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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Istanbul, Türkiye, 12-15 September 2023

**Agenda Items 3 and 4: Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2022-2023 Biennium and Financial Report for 2020-2021 and 2022-2023**

**Report of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Marseille, France, 14-16 June 2023)**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2023

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission  
on Sustainable Development (MCSD)**

(Marseille 14-16 June 2023)

**20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)  
(Marseille 14-16 June 2023)**

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

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

1. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of France and Minister Hervé Berville for hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> MCSD Meeting and to the Secretariat for the meeting preparations.

**Agenda item 2: Organizational Matters**

2. The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD expressed gratitude to the outgoing President, Mr. Mitja Bricelj, Slovenia and to the other Members of the Steering Committee, i.e. Ms. Samah Saleh, Egypt, Ms. Bahar Özögüt, Türkiye, Mr. Emad Adly, Egyptian Forum on Sustainable Development (ESDF), Ambassador Sergio Piazzini, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Mr. Michael Scoullou, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), and Ms. Anne-France Didier, France, acknowledging with appreciation the work done under their guidance in 2022-2023.

3. The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD elected its Steering Committee in accordance with the MCSD Constitutive Documents, Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure, as follows:

- President: Ms. Anne-France Didier, France
- Vice-President: Ms. Asli Topalak, Türkiye, (ex officio, as representative of the Presidency of the Contracting Parties)
- Vice-President: Mr. Mohammed Maktit, Morocco
- Vice-President: Mr. Lotfi Ben Said, Tunisia
- Vice-President: Mr. Najib Saab, Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED)
- Vice-President: Mr. Almotaz Abadi, UfM Secretariat
- Rapporteur: Mr. Josep Canals Molina, MEDCITIES

**Agenda item 3: Report by the Coordinator on Sustainable Development Activities for the period June 2021 – May 2023**

4. The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed with appreciation the progress achieved as reflected in the progress report, presented by the Secretariat on the various and considerable activities undertaken since the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD. In this respect the meeting appreciated the growing interest and political will to enhance the work of MCSD in the Mediterranean region, in pursuance of its authoritative role in Sustainable Development as a

regional multi-stakeholder platform for experience sharing and peer learning in the Mediterranean region.

5. The meeting acknowledged the efforts exerted and progress achieved by the MCSD Members and Observers, with the support of the Secretariat, as an important contribution towards the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals, the MSSD, and other global and regional environmental frameworks.
6. The meeting agreed of the importance of strengthening the role of Local Authorities and youth representatives in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the Mediterranean.
7. The meeting expressed appreciation for the adoption of the Decisions by COP 22 regarding MED SOx ECA, which led to its endorsement by IMO at MEPC 79 and highlighted the importance of enhancing efforts towards the possible designation of the MED NOx ECA.
8. The meeting stressed the need to ensure adequate representation of the Secretariat in global and regional events and fora related to the work of UNEP/MAP and MSSD, in view of raising visibility of the work of UNEP/MAP at the global level and exchanging knowledge and experiences with other Conventions and strategies.
9. The meeting highlighted the important role that the Regional Seas Conventions should play in the implementation of global commitments and targets, i.e. under the New Global Plastic Treaty, the BBNJ Treaty and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and the need for these processes to take into account the existing regulatory frameworks adopted at the regional level.

**Agenda item 6: Roundtable/Panel discussion: Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean in the context of the most recent relevant global and regional commitments**

10. The meeting welcomed with appreciation the interventions from the two panels. To this end, the meeting highlighted the relevance of the work of the MCSD for the implementation of global commitments and appreciated the achievements of existing best practices which may lead to flagship initiatives of the next updated MSSD.
11. The meeting stressed the need for coordination of activities by different organizations active in the Mediterranean region.
12. The meeting stressed the need to include comprehensive integrated Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the next MSSD; to this end, the meeting recommended the establishment of a dedicated UNEP/MAP Working Group, building on and collaborating with the other MSP mechanisms in the region.

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

##### **a) MSSD Flagship Initiatives**

- 13.** The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcomed the presentations of the activities undertaken by its Members and the Secretariat under the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, noting with appreciation the advanced status of implementation of those initiatives.
- 14.** The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD noted the need to further promote visibility of the work done under the MSSD and especially its Flagship Initiatives, through communication and capitalization actions, including through the UNEP/MAP website and the website of MCSD members that have a leading role in the Flagship Initiatives.
- 15.** The meeting welcomed the proposals to launch new Flagship Initiatives on “Sustainable Blue Tourism”, on “the protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystems” and on “the Water Energy Food Ecosystems nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum”. The meeting endorsed these proposals and suggested that initial work on them can start now due to their importance, and then they can be considered for official inclusion in the updated MSSD.
- 16.** The meeting welcomed the proposal to continue work (a) on the Flagship Initiative related to waste reduction, inter alia by considering specific waste streams such as food waste and plastic waste, by looking at Extended Producer Responsibility schemes and by considering zero waste options; (b) on the Flagship Initiative on public procurement, as proposed by COMPSUD, Israel, Morocco and ECOUNION, acknowledging the challenges faced on this issue.
- 17.** The meeting acknowledged the importance of youth and of education as important aspects of sustainable development for consideration in the work of the MCSD and for inclusion in the new updated MSSD, *inter alia* through the continuation of the Flagship Initiative on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.
- 18.** The meeting highlighted the need to further strengthen the links between the scientific community and policy makers, inter alia by providing additional support to reinforce the scientific capacities and knowledge in the Mediterranean region.
- 19.** The MCSD encouraged Contracting Parties to consider acceding to relevant Conventions to which they are not Parties, such as the Aarhus Convention, the ESPOO Convention and the Landscape Convention.

##### **b) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard**

- 20.** The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD took note of and welcomed the progress in the work done by the Secretariat (Plan Bleu and MedWaves-SCP/RAC) for updating and populating the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard in an integrated manner. The meeting requested Plan Bleu/RAC to submit information on the situation of sustainable development in the region using the MSSD dashboard populated indicators.

### **c) Updated MSSD: Process and Rationale**

- 21.** The meeting welcomed the proposed process of reviewing and updating the MSSD and noted that it should be aligned with relevant global processes and should make use of the outcome of the mid-term evaluation of the MSSD, of the MED 2050 Foresight Study as well as of the results deriving from the population of the MSSD indicators.
- 22.** The meeting agreed that this process should be led by the MCSD Steering Committee, extended with additional MCSD members, to represent parliamentarians, scientific institutions, and cross-cutting issues/synergies, as well as Egypt as host country of COP 24, where the updated MSSD is expected to be endorsed. To this aim the meeting invited MCSD members to express their interest, before end of August 2023.
- 23.** The meeting asked the Secretariat to accelerate the process of the recruitment of the Socioeconomic Affairs Officer to support inter alia the timely and effective MSSD review and update process.
- 24.** The meeting agreed on the need to involve Mediterranean youth representatives in the process of reviewing and updating the MSSD.

#### **Agenda item 5: MED 2050 Foresight Study**

##### **a) Presentation MED 2050 Foresight Study**

##### **b) Outcome of the MED 2050 Youth Workshop on the Future of the Mediterranean**

- 25.** The meeting welcomed the progress in the development of the MED 2050 Foresight Study. The MCSD expressed its appreciation for the work of a considerable number of experts under the leadership of UNEP/MAP Plan Bleu/Regional Activity Centre to deliver this complex Foresight Study and encouraged the Secretariat to disseminate its outcome in a way to ensure that it is understandable by the general public and to support the ownership or the uptake by different stakeholders.
- 26.** The meeting welcomed the contribution of youth representatives in the meeting, and their engagement in the consultation process for the development of the MED 2050 Foresight Study and stressed the importance to continue supporting youth presence and inputs in next MCSD meetings.
- 27.** The MCSD highlighted the need to identify and co-design the necessary transition pathways ensuring that the region chooses the most sustainable scenario(s) to bring a desirable future to the region, taking full consideration of all relevant existing initiatives and actions, to the extent possible, and their implementation. This exercise should contribute to the MSSD revision process.
- 28.** The meeting also encouraged all MCSD members to use, as appropriate, the outcomes of this Foresight Study analysis, in identifying the necessary actions to be taken to enhance sustainability of their policies and their implementation and noting the urgency of taking concerted action.

**Agenda item 7: Sustainability Considerations in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2024-2025**

29. The meeting welcomed the presentation of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) 2024-2025 and considered that the overall draft PoW adequately integrates sustainability considerations.

30. The meeting welcomed the important sustainability aspects embedded in the proposed PoW, and made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Secretariat as appropriate with regard to the strengthening of a number of aspects and requested the Chair of the MCSD to present them to the MAP Focal Points meeting in September 2023.

**Agenda item 8: Inputs of the 20<sup>th</sup> MCSD Meeting to COP 23**

31. As per established practice, the input of the MCSD to the COP 23 will be based on the discussions held during the 20<sup>th</sup> MCSD meeting and especially the panel discussions on sustainable blue economy, as well as youth and women inclusion.

32. In addition, the meeting requested the Secretariat to share, once agreed by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Host Country, the main theme of the Ministerial segment of the COP 23 that would allow MCSD to provide a more tailored input to the Ministerial discussions and the Ministerial Declaration.

33. The meeting also agreed to establish an extended committee with participation of the MCSD Steering Committee and some additional MCSD members on voluntary basis, to be decided by end of June 2023 at the latest, which will work online to prepare the MCSD contribution to the COP 23 under the French leadership. Every effort should be made to share with the MAP Focal Points the MCSD input to COP23 before their meeting in September.

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

34. The meeting encouraged all Contracting Parties to join the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) on Plastics, as well as the HAC for Nature and People, especially in relation to the achievement of the 30X30 target on protected areas, noting that these are important priorities for COP 23.

35. The meeting welcomed the expression of interest of PAM in hosting the next meeting of the MCSD and suggested that the host and the exact date of the meeting (in May or June 2025) will be set at a later stage, considering the global calendar and logistical considerations.