

ANNEX III

ALMERIA DECLARATION

We, the Environment Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols, meeting in Almeria, Spain, from 15 to 18 January 2008,

Aware that a healthy environment in the Mediterranean Sea area contributes to human well-being, and constitutes an indispensable resource whose protection, preservation and rational planning and management, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, is therefore of paramount importance,

Taking note, however, that the environmental priorities of the Mediterranean have changed over the decades and that environmental awareness has not been sufficiently translated into practical action,

Observing with alarm that environmental protection and preservation have not yet been sufficiently integrated into other policies,

Recalling the adverse effects of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and on the environment in general and the negative consequences for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries in the Mediterranean basin,

Aware of the many and interlocking challenges that must be addressed in order to effectively mitigate, reduce and combat environmental degradation and to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region taking into account new threats, including the high levels of pollution which persist in our sea, water, air, soil and subsoil; the continued overexploitation of natural resources; unplanned and insufficiently integrated coastal development; disproportionate expansion of aquaculture; the introduction of invasive alien species; increase of maritime traffic; continued degradation of unique landscapes; loss of biodiversity; desertification; accelerated coastal erosion and negative effects of climate change,

Further acknowledging their underlying causes which include poverty; socio-economic inequality; inadequate valuing of natural resources; inappropriate macroeconomic policies, insufficient de-coupling of economic growth from environmental degradation; and unsustainable production and consumption patterns,

Reaffirming our commitment to ensuring a viable future for the Mediterranean, by promoting the implementation of the ecosystem approach as a key tool for achieving our obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols to prevent, abate, combat and, to the fullest extent possible, eliminate all forms of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea area and to protect and enhance the quality of its marine and coastal environment,

Convinced that the effective implementation of a good governance scheme for the MAP system further promotes the effective and efficient use of human and financial resources, whereby the various components of MAP work in synergy,

Affirming that the principles and targets for protection of the Mediterranean have already been established in the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the strategies adopted by the Contracting Parties, including the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

(MSSD) and that these principles and targets enable us to address the challenges at hand. The seriousness of these challenges requires us to strengthen our action in the Mediterranean,

Welcoming the agreement on the new European Union Marine Strategy Directive, which calls for close cooperation among all countries sharing a marine region to achieve its good environmental status by 2020 and highlights the important role of regional sea conventions including the Barcelona Convention,

Welcoming the work of the 13th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and in particular the adoption of the Bali Action Plan which launches a comprehensive process, to be completed by 2009, to enable the full effective and sustained implementation of the climate change convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012,

Seriously aware, on the basis of the most recent work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, of the implications for the marine environment of climate change and ocean acidification due to elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and in particular of their significant effects on the Mediterranean coastal zone, its ecosystems and biodiversity and the extreme sensitivity of the region to alterations in climate,

Considering the recommendations of the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007, with the participation of several Mediterranean countries, institutions and NGOs and the Mediterranean Action Plan,

Taking note of the Rome Declaration of 20 December 2007 concerning the Union for the Mediterranean initiative, which should build upon the Barcelona Convention/Mediterranean Action Plan, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including its Horizon 2020 initiative, and the Mediterranean Component of the European Union Water Initiative,

Stressing the adaptation effort that all countries are required to make in order to reduce the impact of climate change,

Highlighting the importance of capacity building, technology transfer and mobilization of financial resources to enable developing countries, in particular, to meet such challenges as recommended in the Tunis Declaration and Action Plan,

Recalling the principle of common but differentiated responsibility in the area of climate change and the need to strengthen regional and international cooperation, in accordance with the spirit and the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Aware of the rapid rates of loss of biodiversity and of continuing degradation of the marine and coastal environment, and of the importance of the geographical specificity of the genetic heritage in the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal area,

Recalling the objectives of the strategic plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and of the Millennium Development Goals with regard to the protection of biodiversity and the creation of marine protected areas, approved and adopted in 2002, and also the recommendations adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and of the

Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean,

Noting that, since the adoption of the Barcelona Convention, developments in technology have made it possible to capture carbon dioxide from industrial and energy-related sources, transport it and inject it into sub-seabed geological formations for long-term isolation from the atmosphere and the sea,

Considering further recent developments under several international instruments in relation to carbon dioxide streams from capture processes for sequestration in sub-seabed geological formations,

Concerned by the potential risks arising from carbon dioxide storage in marine geological formations, mostly due to the nature, temporal and spatial scales and duration of potential impacts, and aware of the need to protect the marine and coastal Mediterranean environment and its biodiversity from the potential impacts of carbon storage,

Convinced that

- (a) The problem of climate change should be seriously addressed, in order to reduce as rapidly as possible its effects on the Mediterranean coastal and marine environment,
- (b) Promoting the implementation of early measures in the Mediterranean region to mitigate climate change is vital to the preservation of resources, biodiversity and protection of the coastal areas in the Mediterranean region,
- (c) Strategies to mitigate climate change should include methods such as the ecosystem approach, risk management, strategic environmental assessment and integrated marine and coastal zone management,
- (d) The adoption of the new Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management constitutes a relevant legal tool that lays down binding regulations that are required to contribute to the sustainable development of the coastal zones of the Mediterranean Sea and to address the effects of climate change on these sensitive zones,
- (e) There is a need to further develop renewable and low- and non-carbon forms of energy generation and use, and to promote energy efficiency and more sustainable production and consumption patterns,

Decide

1. To initiate rapid ratification of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management with a view to applying appropriate effective measures aimed at reconciling coastal preservation and sustainable development with the implementation of economic activities in the coastal zones and to triggering an immediate practical response to the impact of climate change on Mediterranean coastal ecosystems,
2. To identify by 2011 the coastal and marine species and habitats that are most sensitive to the changes that will result from the various scenarios described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and to promote measures for the establishment of a comprehensive and coherent Mediterranean network of coastal and marine protected areas by 2012,

3. To undertake cooperative studies to estimate the economic value of the products currently derived from and the services rendered by the marine and coastal ecosystems and how that value will be affected by the disruptions that will result from climate change, and to report on those studies to each Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention,
4. To prepare for each Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and to the Convention on Biological Diversity a report on the situation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean and the observed impact of climate change,
5. To strengthen cooperation and seek synergies with initiatives pursuing similar environmental objectives, including the European Union Marine Strategy Directive, with a view to achieving our shared vision of a healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations,
6. To promote better management of energy demand and increase energy efficiency; to capitalize on the significant potential of the region for solar and wind energy development; to encourage management and restoration of forests and appropriate use of cultivations as carbon dioxide sinks; to promote better water demand management including improved water savings and consider, where appropriate, the use of non-conventional water resources such as treated waste waters in combination with renewable energy sources,
7. To prepare a risk assessment framework and adequately address liability issues for storage of carbon dioxide streams in Mediterranean sub-seabed geological formations as well as for any other mitigation measures with a potential impact on the marine environment to ensure that there is no significant risk to the marine environment, prior to future consideration of amending the legal instruments of the Barcelona Convention including the 1995 Dumping Protocol,
8. To take the Tunis Declaration and Action Plan and the Rabat Declaration on Climate Change: Impacts, Preparedness and Adaptation Measures into consideration within the Mediterranean priorities for better adaptation and response to climate change.

