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Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 24-26 May 2023

**Report of the Meeting**

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## Report of the Meeting

### Introduction

1. In accordance with the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), Programme of Work 2022-2023 adopted by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021), the UNEP/MAP Secretariat (MED POL Programme) organized the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points. The Meeting was held in Athens, Greece from 24 to 26 May 2023.
2. The main objectives of the Meeting were to present:
  - a) the progress on the implementation of Programme of Work (PoW) activities carried out during the 2022-2023 biennium, undertaken by MED POL, along with the status of the technical implementation of the pollution-related Protocols of the Barcelona Convention including its monitoring and assessment aspects;
  - b) the final drafts of the Regional Plans for Agriculture, Aquaculture and Stormwater Management;
  - c) a number of technical guidelines addressing dumping of inert uncontaminated geological materials, wastewater and sludge treatment technologies as well as on up to date desalination technologies;
  - d) the new/updated IMAP assessment criteria for nutrients, contaminants and marine litter;
  - e) the proposed measures and related key messages to respond to the findings of the assessments related to pollution and litter clusters of the MED 2023 QSR; and
  - f) the proposed activities to be implemented during the next biennium for inclusion in the MAP Programme of Work 2024-2025 which will be executed by MED POL.

### Participation

3. The Meeting was attended by representatives from the following Contracting Parties: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab republic, Tunisia and Türkiye. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including the Mediterranean Action Plan/Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UNEP/MAP) were also represented.
4. The following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: The Regional Organization for Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden (PERSGA).
5. The following non-governmental organizations and other institutions were also represented as observers: Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture & Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE); the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET); the Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA); and the Human Environmental Association for Development (HEAD).
6. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention was represented by the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL). The following MAP Component also participated in the Meeting: The Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC).
7. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

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

8. The Meeting was opened at 9:30 AM on 24 May 2023 by UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mrs Tatjana Hema. In her opening remarks, she reminded the participants that the Meeting is expected to validate important deliverables at policy and technical levels in pollution prevention and control which were mandated to MED POL in the current biennium. She called on the Contracting Parties to inform about their work on implementation of the three Protocols (Land-based sources and activities protocol, the dumping protocol and the and hazardous waste protocol).

9. The Coordinator informed the Meeting about key achievements on the level of MAP leading to COP23 in Slovenia to be held in December 2023. She particularly referred to (i) the proclamation of the Mediterranean Sea as a sulphur oxide free emission area, noting that the Decision was approved by IMO with the view of ratifying Annex 6 by 2025 when the new system will enter into force; (ii) development of three legally binding regional plans, which upon adoption potentially by COP23, along with three other regional plans adopted by COP22, showcase the commitment of the Barcelona Convention to important up-to-date technical standards that enable the Countries to realize the SDGs and contribute to their efforts to achieve GES in the Mediterranean; and (iii) approval of SAP-BIO with common activities and targets concerning marine and coastal biodiversity which also illustrate the commitment of the region to marine protected areas. In this regard, the Coordinator noted that approval of SAP-BIO preceded the endorsement of the global framework for biodiversity conservation by one year (December 2022). She highlighted the opportunity gained in this occasion to consider pollution in the context of integration with ICZM and biodiversity vis-à-vis the traditional sectoral approach to addressing pollution problems.

10. The Coordinator presented to the Meeting other mandates UNEP/MAP is working on including the theme for COP23. She presented the proposed theme “switch to green Mediterranean; from Decisions to Actions.” She explained the aim of including the term “green” within this theme, noting that this term would enable the entire UNEP/MAP system to undertake a transformation from pollution to circular or biodiversity perspectives.

11. The Coordinator pointed out to UNEP/MAP’s leadership role in monitoring and assessment for almost 50 years. She indicated that this mandate does not only cover pollution; but extends also to other areas such as biodiversity and coast and hydrography. She indicated that the 2023 MED QSR provides an opportunity for the Countries to evaluate in a quantitative manner the current status of marine and coastal environment through concrete indicators. She linked pollution assessment to the corresponding obligations under the EU’s MSFD to which eight Contracting Parties have legal mandates. She also brought to the attention of the Meeting the section on measures developed further to the review of the QSR.

12. The Coordinator finally requested the Contracting Parties represented by the MED POL Focal Points to make every effort to ensure that colleagues working in designated water quality monitoring laboratories responsible for testing, data collection, or in charge of data recording in the MAP InfoSystem, are provided with all support needed to undertake their jobs effectively, including from the political level. She explained that this support is crucial due to the role of monitoring and assessment in the development of the right policy and examination of the status and effectiveness of the implemented policies. She pointed out that without quality-assured data, this aim cannot be achieved. In this regard, the Coordinator brought to the attention of the Meeting that MTF funding for monitoring and assessment can no longer be “fully” secured from MTF, particularly with the expanding scope of the monitoring indicators, and other priorities that UNEP/MAP is also working on. She indicated that the Secretariat is keen to allocate additional funds while requesting from the Contracting Parties to reflect on this aspect when discussions on the PoW for the 2024-2025 biennium will be held. She stressed on the importance for mobilizing additional funds and external resources to support monitoring and assessment. She indicated that while MTF funding continue to be allocated for designated laboratories in the framework of the Quality Assurance Programme currently under implementation with IAEA for the pollution part of contaminants; there is a need to mobilize

additional support in order to have necessary means to sustain this work by all laboratories around the Mediterranean.

## **Agenda item 2: Organizational matters**

### *a) Rules of Procedure for the Meeting*

13. The Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences 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 applied mutatis mutandis to the present Meeting (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI).

### *b) Election of Officers*

14. Subject to Rule 20 of the rules of procedure mentioned at para. 2(a) for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties, the Meeting elected one (1) President, three (3) Vice Presidents and one (1) Rapporteur from among the participants, as follows:

Chair: Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
Ms. Selma Cengic

First vice chair: France,  
Ms. Lugdiwine Burtschell

Second vice chair: Tunisia,  
Mr. Yassine Marzougui

Third vice chair: Türkiye,  
Mr. Mehmet Tamer Çobanoğlu

Rapporteur: Italy,  
Ms. Erika Magaletti

### *c) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda*

15. Subject to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure mentioned at para. 2(a), the proposed agenda appearing in document UNEP/MED WG.563/1 and annotated in the UNEP/MED WG.563/2 document was reviewed and accepted, as proposed by the Chair. Cyprus requested to add a presentation under agenda item 9 (Any Other Business) on the proceedings of the Sustainable Desalination Conference which was held in Limassol, Cyprus, on 22-23 May 2023. The Annotated Agenda was adopted with the proposed changes by the Meeting as appended in Annex II to the present document.

### *d) Organization of Work*

16. The discussions were proposed to be held in two daily plenary sessions, convened over three days, from 9:30 to 12:30 and 14:30 to 17:30.

17. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French was provided for all sessions. All documentation was available in English and French. Participants were encouraged to download the documentation onto their computers in advance of the session. The meeting was recorded for future reference.

18. The Meeting addressed all Agenda items during the three-day meeting. The Meeting closed on 26 May 2023 after adopting its Conclusions and Recommendations appended to this present document.

**Agenda item 3: Status of implementation activities by MED POL during 2022-2023 biennium**

19. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat introduced document UNEP/MED WG.563/3 which summarizes the progress made on the implementation of the main activities carried out by MED POL, in accordance with the Programme of Work 2022-2023 and the MAP Mid-Term Strategy (2022-2027) Programme 1 “Pollution and Litter Free Mediterranean Programme” and Programme 6 “Shared Vision of the Mediterranean Programme” including their related “Governance” elements. The Secretariat presented achievements made by MED POL, with a special note of the delivery of the pollution and marine litter chapters of the 2023 MED Quality Status Report (QSR); development of three new Regional Plans in accordance with Article 15 of the LBS Protocol and related guidance documents; upgrading the assessment component of IMAP including possible integrated assessment for all IMAP clusters; strengthening implementation of national IMAP-based monitoring programmes and delivering quality assured data; strengthening national capacities to apply harmonized and standardized monitoring and assessment practices related to pollution in line with IMAP; and updating the 2005 “Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Geological Materials” in synergy with the IMO London Protocol.

20. The Secretariat also presented its contribution to pilot actions to prevent, eliminate and dispose of obsolete chemicals under Child Project 1.1 of the GEF-funded MedProgramme, as well as support to implementation of ongoing projects and initiatives including cooperation agreement between UNEP/MAP and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, EU-funded EcAp Med II and IMAP-MPA projects.

21. Five Contracting Parties took the floor and indicated their appreciation of the volume and ambitious level of work accomplished by MED POL during this biennium. One Contracting Party indicated that there is a need for more frequent interactions with the Contracting Parties to allow more time for providing feedback for the Meeting documents, and not to leave this process for the last minute. The same Contracting Party pointed out the importance for activating the online working groups as a means that could help in this process. Another Contracting Party noted the need for countries to work on national monitoring and calibration exercises. One Contracting Party requested that they are provided with enough time for reviewing the related MED POL documents. Another Contracting Party stressed the need to reinforce the participation of countries in IMAP implementation. Yet one more Contracting Party indicated that work in QSR should be aligned with national monitoring exercises.

22. The Coordinator thanked MED POL for the effort made to implement the Programme of work (PoW). She also thanked the Contracting Parties and UNEP/MAP Partners for their collaboration in the implementation of the MED POL PoW. In response to the points raised by the Meeting, the Coordinator provided the following comments and insights:

- a. With regards to data reporting:
  - i. Delays in reporting data by the countries have resulted in the postponement of review of the first draft of QSR Chapters during the CORMONs from December 2022 to March 2023. This prevented the smooth interaction between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat.
  - ii. Another issue of concern is that level of data reported from each country is not the same. With varying number of data, results of assessment are affected and may be in some instances misleading. This point illustrates the importance of quality of data and the need for all countries to report.
  - iii. The Secretariat wishes to see a higher level of involvement by the Contracting Parties in the preparation of the next QSR. The Secretariat will provide support with the responsibility for data reporting remaining with the countries.
  - iv. The 6-year cycle for preparation of the QSR is a relatively short period considering that the last 2 years of the cycle should focus only on assessment and not on data

collection. This would allow more space for interactions with the Contracting Parties for the assessment products.

- b. Concerning the assessments:
  - i. Since data reporting was progressing until October 2022, draft assessments could not be timely finalized for pollution, litter and biodiversity.
  - ii. Every effort is being made to prepare also at sub-regional level. This is an important development which is done for the benefit of countries. It is also of benefit to the Contracting Parties who apply the MSFD.
  - iii. The Contracting Parties should take a leadership role in the preparation of the assessments. This point will be raised in the EcAp Coordination Group Meeting to be held in September 2023.
  - iv. During this biennium, a number of assessment criteria were prepared. Due consideration was given to work undertaken in the framework of the MSFD in order to align standards in the Mediterranean. MAP is actively participating and following up on the process.
  - v. The Secretariat is making every effort to use national data where possible; however, it should be recognized that there are limitations that may prevent their use. As a result, regional assessment findings might not be in line with the results of national assessments. What is important is to avoid contradiction, or to go in different directions. Based on the information from the current QSR, there is a good trend aligning national and regional assessments, with some discrepancies.
- c. Regarding the online working groups:
  - i. The Secretariat is preparing a proposal to the EcAp Coordination Group Meeting on the operational modalities of online working groups; however, it should be noted that the Secretariat cannot afford to work under the Rules of Procedure for the Barcelona Convention Meetings with online groups (i.e. , documents disseminated timely and in two languages, interpretation, etc.) as this modality entails significant expenses. The proposal would be to have these groups as input-oriented meaning those who are willing to contribute will work with the Secretariat.

23. The Coordinator informed the Meeting that the Secretariat will seek a mandate from COP23 to update the ecosystem approach roadmap, as well as to revise IMAP, noting that a similar process is underway in the framework of the MSFD, which UNEP/MAP wishes to benefit from and learn from its experience.

24. Mr. Arthur Pasquale, Deputy Director of INFO/RAC, provided his comments and responses with regards to points raised by the Contracting Parties on the IMAP InfoSystem, noting:

- a. The IMAP InfoSystem is currently completed at the level of indicators, including candidate indicators. The System is fully functional and is integrated with new functionalities available for MAP components and also for the Contracting Parties.
- b. Work in progress for preparation of NBB InfoSystem. Input of countries is being sought to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose.
- c. IMAP InfoSystem is not only a repository system. It has functionalities to ensure quality reporting. Many functionalities were implemented this biennium. This includes access to data download and search. What is missing at the present time is assessment component, which is under development.
- d. In order to ensure a better system suited for the QSR, it is possible to include in the InfoSystem the automated conversion of data.

- e. There is a new data policy adopted in COP 22. Data should be completed in a short period and made public. Publication is nevertheless subject to approval of each country.
- f. For the next biennium, INFO/RAC aims to integrate new functionalities for assessment that will be based on the results of the QSR.

25. Following his intervention, several Contracting Parties raised several issues for consideration. One Contracting Party elaborated on CI-20 where some compulsory fields for some data are required but are missing from the national database. The participant noted that this resulted in the non-use of the country's data for the QSR. The Contracting Party requested to consider optional uploading of compulsory fields of data. Another Contracting Party indicated that this issue is also observed for other indicators. One other Contracting Party indicated that this requirement should not block the Countries from uploading their data; while noting that they possess historical data which risk to be lost if it cannot be integrated within the IMAP InfoSystem.

26. INFO/RAC Deputy Director responded by indicating that the compulsory data fields for the indicators were agreed with the Contracting Parties. Any change to their contents and compulsory fields should come from the Contracting Parties themselves. He also explained that it is possible to upload data when certain compulsory fields are missing, and that the System would indicate that the file is non-compliant. However, this ensures that the data is preserved and can be visualized by the MAP Components.

27. UNEP/MAP Coordinator requested that the Contracting Parties advise the MAP Components when data are non-compliant and the ensuing course of action to follow; noting that this process should be automated within the InfoSystem. She stressed that the InfoSystem should be designed to facilitate work at the Country and Secretariat levels to avoid issues faced with the current QSR.

28. Another Contracting Party indicated that as the IMAP InfoSystem expanded to include indicators reported under other MAP Components, a question has arisen as to whom should be uploading and reporting on national data. The Coordinator indicated that this responsibility rests typically with the MAP Focal Point to arrange in a coordinated way who would have the credentials at the country level. INFO/RAC Deputy Director advised a three-level hierarchy consisting of (1) persons who directly elaborate the data; (2) institute of the country; (3) official release/formal approval of the data which can be allocated to the MAP Focal Point; while noting that it would be best to designate a specific person for each indicator.

29. The Meeting's final conclusions related to this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

#### **Agenda item 4: Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management**

30. Under this agenda item, Mr. Mohamad Kayyal, MED POL Programme Management Officer provided a comprehensive overview of the process for development of the three Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management as presented in documents UNEP/MED WG.563/4 "Final Draft Regional Plan on Agriculture Management," UNEP/MED WG.563/5 "Final Draft Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management," and UNEP/MED WG.563/6 "Final Draft Regional Plan on Urban Stormwater Management." He indicated that the Regional Plans, as included in these documents, have undergone two key revisions proposed by experts nominated by the Countries in the framework of two Regional Meetings held in October 2022 and May 2023. He explained that revisions addressed deadlines of the proposed measures and related technical aspects included mainly in the annexes to the Regional Plans.

31. The Meeting appreciated the work undertaken by the Secretariat and requested to undertake a final review of the text of the Regional Plans by relevant competent authorities with the view of



submitting their comments by 31 May 2023. The Secretariat agreed to transmit received comments to the attention of the MAP Focal Points for their consideration.

32. The EU stressed the need to undertake a review of the Regional Plans from a legal perspective adding that it would give its approval further to the review of the EU Council. The EU indicated that for this particular reason, comments will be submitted by 30 June 2023. The Secretariat agreed to the request and confirmed that it will include received comments from the EU in the Draft Decisions on the three Regional Plans to be presented for the consideration of the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points.

33. The Meeting endorsed transmission of the three Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management to the MAP Focal Points Meeting.

34. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

#### **Agenda item 5(a): Assessment of marine and Coastal Environment: New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter**

Under this agenda item, Ms. Jelena Knezevic, MED POL Monitoring and Assessment Officer and Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis, Associate Programme Management Officer (Marine Litter) presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/7 “New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter.” Both officers presented in detail a series of assessment criteria for pollution and marine litter cluster, including the under-review Baseline Value for IMAP CI23; all of which are used for development of the thematic assessment chapters for pollution and marine litter.

35. Further to the approval provided by the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring (27 and 30 May 2022) for (i): the new Background Concentrations (BC) and Background Assessment Concentrations (BAC) for IMAP Common Indicator 17; (ii) the Mediterranean EAC values for CI 20 which are based on the maximum regulatory levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs included in EC/EU Directives 1881/2006, 1259/2011 and amendments 488/2014 and 1005/2015; (iii) the new and updated reference conditions and boundary values of Chl *a*, TP and DIN for the Adriatic Sea Sub-region coastal and open (offshore) waters; and (iv) the possible approaches for future upgrade of EAC for IMAP Common Indicators 17 and 18, the Meeting endorsed the new and updated values for IMAP Common Indicators of EO5 and EO9 in the context of their use provided in the framework of the 2023 MED QSR preparation. By expressing appreciation for such significant work related to IMAP pollution assessment criteria, a few participants requested that future updates and further development of the assessment criteria take place as of the beginning of the next assessment cycle in close collaboration between the countries and the Secretariat. The participants noted that such action should result in the availability of optimally advanced assessment criteria, with increased relevance for the Mediterranean ecosystems, at least two years before the preparation of the next quality status report.

36. The Contracting Parties welcomed the work undertaken by the Secretariat towards providing and preparing, for the first time, an assessment based on quantifiable targets. The Meeting reviewed thoroughly the assessment criteria for IMAP EO10 Marine Litter, currently under-development. Several Contracting Parties expressed their concerns for the application of the “non-deterioration” approach for seafloor macro-litter, justifying that the resulting higher values provide the wrong message from a policy and target perspective. They also made specific reference to the need in establishing ambitious targets having as primary scope the protection of the marine and coastal environment. The meeting advised MED POL to further revise the said value (i.e. TV for seafloor macro-litter) by not taking into consideration the “non-deterioration” approach, through providing a common and consistent approach when elaborating TV for all marine litter indicators (i.e., IMAP CI22 beach macro-litter, IMAP CI23 seafloor macro-litter and floating microplastics).

37. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 5(b): Assessment of marine and Coastal Environment: Measures related to assessment findings of the 2023 MED QSR for Pollution and Marine Litter**

38. Under this agenda item, the MED POL Monitoring and Assessment Officer and the Associate Programme Management Officer (Marine Litter) presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/8 “Proposed measures related to assessment findings of the 2023 MED QSR for Pollution and Marine Litter” addressing policy and technical measures related to IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20 and 21 as well as on marine litter prevention and reduction, reflecting the assessment findings of the corresponding marine litter assessment chapter of the 2023 MED QSR for pollution and marine litter.

39. The Contracting Parties welcomed and endorsed the proposal after proposing several fine-tuning elements. Regarding measures related to Ecological Objectives 5 and 9, the following revisions were requested: (i) amending elaboration of the lack of data reporting with the lack of consistency with monitoring programmes adopted at the national scales as well as with routine measurements undertaken on parameters (e.g. for nutrients); (ii) amending the specific measures related to aquaculture by making their interrelation with the use of several strategies and guidelines developed by FAO, and by moving up the key three principles of the FAO/GFCM strategy from specific measures related to Ecological Objective 10 and marine traffic and marine and port operations by indicating that introduction of exhaust gas cleaning systems EGCS – scrubbers on ships may generate a new stream of shipping liquid wastes with dominant discharges of metals and PAH; therefore, causing transfer of the chemical pollution from air to marine waters; and iii) amending the technical measure related to the improvement of the IMAP IS database management by specifying that the pilot implementation of the Joint Monitoring Surveys should be strongly supported by detailed implementation plans and GES assessment by specifying that the modeling tools (e.g. for CI 13 and CI 14) are often specific to a given ecosystem and are difficult to standardize; therefore, indicating that their use needs to be associated to relevant uncertainties and acknowledged gaps.

40. In response to the comments of the participants, the Secretariat revised the proposal of the measures ensuring integration of the revision points in the meeting document UNEP/MED WG.563/8 with a view to improving the Proposals of the Pollution and Marine Litter Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR.

41. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 6: Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) 2023**

42. Under this agenda item, the MED POL Programme Management Officer introduced document UNEP/MED WG.563/9 “Main findings and recommendations of the TDA (2023) -Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.” He explained the process for updating the 2005 TDA as culminated into the 2023 TDA. He provided an overview of its main outcomes including the “a priori” transboundary shared problems (environmental changes) and socioeconomic challenges decided and classified along with their causes and impacts, and the “a posteriori” transboundary issues identified further to inputs and feedback obtained from scientists and experts at national and regional levels, as well as from countries’ stakeholders.

43. Several Contracting Parties provided comments on technical aspects of the report including the need to diagnose and highlight problems and new emerging issues including those which are not tackled already by the action programmes derived from the protocols and the COP decisions for future action items; the importance for expanding the diagnosis to the entire MED Coastal countries; the necessity to include specific national needs as identified in the National TDAs Reports, in particular

the areas which call for urgent actions in transboundary context; and the importance to build on and synergize the proposal of TDA priorities with the assessment findings and related gaps and needs as provided in the MED QSR 2023, with the aim to assist the Contracting Parties to tailor the NAPs.

44. The Secretariat agreed to receive comments on the 2023 TDA further to a final review to be undertaken by the Contracting Parties on a voluntary basis with the view of submitting their comments to the Secretariat by 15 July 2023 for integration into the TDA report.

45. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 7(a): Technical guidelines: Updated Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Inorganic Geological Materials**

46. Under this agenda item, Mr. Erol Cavus, MED POL Pollution Officer, presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/10 “Updated Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Inorganic Geological Materials.” He explained the updates to the Guidelines noting that these are based on recent global and regional developments found in the London Convention/London Protocol (LC/LP) International Maritime Organization (IMO) documents. He noted that these documents promote the use of valuable inert uncontaminated inorganic geological materials for alternative uses, as well as underlining the significant improvements on monitoring of disposal of inert, uncontaminated inorganic geological materials, in line with UNEP/MAP’s Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme based on the Ecosystem Approach.

47. The Contracting Parties welcomed the update of the Guidelines and requested the Secretariat also to consider the “colour” of the dumping material as part of the characteristics of the matter to be dumped.

48. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 7(b): Technical guidelines: Regional guideline on pre-treatment standards and applicable Best Available Technologies for industrial sectors eligible to discharge to urban wastewater collection systems**

49. Under this agenda item, the MED POL Pollution Officer presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/11 “Regional Guideline on Pre-Treatment Standards and Applicable BATs for Industrial Sectors Eligible to Discharge to Urban Wastewater Collection Systems.” He indicated that this document provides, in line with the requirement of the “Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management,” the knowhow to operators of wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities as well as regulators on the means by which undesired effects of direct discharges from eligible industrial facilities can be avoided including the collective discharges of pre-treated wastewater from Organized Industrial Zones.

50. The Contracting Parties welcomed the Guideline and did not introduce any modification. The Contracting parties endorsed the use of the Guideline in the implementation of the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management.

51. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 7(c): Technical guidelines: Regional guideline on available treatment technologies for urban wastewater and sewage sludge and decision support systems (DSS) for their selection**

52. Under this agenda item, the MED POL Pollution Officer presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/12 “Regional Guideline on Available Treatment Technologies for Urban Wastewater and Sewage Sludge and Decision Support Systems (DSS) for their Selection.” He explained that the Guideline elaborates on a number of technical measures as stipulated by the Regional Plans for the Treatment of Wastewater and Sewage Sludge Management including reclamation and reuse of treated wastewater; efficient operation and energy/nutrients recovery from treatment processes; and use of alternative energy sources based on advanced technologies with a proposal of a tailor-made Decision Support Systems (DSS) for prioritization of those technologies.

53. One Contracting Party submitted a written comment, which was shared with the Meeting in session proposing consideration of “Super Critical Water Oxidation (SCWO)” treatment process to be elaborated as a new energy technology in the Guideline. The Meeting accepted the proposal, and the Secretariat incorporated the proposal in the Guideline accordingly.

54. The Contracting Parties endorsed the use of the Guideline in the implementation of the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management.

55. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 7(d): Technical guidelines: Guideline on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean**

56. Under this agenda item, the MED POL Pollution Officer presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/13 “Guideline on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean.” He described the common discharge standards included in the Guideline for desalination plants to be established as available state of the art desalination technologies and their possible implementation and Decision Support Systems (DSS) aiming to assist policy makers/facilities’ operators in selection of the appropriate treatment technologies to achieve sustainable desalination.

57. One Contracting Party submitted a number of written comments, which were shared with the Meeting in session, requesting consideration of a risk-based application of brine ELVs in Table 3 of the Guideline with the aim of reducing costs entailed from proposed monitoring and the limited resources in some of the Contracting Parties. The Secretariat responded by introducing additional explanation to Table 3, indicating the possibility to use the risk-based approach as agreed in the Regional Plan for Urban Wastewater Treatment. The Meeting agreed with the additional modifications and endorsed the use of the Guideline and its recommended standards and monitoring frequencies.

58. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 8: MED POL Activities 2024-2025**

59. Under this Agenda item, the Secretariat presented document UNEP/MED WG.563/14 describing the proposed MED POL Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025. The Secretariat explained the rationale for developing the Programme of Work, its targets and key activities. The Secretariat presented each output planned under Programme 1 “Pollution and Litter Free

Mediterranean Programme” and Programme 6 “Shared Vision of the Mediterranean Programme” of the MAP Mid-Term Strategy (2022-2027) was made.

60. Several participants raised the issue of the sufficiency of funding and prioritization of planned activities as crucial for implementation of the proposed MED POL activities within the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work. Other participants noted that it is difficult to comment on the activities without prior knowledge of available financing. The Coordinator responded by noting that the MAP Focal Points had requested that the focal points of the MAP Components should ensure that the proposed activities are in line with the mid-term strategy and are feasible to implement technically; ultimately leading to the delivery of the mandated activities within the components’ PoW. She indicated that the MED POL Focal Points are expected to endorse the proposed activities, as amended, and recommend to the Secretariat to include them in the MAP PoW for the consideration of the MAP Focal Points.

61. The Coordinator provided an overview of the human resource base of MED POL which is foreseen to implement the proposed activities. She noted that support for implementation will be also made available through EU-funded projects, the GEF-funded MedProgramme, in addition to MTF funds. She highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation with the Countries to support UNEP/MAP PoW activities, with special reference to Italy and France. She indicated that the priority for the next biennium will be for developing the NAPs and estimating pollution loads (NBB); a process which aims to inform the Countries about priority national actions for reducing impacts of discharges from land-based sources and activities, particularly further to the approval of the legally binding Regional Plans. In this regard, one Contracting Party requested support for implementation of the measures of the Regional Plans. The Coordinator concurred on the need for additional financial resources for implementation of the Regional Plans, particularly with the approaching deadline of 2030.

62. The Meeting raised concerns on the proposed activity 1.2.1 planned to deliver the “state of play of offshore windfarms operations as well as guidelines of potentially legally binding nature on offshore windfarm installations. Some participants questioned the validity of placing this activity under Article 15 of the LBS protocol. Others agreed with its importance but noted that they cannot decide yet on the legally binding nature of this guideline. Other participants noted that it is premature to develop legally binding measures for wind farms. Some participants questioned whether this activity should be carried out under the Offshore Protocol. Yet another indicated that windfarms fall under the category of renewable energy; questioning at the same time whether offshore wind farms are a priority to tackle under renewable energy sources. The Coordinator indicated that including windfarms in the PoW activities for MED POL was based on the consent of the Countries. She highlighted the need to assess the current situation of windfarms in the Mediterranean as these are becoming problematic for biodiversity and noise. She drew the attention of the Meeting to the approach of UNEP/MAP to be ahead of the problem before the situation gets out of control. She confirmed that further to a legal analysis undertaken by the Secretariat, the LBS Protocol is justified for windfarms under Article 15. She proposed to alter the text to state “a state of play or best practices meeting on initial experiences” for the consideration of the Meeting prior to preparation of guidelines and/or Regional Plans; noting at the same time that assessment of renewable energies falls under the mandate of Plan Bleu. The Meeting agreed to amend the deliverable under activity 1.2.1 with the view to prepare a study on the “state of play of marine renewable energies including offshore windfarms in the Mediterranean,” while deleting the deliverable related to preparation of guidelines on offshore windfarms.

63. One Contracting Party requested to include scrubbers on ships which are responsible for discharge of significant amounts of sulphur to the Mediterranean. The Coordinator confirmed that this process falls under the Offshore Protocol and is handled by REMPEC.

64. A few Contracting Parties requested support for the application of the assessment methodologies at the national level, along with the organization of field surveys to ensure optimal level of monitoring efforts and to capitalize on the significant achievements related to the 2023 MED

QSR. The Coordinator indicated that financing monitoring activities is costly, and countries should not depend fully on UNEP/MAP for this purpose. She stressed that Countries should plan to allocate resources from their own national budgets, even though joint financing from UNEP/MAP may be possible in countries eligible for project support by the EU and/or GEF.

65. One Contracting Party raised concern about the need to address new emerging pollutants, particularly Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS). The Coordinator indicated that emerging pollutants are not included in IMAP as they are costly to measure. She stressed the need to assess their widespread distribution in the region including PFOS. As for POPs, she indicated that MED POL and MedWaves (SCP/RAC) should collaborate together in this domain, noting that a decision should be made on whether POPs should be addressed by MED POL as the case was previously, or should remain under the mandate of MedWaves. Finally, the Coordinator explained that MedWaves is currently involved through the GEF-funded Child Project 1.1 (MedProgramme) in the implementation of measures aiming for the reduction and prevention of PFOS in GEF eligible countries in the region.

66. In response to the inquiry on the calendar of meetings, the Coordinator explained that by end of 2023, a MED POL calendar of meetings will be issued fixing the dates of meetings for the year 2024. For 2025, the calendar will be prepared shortly thereafter. With regards to the remaining meetings for 2023, the Coordinator briefed the MED POL Focal Points on the upcoming Meeting of Best Practices for application of the Guidelines for estimating pollutant loads from agriculture and aquaculture and for developing preliminary elements for the new NAPs. She informed that all MED POL Focal Points will be invited to discuss the conceptual framework for preparation of the new NAPs and their main elements. She also highlighted the importance of undertaking the NBB/PRTR exercise by the Countries as a means for obtaining clear evidence on where we stand in terms of pollutants types and how we will address the loads of pollutants in the measures developed in the context of the Regional Plans. The Coordinator indicated that in the current biennium, focus was on the MED QSR. In the next biennium, consideration is on the loads of pollutants and the link between causes and impacts, to which policy measures will be proposed in the new NAPs. She noted that MTF funds will be allocated for this work while external resources will be mobilized to ensure delivery of these priority activities.

67. The Meeting took note of the points raised by the Secretariat and endorsed as appropriate MED POL activities further to incorporating the Countries' inputs and comments. The Meeting mandated the Secretariat to integrate MED POL activities into the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work proposal for the biennium 2024-2025 and recommended its submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting in September 2023.

68. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

#### **Agenda item 9: Any Other Business**

69. Under this agenda item, a presentation was given by Dr. Dimitris Xevgenos, (Water-Mining Project) on the topic of sustainable desalination, sharing some of the results from the EU-funded project. He explained that the project includes, inter alia, two large scale demonstrations on renewable powered desalination and sustainable brine management systems in Lampedusa Island (Italy) and Almeria (Spain). He also shared some of the findings from the "Circular & Decarbonized Desalination workshop" that took place in Cyprus on 22 May 2023 with participation of UNEP/MAP.

#### **Agenda item 10: Conclusions and Recommendations**

70. The Meeting reviewed, commented on, and approved the draft Conclusions and Recommendations as amended and attached to the present report as Annex III including its appendices as revised as appropriate by the meeting.

**Agenda item 11: Closure of the Meeting**

71. After expressing the usual courtesies, the Chair declared the Meeting closed at 17:30 on Friday 26 May 2023.

**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**



**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES / REPRESENTANTS DES  
PARTIES CONTRACTANTES**

<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE</b>	<b>Ms. Selma Cengic</b> Executive Director Hydro Engineering Department Hydro Engineering Institute Sarajevo
<b>CYPRUS / CHYPRE</b>	<b>Mr. Antoniadis Konstantinos</b> Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
<b>EGYPT / EGYPTE</b>	<b>Mr. Sameh Ayoub</b> Director General of Environmental Quality and Labs Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)
<b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE</b>	<b>Ms. Trudy Higgins</b> DG Environment Water Expert
<b>FRANCE / FRANCE</b>	<b>Ms. Lugdiwine Burtschell</b> Ministry of Ecological Transition Marine Environment Assessment and Protection Office
<b>GREECE / GRECE</b>	<b>Ms. Stylogianni Aikaterini</b> Environmental Scientist, Ministry of Environment and Energy  <b>Ms. Charisi Styliani</b> Ministry of Environment and Energy
<b>ISRAEL / ISRAEL</b>	<b>Mr. Ran Amir</b> Director MEPD, Ministry of Environmental Protection
<b>ITALY / ITALIE</b>	<b>Ms. Erika Magaletti</b> Senior Research Scientist, ISPRA
<b>LEBANON / LIBAN</b>	<b>Bassam Sabbagh</b> Head of Urban Environment service Ministry of Environment
<b>MONACO / MONACO</b>	<b>Mr. Philippe Antognelli</b> Head of Section at Direction de l'Environnement
<b>MONTENEGRO / MONTENEGRO</b>	<b>Ms. Mitrovic Ivana</b> Environmental Protection Agency
<b>MOROCCO / MAROC</b>	<b>Mr. Mohammed El Bouch</b> Director, Department of Sustainable Development

<b>SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE</b>	<b>Ms. Mateja Poje</b> Slovene Environment Agency  <b>Mr. Uros Robic</b> Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
<b>SPAIN / ESPAGNE</b>	<b>Ms. Sánchez Beatriz</b> Head of Human Activities and Marine Pollution Department
<b>SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC / REPULIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE</b>	<b>Mr. Ahmad Naman</b> Ministry of Local Administration and Environment
<b>TUNISIA / TUNISIE</b>	<b>Mr. Yassine Marzougui</b> National Environmental Protection Agency
<b>TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE</b>	<b>Mr. Mehmet Tamer Çobanoğlu</b> Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Expert
<b>OBSERVER PALESTINE / PALESTINE</b>	<b>Ms. Draid Doaa</b> Environment Quality Authority

**REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND  
OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS / REPRESENTANTS DES  
INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISEES DES NATIONS UNIES ET AUTRES  
ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES**

<b>THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE RED SEA &amp; GULF OF ADEN</b>	<b>Mr Mohammed Ismail Ahmed</b> Coordinator of Economic valuation and Sensitivity mapping
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**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES**

<b>MEDITERRANEAN INFORMATION OFFICE FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE &amp; SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MIO-ECSDE)</b>	<b>Ms. Thomais Vlachogianni</b> Senior Programme/Policy Officer  <b>Mr. Haris Paliogiannis</b> Policy Officer
<b>MEDITERRANEAN ASSOCIATION TO SAVE THE SEA TURTLES (MEDASSET)</b>	<b>Mr. Georgios Sampson</b> Director
<b>HELLENIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (HELMEPA)</b>	<b>Mr. Triantafillou Constantinos</b> Head of Strategy & Development
<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (HEAD)</b>	<b>Ms. Merhej Seif Marie Therese</b> Chairman& Executive director

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME – COORDINATING UNIT AND  
COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT – UNITÉ DE  
COORDINATION ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

<p><b>UNEP/MAP COORDINATING UNIT PNUE/PAM UNITÉ DE COORDINATION</b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Tatjana Hema</b> Coordinator – UNEP/MAP Email: <a href="mailto:tatjana.hema@un.org">tatjana.hema@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Mohamad Kayyal</b> MED POL Programme Management Officer Email: <a href="mailto:mohamad.kayyal@un.org">mohamad.kayyal@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Jelena Knezevic</b> MED POL Monitoring and Assessment Officer Email: <a href="mailto:jelena.knezevic@un.org">jelena.knezevic@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Erol Cavus</b> MED POL Pollution Control Officer Email: <a href="mailto:erol.cavus@un.org">erol.cavus@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis</b> Associate Project Manager   Marine Litter MED II Project Email: <a href="mailto:christos.ioakeimidis@un.org">christos.ioakeimidis@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mrs Olfat Hamdan</b> MedProgramme Management Officer Email: <a href="mailto:olfat.hamdan@un.org">olfat.hamdan@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mrs Patrizia Busolini</b> Programme Management Officer, EcAp Med III E-mail: <a href="mailto:patrizia.busolini@un.org">patrizia.busolini@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr Philippe Théou</b> IMAP-MPA Project Manager E-mail: <a href="mailto:philippe.theou@un.org">philippe.theou@un.org</a></p> <p><b><u>Experts:</u></b></p> <p><b>Mr. Antoine Allam</b> Consultant, Stormwater Email: <a href="mailto:antoine.allam@hotmail.com">antoine.allam@hotmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Dimitris Tsotsos</b> Consultant, Chemical Engineer Email: <a href="mailto:tsotsosd@gmail.com">tsotsosd@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Efrat Meeder</b> Consultant, Oceanography and Biogeochemistry Email: <a href="mailto:efratmeeder@gmail.com">efratmeeder@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Gianluca Sara'</b> Consultant, Aquaculture Email: <a href="mailto:gsara.unipa@gmail.com">gsara.unipa@gmail.com</a></p>
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	<p><b>Mr. Jorge Reuven Tarchitzky</b> Consultant, Agriculture Email: <a href="mailto:jorge.tarchitz@mail.huji.ac.il">jorge.tarchitz@mail.huji.ac.il</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Marina Markovic</b> Consultant, Environmental economist Email: <a href="mailto:marina.markovic@t-com.me">marina.markovic@t-com.me</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Nigmat Uzal</b> Consultant, Treatment Technologies on desalination, wastewater and sludge Email: <a href="mailto:nimetuzal@gmail.com">nimetuzal@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (INFO/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR L'INFORMATION ET LA COMMUNICATION (CAR/INFO)</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Arthur Pasquale</b> Deputy Director</p> <p><b>Ms. Francesca Catini</b> IMAP &amp; NBB Officer</p>

**Annex II**  
**Agenda of the Meeting**

### Agenda of the Meeting

- Agenda item 1:** Opening of the Meeting.
- Agenda item 2:** Organizational Matters.
- Agenda item 3:** Status of implementation activities by MED POL during 2022-2023 biennium.
- Agenda item 4:** Regional Plans on agriculture, aquaculture and stormwater management.
- Agenda item 5:** Assessment of marine and Coastal Environment:
- a) New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter.
  - b) Measures related to assessment findings of the 2023 MED QSR for Pollution and Marine Litter.
- Agenda item 6:** Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) 2023.
- Agenda item 7:** Technical guidelines:
- a) Updated Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Inorganic Geological Materials.
  - b) Regional guideline on pre-treatment standards and applicable Best Available Technologies for industrial sectors eligible to discharge to urban wastewater collection systems.
  - c) Regional guideline on available treatment technologies for urban wastewater and sewage sludge and decision support systems (DSS) for their selection.
  - d) Guideline on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean.
- Agenda item 8:** MED POL Activities 2024-2025.
- Agenda item 9:** Any other business.
- Agenda item 10:** Conclusions and recommendations.
- Agenda item 11:** Closure of the Meeting.



**Annex III**

**Conclusions and Recommendations / conclusions et recommandations**

On 24-26 May 2023, the MED POL Focal Points Meeting was held in Athens, Greece. The Meeting was organized by UNEP/MAP Secretariat (MED POL Programme).

Further to its deliberations, the Meeting reached the following conclusions:

**Agenda item 3: Status of implementation activities by MED POL during 2022-2023 biennium**

1. Following the presentation by the Secretariat of Working document UNEP/MED WG.563/3: “Progress of the Implementation of the MAP Programme of Work 2022-2023 related to Land Based Pollution and Governance Themes executed by MED POL,” the Meeting acknowledged the progress achieved and appreciated the work undertaken by MED POL and the Contracting Parties to achieve the planned outputs as mandated in the PoW for the biennium 2022-2023, with special mention of the work in progress for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution and Marine Litter Chapters.
2. The Meeting called for caution in the planning of the future assessment cycle in order to ensure the following:
  - i) Optimal workflow, including allocation of sufficient time for the Contracting Parties to provide substantive expertise, along with the setting of mechanisms to scientifically support future work of MED POL related to monitoring and assessment of marine environment;
  - ii) Optimal quantity and quality data reporting and the need for significant improvement of data management in IMAP Information System;
  - iii) Further streamlining of the assessment methodologies and upgrading the assessment criteria; and
  - iv) The need to address capacity building requirements for the Contracting Parties regarding the use of the IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter assessment methodologies and application of harmonized and standardized monitoring practices.

**Agenda item 4: Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management**

3. The Meeting reviewed the final draft Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management further to the modifications and amendments agreed by the designated experts to the Working Groups in their 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held back-to-back with this Meeting. The Meeting concurred with all introduced modifications and endorsed the transmission of the updated Regional Plans, as presented in Appendix I, to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points.
4. The Meeting appreciated the work undertaken by the Secretariat and requested that the Contracting Parties undertake a final review by relevant competent authorities of the Regional Plans with the aim of submitting their comments to the Secretariat by 31 May 2023. The Secretariat will transmit received comments to the attention of the MAP Focal Points for their consideration.

**Agenda item 5: Assessment of Marine and Coastal Environment:**

**a) New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter**

5. Following on the submission of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.563/7 “New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter” as agreed by the Meetings of CorMon Pollution of 27 & 30 May 2022 and CorMon Marine Litter of 3 March 2023, the Meeting: (i) endorsed the new and updated values for IMAP Common Indicators of EO5 and EO9, and (ii) took note of the proposed baseline values for IMAP EO10 Common Indicator 23.
6. The Meeting endorsed the integration of the said assessment criteria into the respective Decision related to the 2023 MED QSR foreseen for submission to COP 23, following on their use for the present preparation of the Pollution and Marine Litter Chapters. The Meeting emphasized on the evolving nature of the assessment criteria and the necessity to undertake their regular update at least 2

years prior to the preparation of the next MED QSR. Moreover, the Meeting expressed concerns regarding the application of the “non-deterioration” approach for seafloor macro-litter (IMAP CI23). Accordingly, the Meeting proposed a new title for the document described as follows: “New/Updated IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter within the framework of preparation of the 2023 MED QSR”.

**b) Measures related to assessment findings of the 2023 MED QSR for Pollution and Marine Litter**

7. The Meeting approved the measures proposed in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.563/8 “Proposed Measures Related to Assessment Findings of the 2023 MED QSR for Pollution and Marine Litter” for IMAP Common Indicators 13 & 14; 17, 18, 20, 21, 22 and 23, and proposed their integration into the respective Pollution and Marine Litter Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR, further to addressing modifications under paragraphs 2, 20, 25, 29, 33, 59 and 60.

8. The Meeting recognized the importance of revising the frequency from the present five-year assessment cycle to eight-year assessment cycle for the preparation of the future MED QSR, to ensure optimal workflow and alignment with the frequency of the current monitoring practices of the CPs.

**Agenda item 6: Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) 2023**

9. The Meeting discussed the “Main findings and recommendations of the TDA (2023) - Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.” The Meeting took note of the regional assessment of pollution and coastal and marine ecosystems, with the analysis of their causes and effects, and the transboundary prioritized environmental concerns. The Meeting agreed that Contracting Parties would undertake on a voluntary basis a final review of the 2023 TDA with the aim of submitting their comments to the Secretariat by 15 July 2023 for integration into the TDA report.

**Agenda item 7: Technical guidelines:**

**a) Updated Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Inorganic Geological Materials.**

10. The Meeting reviewed the “Updated Guidelines for the Dumping of Inert Uncontaminated Inorganic Geological Materials” (UNEP/MED WG.563/10), and endorsed its transmission, with minor modifications, as amended and presented in Appendix 4, to the MAP Focal Points Meeting.

**b) Regional guideline on pre-treatment standards and applicable Best Available Technologies for industrial sectors eligible to discharge to urban wastewater collection systems.**

11. The Meeting reviewed the “Regional Guideline on Pre-Treatment Standards and Applicable BATs for Industrial Sectors Eligible to Discharge to Urban Wastewater Collection Systems,” (UNEP/MED WG.563/11). The Meeting endorsed the Guidelines and recommended their use by the Contracting Parties, as presented in Appendix 5 to this report.

**c) Regional guideline on available treatment technologies for urban wastewater and sewage sludge and decision support systems (DSS) for their selection.**

12. The Meeting reviewed the “Regional Guideline on Available Treatment Technologies for Urban Wastewater and Sewage Sludge and Decision Support Systems (DSS) for their Selection” (UNEP/MED WG.563/12). The Meeting endorsed the Guideline with minor modifications and recommended its use by the Contracting Parties, as presented in Appendix 6 to this report.

**d) Guideline on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean.**

13. The Meeting reviewed the “Guideline on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean, (UNEP/MED WG.563/13). The Meeting endorsed the Guideline with minor modifications and recommended its use by the Contracting Parties, as presented in Appendix 7 to this report.

**Agenda item 8: MED POL Activities 2024-2025**

14. The Meeting took note of MED POL activities under the Programme of Work for the new biennium 2024-2025 and endorsed its inclusion in MAP Programme of Work, while stressing the importance of ensuring the allocation of sufficient financial resources for implementation of the MED POL activities under the Programme of Work.

15. The Meeting took note of MED POL priorities under the Programme of Work for the new biennium 2024-2025 aiming to develop the NAPs/PoMs, and inventorying and assessing the loads of pollutants through NBB/PRTR system, as well as implementation of national IMAPs.

16. The Meeting took note of MED POL’s proposal for assessing the state of play of offshore windfarms under activity 1.2.1(a) and for developing guidelines/legally binding measures in line with article 15 of the LBS Protocol under activity 1.2.1(b). The Meeting decided to delete activity 1.2.1(b) while requesting the need to expand the scope of activity 1.2.1(a) to address marine renewable energies including offshore windfarms in the Mediterranean.

17. Acknowledging the important emerging issue of offshore renewable energies and their possible implications on the marine environment, the Meeting calls the MAP Focal Points to have an in-depth discussion on the ways and means to include this subject as a main topic in the UNEP/MAP near-future Programme of Work.

La réunion des points focaux du MED POL s'est tenue à Athènes, Grèce, du 24 au 26 mai 2023. La réunion était organisée par le Secrétariat du PNUE/PAM (Programme MED POL).

A l'issue de ses délibérations, la réunion est parvenue aux conclusions suivantes :

**Point 3 de l'ordre du jour: Progrès de la mise en œuvre par le MED POL au cours de l'exercice biennal 2022-2023**

1. Suite à la présentation par le Secrétariat du document de travail UNEP/MED WG.563/3 : « Progrès de la mise en œuvre du programme de travail du PAM 2022-2023 relatif aux thèmes de la pollution d'origine tellurique et de la gouvernance exécuté par le MED POL », la réunion a reconnu les progrès accomplis et apprécié le travail entrepris par le MED POL et les Parties contractantes pour atteindre les produits prévus conformément au programme de travail pour l'exercice biennal 2022-2023, avec une mention spéciale du travail en cours pour la préparation du MED QSR 2023 Pollution et Chapitres sur les Déchets Marins.

2. La Réunion a appelé à la prudence dans la planification du futur cycle d'évaluation afin de garantir les points suivants :

- i) Flux de travail optimal, y compris l'assurance d'un temps suffisant aux Parties contractantes pour fournir une expertise de fond, ainsi que la mise en place de mécanismes pour soutenir scientifiquement les travaux futurs du MED POL liés à la surveillance et à l'évaluation du milieu marin ;
- ii) Rapports des données d'une quantité et qualité optimale et nécessité d'une amélioration significative de la gestion des données dans le système d'information IMAP ;
- iii) Une plus grande rationalisation des méthodologies d'évaluation et mettre à jour les critères d'évaluation ; et
- iv) La nécessité de répondre aux exigences de renforcement des capacités des Parties contractantes concernant l'utilisation des méthodologies d'évaluation de la pollution et des déchets marins de l'IMAP et l'application de pratiques de surveillance harmonisées et normalisées.

**Point 4 de l'ordre du jour: Plans régionaux sur l'agriculture, l'aquaculture et la gestion des eaux pluviales urbaines**

3. La réunion a examiné les projets finaux de plans régionaux sur l'agriculture, l'aquaculture et la gestion des eaux pluviales urbaines suite aux modifications et amendements convenus par les experts désignés pour les groupes de travail lors de leur 2<sup>e</sup> réunion tenue juste avant cette réunion. La Réunion a approuvé toutes les modifications introduites et a approuvé la transmission des Plans régionaux mis à jour, tels que présentés à l'Appendice I à la Réunion des Points focaux du PAM.

4. La réunion a apprécié le travail entrepris par le Secrétariat et a demandé que les Parties contractantes entreprennent un examen final par les autorités compétentes concernées des plans régionaux dans le but de soumettre leurs commentaires au Secrétariat avant le 31 mai 2023. Le Secrétariat transmettra les commentaires reçus à l'attention des Points focaux du PAM en vue d'être examinés.

**Point 5 de l'ordre du jour : Évaluation de l'environnement marin et côtier :**

**a) Critères d'évaluation IMAP nouveaux/mis à jour pour les éléments nutritifs, les contaminants et les déchets marins**

5. Suite à la soumission du document de travail UNEP/MED WG.563/7 "Critères d'évaluation IMAP nouveaux/mis à jour pour les nutriments, les contaminants et les déchets marins" comme convenu par les réunions de CorMon Pollution des 27 et 30 mai 2022 et de CorMon Marine Litter du 3 mars 2023, la réunion : (i) a approuvé les valeurs nouvelles et mises à jour pour les indicateurs

communs IMAP de l'OE5 et de l'OE9, et (ii) a pris note des valeurs de référence proposées pour l'indicateur commun 23 de l'IMAP EO10.

6. La réunion a approuvé l'intégration desdits critères d'évaluation dans la décision respective relative au MED QSR 2023 prévu pour soumission à la COP 23, suite à leur utilisation pour la préparation actuelle des chapitres sur la pollution et les déchets marins. La réunion a souligné la nature évolutive des critères d'évaluation et la nécessité d'entreprendre leur mise à jour régulière au moins 2 ans avant la préparation du prochain MED QSR. En outre, la réunion a exprimé des préoccupations concernant l'application de l'approche de « non-détérioration » pour les macro-déchets du fond marin (IMAP CI23). En conséquence, la réunion a proposé un nouveau titre pour le document décrit comme suit : "Critères d'évaluation IMAP nouveaux/mis à jour pour les éléments nutritifs, les contaminants et les déchets marins dans le cadre de la préparation du MED QSR 2023".

**b) Mesures liées aux résultats de l'évaluation du MED QSR 2023 pour la pollution et les déchets marins**

7. La réunion a approuvé les mesures proposées dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.563/8 "Mesures proposées liées aux résultats de l'évaluation du QSR MED 2023 pour la pollution et les déchets marins" pour les indicateurs communs 13 et 14 de l'IMAP ; 17, 18, 20, 21, 22 et 23, et a proposé leur intégration dans les chapitres respectifs sur la pollution et les déchets marins du MED QSR 2023, suite aux modifications apportées aux paragraphes 2, 20, 25, 29, 33, 59 and 60.

8. La réunion a reconnu l'importance de réviser la fréquence du cycle d'évaluation actuel de cinq ans à un cycle d'évaluation de huit ans pour la préparation du futur MED QSR, afin d'assurer un flux de travail optimal et un alignement avec la fréquence des pratiques de surveillance actuelles des PC.

**Point 6 de l'ordre du jour: Analyse diagnostique transfrontalière (ADT) 2023**

9. La réunion a discuté des "Principales conclusions et recommandations de l'ADT (2023) - Analyse diagnostique transfrontalière pour la mer et la côte méditerranéennes". La réunion a pris note de l'évaluation régionale de la pollution et des écosystèmes côtiers et marins, à l'analyse de leurs causes et effets, et des préoccupations environnementales transfrontalières prioritaires. La réunion a demandé que les Parties contractantes entreprennent sur une base volontaire un examen final de l'ADT 2023 dans le but de soumettre leurs commentaires à examen au Secrétariat d'ici le 15 juillet 2023 pour intégration dans le rapport de l'ADT.

**Point 7 de l'ordre du jour: Directives techniques :**

**a) Lignes directrices actualisées pour l'immersion de matériaux géologiques inertes et inorganiques non contaminés**

10. La réunion a examiné les "Lignes directrices actualisées pour l'immersion de matériaux géologiques inertes et inorganiques non contaminés" (UNEP/MED WG.563/10) et a approuvé sa transmission, avec des modifications mineures, telle qu'amendée et présentée à l'annexe 4, au PAM Réunion des points focaux.

**b) Lignes directrices régionales sur les normes de prétraitement et les meilleures technologies disponibles applicables pour les secteurs industriels éligibles au rejet dans les systèmes de collecte des eaux usées urbaines.**

11. La réunion a examiné la « Directive régionale sur les normes de prétraitement et les MTD applicables pour les secteurs industriels éligibles au rejet dans les systèmes de collecte des eaux usées urbaines » (UNEP/MED WG.563/11). La Réunion a approuvé les Lignes directrices et recommandé leur utilisation par les Parties contractantes, telles que présentées à l'Appendice 5 au présent rapport.

**c) Ligne directrice régionale sur les technologies de traitement disponibles pour les eaux usées urbaines et les boues d'épuration et les systèmes d'aide à la décision (DSS) pour leur sélection.**

12. La réunion a examiné la « Ligne directrice régionale sur les technologies de traitement disponibles pour les eaux usées urbaines et les boues d'épuration et les systèmes d'aide à la décision (DSS) pour leur sélection. » (UNEP/MED WG.563/12). La Réunion a approuvé la Directive avec des modifications mineures et a recommandé son utilisation par les Parties contractantes, comme présenté à l'Appendice 6 de ce rapport.

**d) Lignes directrices sur les normes réglementaires pour les rejets des usines de dessalement et systèmes d'aide à la décision pour des technologies de dessalement durables en Méditerranée**

13. La réunion a examiné la « Lignes directrices sur les normes réglementaires pour les rejets des usines de dessalement et systèmes d'aide à la décision pour des technologies de dessalement durables en Méditerranée » (UNEP/MED WG.563/13). La Réunion a approuvé la Directive avec des modifications mineures et a recommandé son utilisation par les Parties contractantes, comme présenté à l'Appendice 7 au présent rapport.

**Point 8 de l'ordre du jour: Activités MED POL 2024-2025**

14. La réunion a pris note des activités du MED POL dans le cadre du programme de travail pour le nouvel exercice biennal 2024-2025 et a approuvé son inclusion dans le programme de travail du PAM, tout en soulignant l'importance d'assurer l'allocation de ressources financières suffisantes pour la mise en œuvre des activités MED POL dans le cadre du programme de travail.

15. La réunion a pris note des priorités du MED POL dans le cadre du programme de travail pour le nouvel exercice biennal 2024-2025 visant à élaborer les PAN/PoM, et à inventorier et évaluer les charges de polluants par le biais du système NBB/PRTR, ainsi que la mise en œuvre des IMAPs nationaux.

16. La réunion a pris note de la proposition du MED POL d'évaluer l'état d'avancement des parcs éoliens offshore dans le cadre de l'activité 1.2.1(a) et d'élaborer des directives/mesures juridiquement contraignantes conformément à l'article 15 du Protocole LBS dans le cadre de l'activité 1.2.1(b). La réunion a décidé de supprimer l'activité 1.2.1(b) tout en demandant la nécessité d'élargir la portée de l'activité 1.2.1(a) pour aborder les énergies marines renouvelables, y compris les parcs éoliens offshore en Méditerranée.

17. Reconnaissant l'important enjeu émergent des énergies renouvelables offshore et leurs implications possibles sur l'environnement marin, la réunion appelle les points focaux du PAM à avoir une discussion approfondie sur les voies et moyens d'inclure ce sujet comme sujet principal dans le futur proche du PNUE/PAM Programme de Travail.