourages the further strengthening of MAP/EC partnership and cooperation in view of its importance in achieving necessary synergies for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. It also recognizes that MAP and Barcelona Convention experiences are very important for the European countries which are parties to the Barcelona Convention with the view to ensuring synergy and sharing experiences in the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
2. The Bureau encourages cooperation between MAP and the Union for the Mediterranean on issues related to environment protection and sustainable development in the Mediterranean.
3. The Bureau agrees to provide its views and advice to the Secretariat by mid-March 2009 on the proposed policy paper with regard to MAP/civil society cooperation. On the basis of the Bureau's suggestions, the policy paper on MAP civil society will be revised by the Secretariat and submitted for comments and discussion to MAP partners and MAP Focal Points for further consideration by the next Bureau meeting.

5. Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development

1. The Bureau encourages Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon to embark on the development of their NSSDs.
2. The Bureau approves CEDARE, UN-WTO and the World Bank (Department for sustainable development), representing IGOs, as members of the MCSD with a view to their participation at the Meeting of the Commission in Cairo in June 2009.
3. With regard to the other categories, the Bureau recommends that the Secretariat extend the deadline for the nominations until the end of April 2009 taking into consideration the criteria approved at the last Bureau meeting (BUR67) as well as the theme of the MCSD: "Climate Change Adaptation". In order to enable the nominated experts to participate at the next meeting of the MCSD they will be approved by the Bureau following consultation through electronic means.

6. Information and communication

1. The Bureau encourages the Secretariat to carry out activities to create awareness about the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and promote their ratification and entry into force. For this purpose, the Bureau requests the Secretariat to provide assistance to the Parties at their request. The Bureau notes with pleasure the offer by Bosnia and Herzegovina to host such an event.

7. Financial, Personnel and administrative matters

1. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to submit to its next meeting a breakdown of MAP activities according to geographic distribution criteria.

COMPONENTS

1. Land-based Pollution (MED POL)

1. The Bureau requests that MED POL prepares and submits to the next Bureau meeting a paper in order to clarify the meaning of the proposed differentiation approach and strongly supports the view that the application of such an approach should only relate to the timeframe where found necessary for implementation and should not compromise the achievement of the main goal with regard to pollution reduction in the Mediterranean.
2. The Bureau agrees that if need be, an additional day would be added to the MED POL focal points meeting in order to resolve any pending issues and finalize the text of the action plans and programmes required by article 15 of the LBS Protocol for subsequent approval by the meeting of the MED POL focal points.
3. The Bureau urges those Contracting Parties that have not yet established a monitoring programme to do so, and request the Secretariat to provide financial support if required.
4. The Bureau requests the Contracting Parties to submit the monitoring data according to the respective deadlines in order to measure the effectiveness of implementation at the national level.
5. The Bureau approves the preparations for the Marine Litter Management Strategy for submission to the meeting of MAP Focal Points for their consideration. It also considers that MED POL should play an important role with regard to the development of the indicator on marine litter, considered as a good environmental status indicator in the framework of the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
6. Since PRTR covers broader issues than those related to the releases to the marine environment, the Bureau requests the Secretariat to discuss at the ECP meeting the issue of the handling by MAP components of PRTR related activities.

2. Sustainable Management of Coastal Zones (Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC))

1. The Bureau takes note of the progress made in Spain on the appointment of the general coordinator of CAMP Levante Almeria and requests Spain to finalize this process as soon as possible.

3. Environment and Development (Blue Plan)

1. The Bureau requests Blue Plan and the concerned components to work together in synergy and broaden the scope of activities related to transport in order to incorporate port expansion and efficient use of the existing infrastructure and their impacts on Biodiversity.

4. Dates and venue of the next Bureau meeting

1. The Bureau agreed that the alternative dates for the next Bureau meeting would be between 8 and 10 June or 15 and 19 June 2009. If no offer to host the meeting was forthcoming from a Contracting Party, the venue of the meeting would be Athens.