

17th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention

Paris, France, 3 days the week of 6-10 February 2012
(As proposed by the Government of France)

- draft for discussion -

The Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Barcelona Convention takes place at an important juncture between CBD and Rio + 20. It also takes place at a time of significant changes around the Mediterranean basin demanding the strengthening of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) system activities to achieve its core goals working with others and through others while reinforcing its value added as a necessary bridge between the national and the global spheres.

1. Achieving the goal of a clean, healthy and productive Mediterranean

- **Reaffirming political commitments to conservation and sustainable development by adopting 11 priority goals for action**

The COP would be the opportunity for parties to agree on 11 Ecological Objectives that for the first time bring together the environmental and sustainability pillars of the Barcelona Convention (pollution, biodiversity and coastal management) in an integrated system specifying concrete targets and indicators. The “**Mediterranean Ecosystem Goals**” have been developed under MAP’s efforts to influence human activities through an adaptive strategy focused on concrete ecological and management priorities which will be periodically monitored, evaluated and revised. Such an approach will have important implications for the future of MAP as it will: expand its monitoring system from pollution only to also cover biodiversity and coastal management; focus attention on shared environmental information systems; and, revise/update/prioritize MAP action plans and other management actions resulting in positive impacts for the purposes of a clean, healthy and productive Mediterranean. It will also be the basis for the State of the Environment Report (SOER) which will be presented at the COP. The 11 Mediterranean Ecosystems Goals are attached.

Ministers could emphasize the coherence and synergies that these new priorities bring to related efforts at global and regional levels. They could agree on the importance of such work for the UN Regular Process of Assessment and Reporting of the state of the marine environment including socio-economic aspects as decided by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) and currently carried out under the auspices of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In this context, it could be agreed to build on the Mediterranean Integrated Assessment for the purposes of placing the Mediterranean in a leadership position for the first UN integrated assessment to take place in 2014. It could also be highlighted how these priorities also relate to relevant EU regional legislation such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

- **Renewing efforts and commitments to protect biodiversity in coherence with the Aichi Plan of Action adopted by the CBD**

While the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 sets strategic goals and objectives to promote a more effective conservation of biodiversity at global level, it provides also a flexible framework for the elaboration of national and regional objectives. In this context it calls on Organizations, such as the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), to play a significant role in coordinating and supporting national initiatives to achieve the goals and objectives agreed during the last meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD) which took place last year in Nagoya. In addition to its regional value, the legal and institutional framework for cooperation and mutual assistance between the Mediterranean countries to safeguard their marine and coastal biodiversity provided by UNEP/MAP is thus instrumental in reversing the loss in the Planet’s biodiversity.

Improved management and increased extension of marine protected areas in the Mediterranean is a priority. The COP provides an opportunity to discuss and agree on ways to advance the implementation of the Aichi Plan of Action agreed at CBD at Mediterranean level. With 4% of marine protected areas we are far from the 10% agreed at Nagoya. Most of them are of a small size and many suffer from management challenges. The Ministerial discussion could focus on ways to

increase the quantity and improve the quality of sites in the Mediterranean network of Marine Protected Areas, including in high seas, offering the opportunity to countries like Spain and France to issue a Declaration of intent to collaborate for the preparation of a SPAMI proposal including high sea zones. Considering that the conservation and the sustainable use of the marine living resources in the open-sea and deep-sea zones are among the regional challenges in the Mediterranean, the Ministerial discussion could address the need for the development and implementation of joint and/or coordinated programmes to collect scientific data on these zones. Such programmes will provide valuable information to the decision-making processes, at regional and national levels, so they will be based on solid scientific premises. They will also benefit the global process of identification of EBSAs launched under the CBD.

The Ministerial Declaration could also be the opportunity to welcome and encourage the establishment of a cooperation agreement between UNEP/MAP and CBD (being developed), signing an agreement between GFCM and the MAP for the purpose of enhancing the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean and strengthening the cooperation with the EEA for the purposes of monitoring and assessment.

2. Promoting better integrated regional governance in the Mediterranean

- **Getting ready to implement the ICZM Protocol**

The **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol (ICZM)** entered into force on 2010 in only two years since adoption, a record time in international law which shows the Contracting Parties recognized need to act on our coasts. This Protocol which is unique in the world offers an integrated vision of coastal areas and the basis for their sustainable development. With a view to move forward with its implementation, an Action Plan has been developed which is expected to be adopted during the COP. The Action Plan addresses legislative, policy, capacity building and awareness raising measures to advance implementation of this important instrument at regional and national level. Implementation of the Protocol requires improving coherence among the multiple layers of coastal governance particularly ensuring clear national frameworks for coastal protection and the engagement and commitment of local societies. The COP could aim to engage Mediterranean middle-size (or secondary) cities (those between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants) as the appropriate level for launching multi-stakeholder cooperation including industry, Government and civil society, by launching a network of *blue Mediterranean urban areas* in cooperation with relevant regional organizations such as CPMR/FOGAR, ARLEM.

Ministerial discussions

Two round-tables of Ministerial discussions could take place around the themes marine and coastal biodiversity and coastal management and cities having the advancement of the 11 Mediterranean Ecosystems Goals (MEG) as the background.

Side-events

Side-events could be planned also around the major COP themes. For example, innovative SCP practices by small and medium size enterprises around the Mediterranean. Events with local authorities and protection networks could also be envisaged.

Annex 1
11 Mediterranean Ecological Goals

Objective 1 – Biological diversity

Biological diversity is maintained or enhanced. The quality and occurrence of coastal and marine habitats and the distribution and abundance of coastal and marine species are in line with prevailing physiographic, hydrographic, geographic and climatic conditions.

Objective 2 – Non-indigenous species

Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem

Objective 3 - Harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish

Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock

Objective 4 – Marine food webs

Alterations to components of marine food webs caused by resource extraction or human-induced environmental changes do not have long-term adverse effects on food web dynamics and related viability

Objective 5 - Eutrophication

Human-induced eutrophication is prevented, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters.

Objective 6 – Sea floor integrity

Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats

Objective 7 – Hydrography

Alteration of hydrographic conditions does not adversely affect coastal and marine ecosystems

Objective 8 – Coastal Ecosystems and landscapes

The natural dynamics of coastal areas are maintained and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved

Objective 9 – Pollution

Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health

Objective 10 – Marine litter

Marine and coastal litter do not adversely affect coastal and marine environment

Objective 11 – Noise

Noise from human activities cause no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems