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**Agenda item 3: Work of the MCSD and MSSD Implementation. Review of Progress for the Period July 2019 – April 2020**

**Progress Report**

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## **Progress Report**

1. The present document provides information on the progress on the work done after the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019) for the period July 2019 – April 2020.
2. Following the conclusions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD welcoming the inclusive process for the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019), the Secretariat collected inputs on the potential content and focus of the declaration from 14 MCSD Members and one Observer. The results of this consultation were reflected in the draft Naples Ministerial Declaration: details are included in Reference Document UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.14.
3. At their 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Members of the Commission also provided comments and inputs that were reflected in documents submitted to COP 21 and in the following decisions, as included in the Report of COP 21 (Reference Document UNEP/MED IG.24/22), which is available online at [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30095/19ig24\\_22\\_eng.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30095/19ig24_22_eng.pdf):
  - Decision IG.24/2: Governance, including its Annex IV “Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2020-2021 – Non-Contracting Party Members”, as reproduced in Annex I of the present document;
  - Decision IG.24/3: Implementation, Monitoring and Mid-Term Evaluation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (SCP Action Plan);
  - Decision IG.24/4: Assessment Studies; and,
  - Decision IG.24/14: UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021.
4. Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro), presented the outcome of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD to MAP Focal Points during their meeting in Athens, Greece, on 10-13 September 2019. She also participated in COP 21, as part of the delegation of Montenegro and President of the MCSD.
5. The second half of 2019 was mainly devoted to the preparation of COP 21 that culminated with a wide successful and inclusive event where fourteen decisions related to pollution and marine litter, biodiversity and marine protected areas, blue economy and integrated coastal zone management, sustainable development and assessment studies were adopted, including the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021 and a groundbreaking roadmap for the proposal of a possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides.
6. Over 200 participants from Contracting Parties, UN agencies, international research organizations, multilateral development banks, civil society, and the private sector attended COP 21. The Secretariat received unequivocal signals of commitment and support from the Contracting Parties and heard the voices of stakeholders. Youth representatives addressed the COP Ministerial Segment for the first time and Members of the MCSD took part in the high-level segment and several side-events that made COP 21 an inclusive and fertile ground for forward-looking ideas, proposals, and actions.
7. The Naples Ministerial Declaration<sup>1</sup> encapsulates an eloquent expression of political support to the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system’s role, achievements and plans in responding to the pressing environmental challenges facing the Mediterranean region. COP 21 also marked the starting point of a new biennium that will focus on implementation and on the preparation of new strategic documents, including an action-oriented Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for the 2022-2027 period.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/id/5f76bbb1-c200-4260-a772-7257eacc287c/NaplesDeclaration\\_eng.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/id/5f76bbb1-c200-4260-a772-7257eacc287c/NaplesDeclaration_eng.pdf)

8. The Contracting Parties “(...) commit[ted *inter alia*] to take concrete action to enhance the level of safeguard of the Mediterranean Sea including its coastal region, (...) as a place of peace, dialogue and solidarity, as a bridge between civilizations and as a model for environmental protection in the context of sustainable development and multilateral cooperation (...)”.

9. As recommended by MCSD Members through the online consultation mentioned above, the Contracting parties “recogniz[ed] the year 2020 as a critical turning point for the conservation and sustainable management of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, on the basis of the knowledge and science based reports delivered in 2019 by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the forthcoming international fora like the UN 2020 Ocean Conference and the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the 2020 ministerial meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean, the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration”.

10. In the Naples Ministerial Declaration, the Contracting Parties also “consider[ed] that the resources of the Mediterranean should trigger economic prosperity and contribute to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities for the maritime economy sectors (aquaculture, fisheries, tourism, shipping, ports) and for emerging ones (blue biotechnologies, marine renewable sources, services digitalization), in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern, supported by the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025”. In that regard, they “reaffirm[ed] that effective Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Mediterranean, in conjunction with sustainable consumption and production approaches, are crucial to promote sustainable and synergic uses of marine and coastal areas and resources, together with research and innovation”.

11. The Contracting Parties also “urg[ed] the implementation of a strategy for environmental communication and dissemination for the promotion of sustainable development, and of high quality and innovative education and training plans targeted according to the different contexts for reaching a diversified audience and the young”.

12. Based on the progress described in the present document, Decisions IG.24/3 and IG.24/4 mentioned above pave the way for the work of the MCSD in 2020-2021. Active contribution of the Commission and all its Members will be crucial for the delivery of the participatory-oriented activities planned by these decisions, as introduced in terms of operationalization and perspectives in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.479/4 “Report on Specific Issues”, with substantive resources provided by the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021.

#### **A. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and Work on Indicators**

13. Following the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee (June 2018 and January 2019), the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) finalized the update of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, as requested by Decision IG.23/4 adopted at COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017), with a revised list of 28 indicators (Annex II) — most of which corresponding or being linked to SDG indicators or SEIS II/Horizon 2020 indicators —, and drafted proposals and recommendations for improving the process, based on challenges and lessons learned, including a proposal for populating regularly the dashboard.

14. Following the opinions expressed by Plan Bleu Focal Points and MCSD Members at their respective meeting in May and June 2019, the updated list of indicators of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard was submitted to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points and then to COP 21, with a revised version of the analytical factsheets that are included in Reference Document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.17.

15. Through Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21, the Contracting Parties welcomed the work done, took note of the updated list of indicators of the dashboard for monitoring the implementation of the MSSD, and requested the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) to populate the indicators, using existing sources of information and data, and giving priority to those addressing coast-related and sea-related issues. They also recognized the living nature of the list of indicators and the need to keep it under review under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, with the technical support of Plan Bleu, as international work on SDGs indicators progresses.

16. In addition, a list of 25 SCP indicators, developed by SCP/RAC in cooperation with Plan Bleu, to monitor the progress of the implementation of the SCP Action Plan was welcomed and taken note of by COP 20 in December 2017. At COP 21, the Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat, through Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC, to integrate the list of SCP indicators in the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard.

17. The Secretariat carried out a comprehensive mapping of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention policies and instruments against relevant SDG targets and indicators. The outputs of this mapping are included in the SDGs Synergies Portal<sup>2</sup>, which is an interactive tool developed by the UNEP Science Division. Highlighting synergies between global/regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and SDGs, this online tool represents a relevant vehicle to showcase the relevance of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system for implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, offering a visualized demonstration of synergies between UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention and its Protocols vs. SDG targets and indicators.

18. It might be of interest to invite a representative of the UNEP Science Division at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee to be held in December 2020 to introduce, during a “learning by doing” session, the Environment Live portal (<https://environmentlive.unep.org/>) that provides the UN Member States open access to information and knowledge on the environment at the global, regional and national levels. Environment Live supports environmental policy through foresight, outlooks and assessments, providing capacity building for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. If relevant, such an interactive session might be considered for the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD to be held in June 2021.

## **B. Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) and Peer Learning Experiences**

19. At COP 19 held in February 2016 in Athens, Greece, the Contracting Parties decided to launch SIMPEER, as an integral part of the Reform of the MCSD (Decision IG.22/17). SIMPEER is an innovative incentive for promoting dialogue between volunteer Mediterranean countries on national structures, processes and policies for sustainable development. This peer review mechanism aims at supporting Contracting Parties in streamlining their work for implementing in synergy sustainable development policies and environmental obligations. SIMPEER can support the preparation and follow-up of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by Contracting Parties at the UN High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF), which aim at facilitating the exchange of national experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to mobilizing multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for accelerating the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation.

20. The Contracting Parties that went through the SIMPEER pilot and second editions are the following: France, Montenegro and Morocco (2016-2017); Albania, Egypt and Tunisia (2018-2019).

21. The Contracting Parties that went/will go through the VNR process at the HLPF are the following:

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<sup>2</sup> [https://uneplive.unep.org/portal#regional\\_synergies](https://uneplive.unep.org/portal#regional_synergies)

|   |                                |                                       |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Albania</a> (2018)                | <a href="#">France</a> (2016)  | <a href="#">Monaco</a> (2017, 2020)   |
| <a href="#">Algeria</a> (2019)                | <a href="#">Greece</a> (2018)  | <a href="#">Montenegro</a> (2016)     |
| <a href="#">Bosnia and Herzegovina</a> (2019) | <a href="#">Italy</a> (2017)   | <a href="#">Morocco</a> (2016, 2020)  |
| <a href="#">Croatia</a> (2019)                | <a href="#">Israel</a> (2019)  | <a href="#">Slovenia</a> (2017, 2020) |
| <a href="#">Cyprus</a> (2017)                 | <a href="#">Lebanon</a> (2018) | <a href="#">Spain</a> (2018)          |
| <a href="#">Egypt</a> (2016, 2018)            | <a href="#">Libya</a> (2020)   | <a href="#">Tunisia</a> (2019)        |
|   | <a href="#">Malta</a> (2018)   | <a href="#">Turkey</a> (2016, 2019)   |

22. At its 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the MCSD welcomed the sharing of experience among Contracting Parties participating in SIMPEER and/or VNR processes. The Commission recognized the value of SIMPEER and noted that peer learning experiences should be capitalized and communicated as crucial in facilitating the transposition, implementation and monitoring of SDGs at the regional and national levels.

23. In the ensuing period, SIMPEER expert team visited the three countries: missions were organized in Gabes, Kairouan and Tunis, Tunisia, on 19-25 September 2019; Tirana, Albania, on 21-23 October 2019; Cairo, Egypt, on 27-29 October 2019.

24. The Second Peer Review Meeting was held in Marseille, France (19-20 November 2019), with representative of two countries from the first SIMPEER edition (France and Morocco). The City of Marseille, France, shared experience on implementing decentralization on environmental and sustainable development aspects.

25. The outputs of the SIMPEER 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 editions are included in Plan Bleu publication "Simplified Peer Review Mechanism of National Strategies for Sustainable Development. Editions 2016-2017 and 2018-2019".

26. Following the interactive session on "Implementing SDGs and the MSSD at the National Level" held at the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD, during which Contracting Party-MCSD Members reported on initiatives undertaken to transpose, implement and monitor SDGs and the MSSD at the national level, as well as on challenges encountered and lessons learned, the Secretariat consulted remotely the members of the Commission representing Contracting Parties to collect inputs from their respective experiences at the HLPF.

27. Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey provided very interesting inputs on the three following elements: one transformational thing done in terms of transposition, implementation and/or monitoring of the SDGs at national level; one challenge encountered for transposing, implementing or monitoring the SDGs, and possible solutions; one lesson learned from the VNR experience at the HLPF. In order to get a complete picture of the Mediterranean countries, expected inputs shall be collected by the Secretariat from the following Contracting Parties: Cyprus, Italy, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Slovenia, Spain, and Syrian Arab Republic.

28. Synthesis elements of those inputs should allow to identify commonalities among Mediterranean countries in terms of transposing, implementing, and monitoring SDGs at national level (achievements, challenges, lessons learned), as well as national specificities that can be useful for other countries, following a peer learning approach. The ultimate objective remains to produce a brief synthesis for all Mediterranean countries. In the future a similar exercise can focus on the interaction between SDG 14 and other SDGs, with a possible Plan Bleu workshop to be organized in fall 2020.

29. Based on the reflection of the Secretariat on the inputs provided by Contracting Party-MCSD Members, the following preliminary conclusions of this online consultation, which are in line with SIMPEER outcome, are drawn to the attention of Members of the MCSD Steering Committee:

- Ministries or departments in charge of environment affairs are often the most aware and active national bodies to promote and implement SDGs at national level, but they are not in a coordinating position;
- Contracting Parties experienced common challenges in implementing SDGs at the national level, in particular those related to coordination and effective mobilization of all governmental actors, and the enhanced engagement of stakeholders and civil society to address these challenges;
- There is a need to strengthen inclusive and institutional set-up towards efficient multi-stakeholder governance frameworks to break the “silo effect” created by thematic and sectoral approaches;
- There is also a lack of capacities and resources in national administrations to address the SDGs adequately, in particular for monitoring programmes to follow SDG indicators.

### C. MSSD Flagship Initiatives

#### ***Mediterranean Green Business Award***

30. Through Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21, the Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat to launch the first edition of the Mediterranean Green Business Award, as a MSSD Flagship Initiative. SCP/RAC is proceeding according to the timeline included in Annex IV of this decision.

31. SCP/RAC completed a benchmarking study of other awards and organized a brainstorming session with its staff to further define the concept of the award, the categories, the criteria for the selection, as well as the application and selection process. Legal arrangements are under preparation.

32. The award will be launched during the next edition of the SwitchMed connect event that will take place during ECOMONDO (Rimini, Italy, 3-6 November 2020). It will be followed by a communication campaign and the call for applications will be opened at the beginning of 2021.

#### ***Regional Assessments and Knowledge Exchanges of High- and Low-Tech Solutions successfully Implemented to Achieve Waste Reduction***

33. Following the Concept Note prepared by COMPSUD and MIO-ECSDE, discussed and welcomed by the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD, the following activity is being considered under the four-year EU funded Water and Environment Support (WES) Regional Project in the ENI Southern Neighborhood region<sup>3</sup> that was launched in Athens, Greece, on 25 September 2019:

34. *Best practices in achieving waste reduction in the Mediterranean: Under Strategic Direction 3.4, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025) contains the Flagship Initiative 3.4.5, as one of the overall 11 MSSD Flagship Initiatives, aiming at the elaboration of a regional assessment of the effectiveness of high-tech and low-tech solutions, including but not limited to awareness-raising and economic measures that have been implemented, with a view to their more widespread utilization in waste reduction efforts. Under WES the following can be implemented: (a) Conduct a regional assessment of high- and low-tech solutions including but not limited to awareness-raising and economic measures, that have been successfully implemented in Mediterranean countries and elsewhere (e.g. in the EU) to achieve waste reduction and promote the principles of circular economy, relevant to the Mediterranean countries' context and needs. Approaches to be assessed might indicatively include inter alia: the overall application of the hierarchy approach in waste management to promote a circular economy; for municipal waste: methods for sorting at source bio-wastes and other streams of recyclable wastes (glass, paper,*

<sup>3</sup> The Water and Environment Support project in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region aims at protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean. [www.wes-med.eu](http://www.wes-med.eu); <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/projects/wes-water-and-environment-support-eni-southern-neighborhood-region>

*aluminium, plastic) to increase levels of recycling, reuse of treated wastewater, etc.; for non-municipal waste: the promotion of use of secondary or by-products in other production processes, possibilities for industrial symbiosis, the collection and management of specific streams of waste, e.g. lubricant oils, accumulators, tires, WEEEs, construction waste; etc.; (b) develop a 'repository' or on-line tool for facilitated access to the solutions and their more widespread utilization in waste reduction efforts; (c) integrate (a) and (b) above in relevant WES activities (over the duration of the project).*

**Environmental Governance: Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)**

35. Following the Concept Note prepared by COMPSUD and MIO-ECSDE, with support from MEPIELAN and the UNECE-Aarhus Convention Secretariat, discussed and welcomed by the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD, the following activity is also being considered under the WES project:

36. *Overall environmental governance – promotion of the Aarhus Convention in the whole of the Mediterranean: The issue of the provision of timely and accurate environmental information to society (e.g. within the process of Environmental Impact Assessments/EIAs and Strategic Environmental Assessments/SEAs) and the encouragement of citizens, organized stakeholders, private sector, municipalities and the media to be involved in activities and initiatives for the protection of the environment and natural resources (water, biodiversity, etc.) is one of the most difficult in the Mediterranean. There are historical socio-political reasons for the reduced participation of citizens in this area. Now many Mediterranean governments try to improve environmental governance and mobilize citizens organizations in becoming constructive allies in dealing with the accumulated environmental and sustainability problems. The Mediterranean Commission of Sustainable Development and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2025) encourages all Mediterranean countries to accede to the Aarhus Convention that provides for access to environmental information, active public participation and access to justice on environmental issues. It has recently approved a flagship programme on this issue and the proposed activity will allow the sharing of experiences between European countries (already members of the Aarhus Convention) and non-European ones. The regional activity will address mostly officials of Ministries of Environment and Water but also governmental departments dealing with International Conventions as well as key environmental NGOs. The Aarhus Secretariat under UNECE has been informed and enthusiastically will cooperate with WES and the MCSD for this regional activity.*

***Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award – Second Edition (2018-2019)***

37. Once the voluntary contribution from the Government of Turkey was released, the Secretariat launched the call for applicant cities to the second edition of the award in May 2019, with a deadline that was extended until 18 September 2019.

38. The initial screening of the applications resulted with the identification of five (5) eligible applications: Ashdod, Israel; Crikvenica, Croatia; Hatay, Turkey; Mugla, Turkey; Sfax, Tunisia. The application of Chefchaouen, Morocco, was not eligible because it is not a coastal city.

39. The Secretariat mobilized three independent experts to support the Task Force (composed by representatives of all MAP Components) for the evaluation of the applications. The selection of these experts was agreed by the MCSD Steering Committee.

40. The final ranking was the result of in-depth evaluations by the members of the Technical Committee (Task Force supported by the three independent experts), using a scores calculation tool that was prepared on that occasion to proceed with an objective, neutral assessment.



41. The two evaluations conducted in parallel, by (1) the three independent experts and (2) the members of the Task Force, converged to the same results. The Technical Committee proposed the following ranking of three short listed eligible applicant cities for consideration by the Jury (i.e. Members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and President of the MCSD): 1. Ashdod, Israel; 2. Crikvenica, Croatia; 3. Hatay, Turkey. The Jury endorsed through electronic means the ranking proposed by the Technical Committee, and nominated Ashdod, Israel, as the winner of the 2019-Award.

42. At COP 21, Mr. Yechiel Lasry, Mayor of Ashdod, accepting the award, conveyed the gratitude of his city for its selection and thanked the Turkish Government for supporting the competition. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Turkey said that the award draw attention to the city of Istanbul, which was an important bridge between cultures.

43. The award giving ceremony was covered by several communication actions undertaken by the Secretariat, MAP Components, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd) Reporting Services, including through social networks. See for instance the video and the COP 21 Summary Highlights bulletin available online at <https://vimeo.com/376915297> and <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/barcelona-convention/cop21/>.

44. Specific issues in relation to these four MSSD Flagship Initiatives are introduced in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.479/4.

#### **D. Mid-term Evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Regional Action Plan**

45. Through Decision IG.24/3, COP 21 requested the Secretariat to undertake the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan.

46. Consultancy services are being mobilized, in line with Activity 1.1.2.5 of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021. The overall objective of this consultancy is to assist the Secretariat in the following tasks: Prepare and support the launch of the MSSD mid-term evaluation process; Conduct the participatory MSSD mid-term evaluation under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee and in close co-operation with the Secretariat; Finalize the participatory MSSD mid-term evaluation towards submission of results for approval by relevant MAP bodies.

47. Specific issues in relation with the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations are included in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.479/4.

#### **E. Assessment Studies**

##### ***Consultation on MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) and its Summary for Policymakers (SPM)***

48. At COP 21, through Decision IG.24/4, the Contracting Parties expressed appreciation to the progress being made by Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change<sup>4</sup> (MedECC – [www.medecc.org](http://www.medecc.org)) on MAR1 that aims at presenting the state of scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge on climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean region and their impacts and future risks. The Contracting Parties approved the elements of the Roadmap for the Consultation of Decision-Makers and Stakeholders on the MAR1, involving the MAP Focal Points, the MAP Components' Focal Points, and the MCSD Members. They also requested the Secretariat to undertake communication on MedECC.

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<sup>4</sup> Created in 2015, MedECC is an open and independent international scientific expert network supporting decision-making and information of the general public on the basis of available scientific information and on-going research on climate change in the Mediterranean basin. To date, MedECC counts more than 600 scientific members from 35 countries, including 19 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

49. The Secretariat is working with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to support this important regional initiative and to contribute to well establish sound processes on environmental assessment both at Mediterranean and global levels.

50. The Scientific Secretariat of MedECC is hosted by Plan Bleu in Marseille, France. The support to MedECC is in line with the mandate of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and with the MSSD, the latter identifying the establishment of “*a regional science-policy interface mechanism (...) with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options*” as a regional flagship initiative.

51. MedECC has also an important role to play as it contributes to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), with a chapter dedicated for the first time to the Mediterranean. This Mediterranean chapter is prepared under the leadership of one of the MedECC coordinators, ensuring a strong synergy across the two assessment reports.

52. Review is an essential part of the MedECC work and ensures that the assessment of literature is transparent, objective and complete. The first stage of the draft MAR1 review was the scientific review: scientific experts were invited to comment on the accuracy and completeness of the scientific and technical content and the overall balance of the draft report. Reviewers were self-nominated and accepted by MedECC on the basis of their expertise. The scientific review process ended in December 2019. The near-final draft of MAR1 taking into consideration the results of the scientific review, as well as draft key messages to feed in the SPM, were reviewed by the MedECC Editorial Committee during a meeting held in Venice, Italy, on 10-12 February 2020.

#### ***2019 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report (SoED 2019)***

53. In September-October 2019, the draft SoED 2019 Summary for Decision-Makers and Key Messages were reviewed to reflect the comments expressed by MAP Focal Points. Reviews included restructuring to emphasize most important facts and key messages. Other changes corresponded to updates of key figures with most recent available data. References were also completed as necessary.

54. At COP 21, the Contracting Parties approved the Summary for Decision-Makers and Key Messages of the SoED 2019, as set out in Annexes I and II of Decision IG.24/4, as important input for the definition of the MTS 2022-2027 and other relevant policy and strategy developments of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system. They encouraged themselves and the Secretariat to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps identified in the SoED 2019.

55. Following recommendations of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD meeting for preparing communication items adapted to a wide audience and targeted groups, in line with specific provisions of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021, the Secretariat supported by Plan Bleu has prepared a MAP system-wide communication plan on SoED 2019. This communication plan is introduced in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.479/4, with specific issues for discussion.

56. In February 2020, the Secretariat submitted to the UNEP Publishing Board the draft publication of the SoED 2019 Summary for Decision Makers and Key Messages. The draft publication was cleared by the UNEP Chief Scientist and the UNEP Gender Advisor. It was approved under conditions by the UNEP Publishing Secretariat on 19 March 2020. A similar procedure is also on-going for the full text of the SoED 2019, which is under review by Plan Bleu: proofreading, editorial changes, design of graphs and maps, and final layout. The goal is to obtain the approval of the UNEP Publishing Board (ISBN number).

#### ***MED2050 Foresight Study***

57. At COP 21, the Contracting Parties endorsed the proposed revised roadmap for the MED 2050 foresight study, as contained in Annex III of Decision IG.24/4 and requested the Secretariat to

implement the proposed roadmap. The latter presents actions carried out in 2018-2019 and deepens the methodological proposal with emphasis on participatory approaches.

58. At COP 21, the Contracting Parties also encouraged themselves to participate in the Phase II of MED 2050 foresight study, to organise on a voluntary basis national or sub-regional workshops, and to nominate relevant experts or interested national stakeholders including youth representatives to contribute to the study.

59. Phase II of MED 2050 is under detailed programming towards implementation. A junior staff has been hired by Plan Bleu on a temporary basis to provide the necessary time to recruit a more senior expert (process in progress). A partnership with a political science doctoral programme is in preparation, for a MED 2050 dedicated PhD thesis from September 2020.

60. Three publications on long term trends are under revision: (i) a publication on demographic trends; (ii) a publication comparing projected trends in the 2005 foresight report and actual trends; (iii) a dashboard of long-term trends. The first edition of the MED 2050 newsletter, including stakeholders' interviews, is also under review to be disseminated through the MED 2050 Network in the first semester 2020. The newsletter will highlight relevant initiatives of Contracting Parties and partners.

61. A MED 2050 logo has been prepared to recognize initiatives directly contributing to the regional foresight study. MCSD Members and MAP Partners developing initiatives which could contribute to the exercise will be invited to potentially use the logo.

62. In terms of resource mobilization to support MED 2050, Plan Bleu has prepared the following initiatives and proposals:

- Project proposal "Future scenarios and concrete transitions for a sustainable Mediterranean by 2050" submitted to the Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco, with particular focus on the module on sustainability transitions: i.e. identifying priority investments, measures and practices in the short, medium and long terms, to foster a transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive Mediterranean at 2050. Transition themes include sustainable governance, water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus, and transition towards more SCP.
- Project proposal "MED 2050 – Mediterranean foresight in the Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, and participation in the Plan Bleu-piloted new foresight exercise at the scale of the Mediterranean basin" submitted to the Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France, with particular focus on the module on trends: i.e. identifying structural long-term trends and possible disruptions that will be determining factors for the future of the Mediterranean basin. Focuses are on coastal demography, waste, transport, and coastal adaptation to climate change.
- Project proposal under development for funding by the French Development Agency (*Agence Française de Développement / AFD*). This project would follow-up on previous AFD support on nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change (lessons learned, bottlenecks and recommendations for scaling-up). It would also support further work on the Blue Economy with a focus on funding sustainability transitions, in relations with sectors such as aquaculture and biodiversity protection.

63. Additional information on MED 2050 and previous publications are available online at <http://planbleu.org/en/activites/med-2050-towards-shared-vision-sustainable-mediterranean-2050-and-transition-issues>; <http://planbleu.org/en/outils-et-methodes/approche-prospective>.

#### ***Case Studies on the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean***

64. The case studies on the Blue Economy – discussed during a regional half-day workshop organized back-to-back with the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD – were published by Plan Bleu: see Information Document UNEP/MED WG.479/Inf.3.

## F. Cooperation and Partners

65. The Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP) received accreditation to the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference). Process is ongoing to secure the same status to other events and processes such as the 2020 UN Ocean Conference initially expected to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 2-6 June 2020 – the Conference was postponed, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

66. Following the invitation of the UNEP Faith for Earth Initiative<sup>5</sup>, the Secretariat participated in the UN Strategic Capacity-Building Workshop “Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) to Achieve the SDGs”, organized in collaboration with the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development. The overall objective of that workshop was to develop the capacities of UN staff and partner FBOs to capitalize on the intrinsic relationship between faith (religious beliefs) and environmental sustainability. The Secretariat will look at what opportunities to be explored for benefiting from this global UNEP initiative to further promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

67. The Secretariat, including MAP Components, contributed with substantial inputs, based on commitments of the Naples Ministerial Declaration and other relevant UNEP/MAP strategic documents, to the UfM consultation (online questionnaire) on the Blue Economy towards the preparation of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy (tentatively planned in July 2020). This contribution was transmitted to the UfM Co-Presidency.

## G. Outreach, Information, and Communication

68. The newsletter MEDNEWS 01/2020 was published online through Info/RAC website: <http://www.info-rac.org/en/communication/newsletter/mednews-01-2020>

69. On 25 February 2020, the Secretariat submitted a Lab debate proposal on “Decoupling development from air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean” to the European Development Days to be held in Brussels, Belgium, on 9-10 June 2020. The proposed session description is the following: *A multi-stakeholder dialogue on game-changing measures and solutions to address air quality degradation caused by maritime transport in one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes. Commitment from Mediterranean states backed by a large coalition of actors, including the private sector (shipping and cruise companies) and port and local authorities, is a prerequisite for change through the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SECA). Following the adoption at COP21 of the Barcelona Convention (December 2019) of the Roadmap towards a possible designation, speakers will examine the case of Med SECA, hear the voice of the maritime transport sector, and explore avenue for fair burden-sharing towards considerable benefits of a low-Sulphur future.*

70. On 21 February 2020, in Athens, Greece, UNEP/MAP received the “Excellence in the Mediterranean Award”, conferred by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in recognition of commitment to the protection of the marine and coastal environment and to sustainable development in the Mediterranean region – PAM is a Member of the MCSDD that actively contributed to COP 21 and to its inclusive preparatory process. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, received the award during a ceremony held in the context of the 14<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of PAM.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment-programme/faith-earth-initiative/why-faith-and-environment-matters>

71. On 21-23 January 2020, in Venice, Italy, the Secretariat joined forces with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO), the Italian Oceanographic Commission, the European Commission and the Mediterranean Science Commission to hold a workshop dedicated to the Mediterranean Sea and coast in the context of preparations for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The workshop entitled “The Mediterranean Sea We Need for the Future We Want” provided a forum to engage with stakeholders and to identify partnerships and concrete steps to meet the Decade’s objectives.

72. On 17 December 2019, in Rabat, Morocco, the Secretariat took part in the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) – which is a Member of the MCSD and a former Member of the MCSD Steering Committee. The meeting, which the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco hosted, agreed to launch of a “Decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean” and related priority actions.

73. On 24-25 October 2019 in Athens, Greece, several MCSD Members and MAP Partners participated in the Regional Stakeholder Workshop organized by the Secretariat as part of the inclusive process of preparation of COP 21. The interactive discussions generated suggestions and proposals pertaining to the work of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system. Key messages formulated by participants were considered in the drafting of the Naples Ministerial Declaration (see Reference Document UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.14).

74. On 25 September 2019, in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, the 2019 edition of the Mediterranean Coast Day was celebrated during a regional event organized by PAP/RAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus. Ms. Xenia Loizidou, Director of the AKTI Project and Research Centre, was announced as the Coast Day Ambassador for 2019. Participants in the event included tourism professionals, local authority officials, and NGOs.

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**Annex I**

**Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2020-2021 –  
Non-Contracting Party Members**

## **Annex I: Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2020-2021 – Non-Contracting Party Members**

Non-Contracting Party membership of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, as welcome by the eighteen meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019). New members are indicated in bold:

- a. The Local Authorities Group: the **Agence des Villes et Territoires méditerranéens durables (AVITEM)**, the **Forum of Adriatic and Ionian cities (FAIC)**, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG);
- b. The Socio-economic Stakeholders Group: ANIMA Investment Network, the **Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME)**, and the **Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESCG)**;
- c. The Non-Governmental Organizations Group: **ECO UNION**, the **Egyptian Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF)**, and the **Network of Marine Protected Areas managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN)**;
- d. The Scientific Community Group: the Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Economiques (FEMISE), the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Med-SDSN), and the Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN);
- e. The Intergovernmental Organizations Group: the **Arab Forum for the Environment and Development (AFED)**, the **Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)**, and the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS); and,
- f. Parliamentarians: the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM).

**Annex II**

**Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard – Updated List of Indicators,  
as taken note of by COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019)**



**Annex II: Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard – Updated List of Indicators, as taken note of by COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019)**

| No. | MSSD Objective | Indicator  |
|-----|----------------|--|
| 1   | Global         | Ecological footprint (*)   |
| 2   | Global         | Human Development Index  |
| 3   | Global         | Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita (*) (SDG Indicator 8.1.1), Gross Domestic Product (*), Gross Domestic Product per capita (*)   |
| 4   | Global         | Youth literacy rate (*)  |
| 5   | Global         | Girl/Boy primary, secondary and tertiary school registration ratio (*)   |
| 6   | 1              | Number of ratifications and level of compliance as reported by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention   |
| 7   | 1              | Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine territorial waters (*)   |
| 8   | 1              | Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels (*) (SDG Indicator 14.4.1)  |
| 9   | 2              | Number of protected areas participating in the Green List initiative (*)   |
| 10  | 2              | Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (*) (SDG Indicator 15.a.1)                                 |
| 11  | 2              | Global Food Security Index   |
| 12  | 2              | Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (*) (SDG Indicator 6.4.2)   |
| 13  | 2              | Water demand, total and by sector, compared to GDP (*)   |
| 14  | 2              | Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water service (*) (SDG Indicator 6.1.1) (**)  |
| 15  | 2              | Share of population with access to an improved sanitation system (total, urban, rural) (*) (**)  |
| 16  | 2              | Proportion of agriculture quality products (*) and/or Share of the agricultural land area used by organic farming (*)  |
| 17  | 2              | Red List Index (IUCN) (*) (SDG Indicator 15.5.1)   |
| 18  | 3              | Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing (*) (SDG Indicator 11.1.1)   |
| 19  | 3              | Status of UNESCO world heritage sites (*)  |
| 20  | 3              | Waste generated and treated by type of waste and treatment type (*) (**)   |
| 21  | 4              | Green House Gas emissions (related to GDP)   |
| 22  | 4              | Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP (*) (SDG Indicator 7.3.1) and/or Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (*) (SDG Indicator 7.2.1) |
| 23  | 5              | Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP (*) (SDG Indicator 12.2.2)  |
| 24  | 6              | Number of National Strategies for Sustainable Development adopted or updated [and number of updates since first edition] (*)   |
| 25  | 6              | Proportion of bank credit allocated to the private sector – Existence of alternative financing systems using bank credit   |
| 26  | 6              | Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP (*) (SDG Indicator 9.5.1)  |
| 27  | 6              | Number of countries that have clear mechanisms in place for ensuring public participation and guarantying public access to environmental information (*)                             |
| 28  | 6              | Number of countries that have National Strategies/Action Plans on Education for Sustainable Development in place   |

(\*) Corresponding/linked to SDG Indicators, (\*\*) linked to SEIS II / Horizon 2020 Indicators