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Agenda item 5 - Specific Issues

UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy 2016-2021 - Draft Issues Paper

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UNEP/MAP MIDTERM STRATEGY 2016-2021

DRAFT ISSUES PAPER

This document is submitted, as per Decision IG.21/13 “Governance”, Annex II, which requests the Secretariat to prepare an issues paper for guidance of the Bureau. It includes an overview of the current status of the Mediterranean Sea and coasts, lists existing legal tools and proposes a generic framework for the Midterm Strategy that will cover the period 2016-2021.

Previous drafts of this document were reviewed by the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) at its 20th and 21st meetings in October and December 2014 respectively. Work for the development of section 5 of the document entitled “Preparation of the UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy 2016-2021” will continue in January and February 2015, reflecting also the comments and guidance that the Bureau may provide at its 79th Meeting in February 2015. The final draft will be then submitted to the first meeting of 2015 of the MAP Focal Points.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Mediterranean comprises a vast set of coastal and marine ecosystems that deliver valuable benefits to all of its coastal inhabitants, including brackish water lagoons, estuaries, transitional areas; coastal plains; wetlands; rocky shores and nearshore coastal areas; seagrass meadows; coralligenous communities; frontal systems and upwellings; seamounts; and pelagic systems (State of the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Environment, UNEP/MAP 2012).
2. The Mediterranean occupies a basin of almost 2.6 million km². The coastline is 46,000 km long, and the basin itself about 3,800 km from east to west and 900 km from north to south at its maximum between France and Algeria. The average water depth is approximately 1,500 m with a maximum depth of 5,121 m off south-western Greece. The shallowest part of the Mediterranean Sea is the northern Adriatic, where the average depth does not exceed 50 m. The Mediterranean Sea can be divided into two sub-basins, the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean, which in turn are composed of a series of varied small basins (Amblas et al. 2004). The estimated residence time of Mediterranean waters is quite high, around 50–100 years (Millot and Taupier-Letage 2005), which has important implications for the cycling and eventual export of contaminants. The Mediterranean drainage basin extends over an area of more than 5 million km².
3. Marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean is high by all measures. The basin supports some of the richest fauna and flora in the world and has an extraordinary diversity of habitats. It is recognised as one of the world’s 25 top biodiversity hotspots, defined as areas with rich biodiversity, a large number of endemic species (species unique to the region), and critical levels of habitat loss. There are an estimated 10,000–12,000 marine species in the Mediterranean, comprising approximately 8,500 macroscopic fauna, over 1,300 plant species, and 2,500 species from other taxonomic groups (UNEP/MAP 2012). This represents 4–18% of the world’s known marine species, depending on the taxonomic group (from 4.1% of the bony fishes to 18.4% of the marine mammals), in an area covering less than 1% of the world’s oceans and less than 0.3% of its volume (UNEP/MAP 2012; Bianchi and Morri 2000).
4. The total population of the Mediterranean countries grew from 276 million in 1970 to 412 million in 2000 (a 1.35% increase per year) and to 466 million in 2010. The population is

predicted to reach 529 million by 2025. Four countries account for about 60% of the total population: Turkey (81 million), Egypt (72 million), France (62 million), and Italy (60 million) (Plan Bleu computations based on UNDESA 2011). Overall, more than half the population lives in countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and this proportion is expected to grow to three-quarters by 2025 (UNEP/MAP/MEDPOL 2005). The Mediterranean region's population is concentrated near the coasts. More than a third lives in coastal administrative entities totalling less than 12% of the surface area of the Mediterranean countries. The population of the coastal areas of the Mediterranean grew from 95 million in 1979 to 143 million in 2000, and could reach 174 million by 2025 (UN/MAP/BP/RAC 2005).

2. PRESSURES AND IMPACTS

5. Despite compelling evidence of the importance of services delivered by Mediterranean coastal and marine systems, the Mediterranean ecosystem continues to be degraded (The UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Initial Integrated Assessment, 2011). The pressures and impacts vary in severity from region to region.
6. The state of the Mediterranean coastal and marine environment varies from place to place, but all parts of the Mediterranean are subject to multiple pressures acting simultaneously and in many cases chronically. The State of the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Environment Report (UNEP/MAP, 2012) highlights the following as the major issues requiring coordinated policy and management responses in the coming years in order to stem the tide of degradation of the Mediterranean ecosystems.
 - **Coastal development and sprawl**, driven by urban and touristic development, leading to fragmentation, degradation and loss of habitats and landscapes, including the destabilization and erosion of the shoreline. Special attention should be paid to the degradation of transitional areas, including deltas, estuaries, and coastal lagoons, which serve as critical nursery areas for commercial fisheries and support unique assemblages of species, but also to the broader coastal zone.
 - **Chemical contamination** of sediments and biota caused by pollution from urbanization, industry, anti-foulants, and atmospheric transport. Although environmental conditions are improving in regard to certain pollutants in many Mediterranean areas, thanks to improved control of land based pollution releases, contamination linked to hazardous substances remains a problem in many areas.
 - **Eutrophication** caused by human-mediated input of nutrients into marine waters is a source of concern, especially in coastal areas near large rivers and/or cities. Impacts of eutrophication include algal blooms, some of them harmful and hypoxia. The direct socioeconomic impacts are related to toxicity or mortality of harvested fish and shellfish, loss of aesthetic value of coastal ecosystems, and reduced water quality.
 - The impact of **marine litter**, concentrated especially in bays and shallow areas, has recently been identified as a matter of concern across the Mediterranean.
 - The impact of **marine noise** on biota, especially marine mammals and fish, requires targeted research. Intense maritime traffic, particularly in the Western Mediterranean, and intense offshore exploration and military activities in specific locations, suggest potentially serious impacts.

- **Invasive non-indigenous species** have increased in recent years, particularly in the easternmost reaches of the Mediterranean. Documented impacts on natural diversity include predation, alteration of the food chain, niche competition, and modification of habitats, leading to a variety of impacts on fishing, aquaculture, human health, and tourism.
 - **Over-exploitation** beyond sustainable limits affects many of the commercially exploited fish stocks of the Mediterranean. The result is changes in species diversity, with some species regarded as Endangered, Vulnerable or Near-Threatened. Over-exploitation also leads to changes in community structure, the food web, and, ultimately, ecological processes and the delivery of ecosystem services. Other pressures brought by the intense fishing activity in the Mediterranean include **bycatch**, **non-selective fishing methods**, and **destructive fishing**. Understanding how multiple pressures reduce sustainable limits of harvest is necessary for effective fisheries management, which is crucial in a part of the world where seafood is both culturally and economically vital. While touted as a means of reducing pressure on wild stocks, **aquaculture** has increased noticeably since the 1990s, adding new pressures. These include nutrient and organic matter pollution leading to eutrophication and eventual benthic anoxia, pollution through the release of antibiotics and biocides, and the introduction of non-indigenous species.
 - **Sea-floor integrity** is affected mainly by bottom fishing, but also by dredging and offshore installations. Bottom fishing and dredging lead to the resuspension of sediment and organisms and to changes in the structure of benthic communities. The impact of offshore installations is not well researched.
 - Changed **hydrographic conditions** caused by local disruption of circulation patterns by human-made structures, changes in freshwater fluxes to the sea, brine release from desalination plants, or climate change influence on both nearshore and offshore areas. Changes in freshwater flows also affect sediment delivery to the coastal zone near river mouths, with impacts on coastline stability and key systems, such as dune-beach complexes.
 - **Marine food webs** have been affected by fisheries pressures that led to the estimated reduction on average of one trophic level in the fisheries catches during the last half-century, increased jellyfish numbers, and reduced abundance of large predator species.
 - Finally the state of **biodiversity** reflects the cumulative effects of the pressures affecting the Mediterranean coastal and marine environment. Although there is still high diversity in the Mediterranean, some species of reptiles, marine mammals, birds, and fish are reaching dangerously low abundance levels. The Mediterranean also hosts a diverse array of habitats of commercial, ecological, and cultural importance. Many are under a variety of pressures. Complicating the issue, many offshore areas, where upwellings develop and seamounts provide important habitat, are located beyond national jurisdiction.
7. **Climate change** impact is becoming increasingly evident in the Mediterranean. The recent IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5, 2014) considers the Mediterranean Region as “high vulnerable to climate change” and states that it “will suffer multiple stresses and systemic failures due to climate changes”. According to observations, in recent decades warm days, warm nights, heat waves, extreme precipitation and soil dryness have increased and cold days and nights have decreased. The projected impacts (2081-2100 compared to 1986-2005) mentioned in the Report include an increase of 4-7°C in surface mean air temperature in the worst case scenario (RCP 8.5), 10-20% decreases in mean annual precipitation, increased risk

of desertification, soil degradation, an increase in duration and intensity of droughts, changes in species composition, increase of alien species, habitat losses, agricultural and forests production losses.

8. According to the EU funded “Climate Change and Impact Research: the Mediterranean Environment” (CIRCE) project's conclusions:
 - In the course of the 21st century the Mediterranean region might experience a substantial warming, which in summer might be of the order of 0.6°C/decade.
 - The warming appears to be accompanied by a reduction in precipitation (projected annual mean precipitation in the 2021-2050 period decreases by about 5% compared with the mean for the 1961-1990 period) over the entire region, more pronounced in the southern and western part of the basin, during summer.
 - Interannual variability of temperature and precipitation in the Mediterranean basin is projected to generally increase, especially in summer, as is the occurrence of extreme heat and drought events.
 - The sea level of the Mediterranean Sea might increase causing adverse impacts on the coastal areas. The projected mean sea level rise in the period 2021-2050 due to thermal expansion and salinity-density compensation of sea water might be in the range of about +6 / +11 cm.
 - There is an expected increase in the number of very hot days and nights as well as longer heat waves. The projections indicate also an earlier onset and a longer duration of droughts.
 - Overall, there is an increase in the intensity of heavy precipitation events over most of the Mediterranean region in all seasons.

9. Unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, , are upstream drivers of the above mentioned pressures and impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems, in terms of pollution and waste generation (marine litter, toxic chemicals, nutrients), land degradation (intensive resource exploitation, coastal artificialization, erosion) and biodiversity (decrease of local species, overexploitation of fisheries, habitat degradation). Conscious that the state of the marine and coastal Mediterranean ecosystems is impacted by human activities and, therefore, by the models of consumption and production on which those activities are based; the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have recognized the urgent need for shifting to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production so as to decouple the socio-economic development from environmental degradation and resource depletion. Food and agriculture, tourism, housing and construction, goods manufacturing and related activity sectors have been broadly recognized as main drivers of environmental pressures from both a production and consumption perspective (UNEP, EEA, Global Footprint Network). In the Mediterranean those sectors are considered both relevant areas of economic activity for the sustainable development of the region (UNEP/MAP/Plan Bleu, 2009) as well as key contributors to the vulnerability of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries to environmental degradation (World Bank/IBRD, 2012). Likewise those sectors as well as the main pollution and environmental challenges associated to their unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are identified as priorities for action in several protocols of the Barcelona Convention (e.g. LBS, IZCM and HW Protocols).

3. THE NEW MIDTERM STRATEGY 2016-2021 - MAIN GLOBAL REFERENCES

10. Under this heading, the main global references for a new UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy (MTS) will be briefly explained. Being part of UNEP's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), Regional Seas Programme (RSP), the Medium-Term Strategy of UNEP for the period 2014-2017 and the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas Programme 2013-2016 are considered as the overarching references for the framework of UNEP/MAP MTS. Another reference will be made to Sustainable Development Goals. These will be followed by Mediterranean-level processes, which are expected to feed the MTS development and complementary strategies like the reviewed Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

3.1. UNEP's Medium-term Strategy for the period 2014-2017

11. UNEP's vision for 2014-2017 continues the vision of the current UNEP MTS and is derived from its mandate:

To be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

12. Whereas the vision statement defines the long-term ambition of UNEP, the UNEP MTS has a goal statement that expresses the focus for the period 2014-2017. For this period, the key goal of UNEP is:

To catalyse a transition towards low carbon, resource efficient and equitable development based on the protection and sustainable use of ecosystem services, coherent environmental governance and the reduction of environmental risks for the well-being of current and future generations and the attainment of global environmental goals in order to contribute to sustainable development.

13. UNEP will achieve this goal by providing active and focused services to relevant UN agencies, governments and other relevant stakeholders in their work towards achieving and tracking global environmental goals and environmental dimension of existing and future sustainable development and environment goals. UNEP will do more to ensure that environmental sustainability contributes to the goals of the other two pillars of sustainable development (social and economic).

14. UNEP's strategic focus for the current MTS period is in the following areas, operationally referred to as subprogrammes:

- **Climate Change**
- **Disasters and Conflicts**
- **Ecosystem Management**
- **Environmental Governance**
- **Chemicals and Waste**
- **Resource Efficiency**
- **Environment under Review**

15. These areas have been reviewed against the decisions taken by member states in GA resolution 66/288 (2011) and validated as a priority for UNEP. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity underpins many of these sub-programmes and each programme will contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (Annex I).

3.2. UNEP Regional Seas Programme Strategic Directions 2013-2016

16. The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans aims to increase their effectiveness and outreach in the period of 2013-2016, through increasing country ownership, promoting the incorporation of the Convention and/or Action Plan and their protocols into national legislation, promoting compliance and enforcement mechanisms, involving civil society and the private sector, building capacities, ensuring viable national and international financial arrangements, as well as developing assessment/evaluation procedures where appropriate.
17. The key issues for the work of the Global Regional Seas Programme are identified as follows:
- **Coastal Area Management** (Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Development)
 - **Ecosystems and Biodiversity** (Coral reefs, Marine Mammals, Marine Protected Areas, Marine and Coastal Invasives, Large Marine Ecosystems)
 - **Land-based Sources of Pollution**
 - **Marine Litter**
 - **Shipping and Sea-based Pollution**
 - **Small Islands**
18. The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans will:
- a) Endeavor to effectively **apply an ecosystem approach in the management of the marine and coastal environment** in order to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations.
 - b) Contribute to the **implementation of the Manila Declaration of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities**, especially in the core partnership areas of wastewater, nutrients and marine litter.
 - c) **Strengthen capacities at the national level on marine and coastal governance**, in order to enable coordination and coherence with systems such as the Large Marine Ecosystem approach, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and River Basin Organizations, as appropriate.
 - d) Support the provision of tools to **decouple economic growth from environmental pressures in the marine and coastal environment by promoting resource efficiency and productivity**, including assessing the value of the services provided by key ecosystems.
 - e) Strengthen coordination and **build necessary capacities at the regional and national levels to improve global knowledge and trends on the status of the marine environment**, contributing to the World Oceans Assessment (Regular Process).
 - f) **Strengthen collaboration mechanisms** to address **common regional objectives, partnerships and coordinated regional implementation** of relevant Multilateral

Environmental Agreements, global and regional initiatives by United Nations Agencies.

3.3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

19. In accordance with the COP 18 Decision IG.21/11, the MSSD needs to be revised in the light of Rio+20 outcomes and the definition of SDGs for consideration by the UN General Assembly.
20. Rio+20 stated that the SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account the different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. The SDGs should address and incorporate in a balanced way the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and their linkages.
21. Established in January 2013 by the UN General Assembly, a 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) was tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs; and the issues have to be addressed in a comprehensive, holistic, balanced and integrated manner. After a rigorous consultation process the OWG agreed on 17 goals and their respective targets. The list of proposed SDGs is as follows, and the full list with goals and targets is provided in Annex III:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Goal 1. | End poverty in all its forms everywhere |
| Goal 2. | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture |
| Goal 3. | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages |
| Goal 4. | Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all |
| Goal 5. | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls |
| Goal 6. | Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all |
| Goal 7. | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all |
| Goal 8. | Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all |
| Goal 9. | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation |
| Goal 10. | Reduce inequality within and among countries |
| Goal 11. | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |
| Goal 12. | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns |
| Goal 13. | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* |

**Acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.*

- Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15.** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

4. THE NEW MIDTERM STRATEGY 2016-2021 - REGIONAL RESPONSE TO PRESSURE AND IMPACTS

4.1. Current strategic approach

22. Being the only regional multilateral agreement for the protection of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment, the Barcelona Convention, aiming “to prevent, abate, combat and to the fullest extent possible eliminate pollution of the Mediterranean Sea Area” and “to protect and enhance the marine environment in that area so as to contribute towards its sustainable development”, rests on seven associated protocols:
- The Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol, adopted 1976, in force 1978, amended 1995),
 - The Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency (Emergency Protocol, adopted 1976, in force 1978), replaced by the Protocol concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol, adopted 2002, in force 2004),
 - The Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol, adopted 1980, in force 1983; amended 1996, in force 2008),
 - The Protocol Concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPA Protocol, adopted 1982, in force 1986) replaced by the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol, adopted 1995, in force 1999),
 - Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol, adopted 1994, in force 2011),
 - Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Hazardous Wastes Protocol, adopted 1996, in force 2008),
 - Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM Protocol, adopted 2008, in force 2011)
23. The Mediterranean Action Plan II adopted in 1995 by COP 10 as well as by a Conference of the Plenipotentiaries held in Barcelona, Spain, June 1995 contains three principal components:
- i. Sustainable development in the Mediterranean
 - Integration of environment and development
 - Conservation of nature landscape and sites
 - Assessment, prevention and elimination of marine pollution
 - Information and participation
 - ii. Strengthening of the legal framework

iii. Institutional and Financial Arrangements

It also contains an annex describing priority fields of activities for the environment and development in the Mediterranean basin (1996-2005) that was further complemented and replaced in 2005 and 2009 by the multiannual programme of work of the MCSD (COP 14) and 5 year UNEP/MAP strategic programme of work (COP 16).

24. In addition to MAP II, the Convention and its Protocols, the following regional strategies and programmes provided foundation for medium term and biannual planning and programming of UNEP/MAP's work so far:
- The Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities (SAP MED), adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their Tenth Meeting held in Tunis in 1997
 - The Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO), adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their Thirteenth Meeting held in Catania in 2003
 - The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their Fourteenth Meeting held in Portoroz, Slovenia in 2005
 - Regional Strategy for Prevention of and response to marine pollution from Ships
 - Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management
25. The Mediterranean Action Plan's Five-Year Strategic Programme of Work for the period 2010-2014 was adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at its meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2009 (Decision IG.19/8: Adoption of the Five-Year Programme of Work and Programme Budget for the 2010-2011 biennium). It was designed alongside the biennial Programme of Work for 2010-2011 and provided a reference for the biennial Programmes of Work for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.
26. The Five Year Strategic Programme of Work outcomes are structured around six priority themes: Governance, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Biodiversity, Pollution Prevention and Control, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Climate Change (Table 1). Each outcome is associated with one to three outputs.

Table 1. Five Year PoW Theme, Outcomes and Outputs

Theme	PoW Outcome	PoW Outputs
Governance	Barcelona Convention, protocols, and strategies effectively implemented	<p>I. Strengthening Institutional Coherence, efficiency and accountability</p> <p>II. Implementation gap filled: Contracting Parties supported in meeting the objectives of BC, protocols and adopted strategies</p> <p>III. Knowledge and information effectively managed and communicated</p>
Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)	Sustainable development of coastal zone enhanced	<p>I. Coastal zone management achieves effective balance between development and protection (sustainable development of coastal zone)</p>

Theme	PoW Outcome	PoW Outputs
Biodiversity	Marine and coastal biodiversity loss reduced	I. Ecosystem services provided by the marine and coastal environment identified and valued II. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (strategic vision, new objectives in the post 2010 context, including fisheries, ballast, non-indigenous species), endangered and threatened species III. Network of Marine and coastal Protected Areas (MPAs), including Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), extended, strengthened and effectively managed
Pollution Prevention and Control	Land-based and sea-based pollution reduced	I. Early warning of pollution (spills, dangerous/hazardous substances) II. Lower levels of pollution in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environments
Sustainable Consumption and Production	Unsustainable consumption and production patterns changed	I. Drivers affecting ecosystems addressed: economic activities, patterns of consumption, infrastructure and spatial development more sustainable, transport
Climate Change	Mediterranean environment less vulnerable to Climate Change	I. Mediterranean region able to face climate change challenges through a better understanding of potential ecological impacts and vulnerabilities II. Reduced socio-economic vulnerability

27. The 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, in their Decision IG.21/17 – “MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the 2014-2015 biennium”, approved the extension of the current Five-Year Strategic Programme of Work (2010-2014) for one additional year and requested the Secretariat to carry out an external evaluation of that programme. The Parties asked the Secretariat with the participation of MAP Components and in full consultation with the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, the MAP Focal Points and MAP Partners to prepare for consideration and approval by the 19th meeting of the Contracting Parties a Mid-Term Strategy for the period 2016-2021.

4.2. Ecosystem Approach Implementation in the Mediterranean

28. Decisions IG 17/6 “Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment” and IG 20/4 “Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach roadmap adopted by the Contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention” respectively in COP 15 (2008) and COP17 (2012) articulate a systematic process for moving forward towards more effective ecosystems-based management in the Mediterranean. COP17 adopted the following ecological objectives, which have been defined through an intensive process of consultation led by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat fully owned by the Contracting Parties and with participation of MAP Partners and technical experts:

- (1). **Biological diversity is maintained** or enhanced. The quality and occurrence of coastal and marine habitats and the distribution and abundance of coastal and marine

species are in line with prevailing physiographic, hydrographic, geographic, and climatic conditions.

- (2). **Non-indigenous species** introduced by human activities are at levels that **do not adversely alter the ecosystem**.
- (3). **Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits**, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.
- (4). **Alterations to components of marine food webs** caused by resource extraction or human-induced environmental changes **do not have long-term adverse effects** on food web dynamics and related viability.
- (5). **Human-induced eutrophication is prevented**, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters.
- (6). **Sea-floor integrity is maintained**, especially in priority benthic habitats.
- (7). **Alteration of hydrographic conditions does not adversely affect coastal and marine ecosystems**.
- (8). The **natural dynamics of coastal areas are maintained** and **coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved**.
- (9). **Contaminants cause no significant impact** on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health.
- (10). **Marine and coastal litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments**.
- (11). **Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems**.

Corresponding 28 operational objectives and 61 indicators is provided in Annex IV.

Additionally, COP 18 with its Decision IG.21/3 on the “Ecosystems Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Targets”, adopted an integrated list of Mediterranean GES and related targets associated with the Operational Objectives and indicators as agreed at Decision IG.20/4 (COP 17, Paris, 2013), which is also provided in Annex V.

4.3. Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and its review

29. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)¹ was adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2005, as a regional response to the global agenda about sustainable development. It focuses mainly on the integration of environmental concerns into the key economic development sectors, while giving due consideration to social and cultural dimensions.
30. Defining four priority objectives, nine challenges and 34 sub-objectives, the MSSD set clear objectives and targets associated with follow-up actions. Adopting an integrated approach to economic and social development, environmental protection, and cultural advancement, the

¹ http://195.97.36.231/dbases/acrobatfiles/05IG16_7_eng.pdf

MSSD establishes four objectives aiming at promoting progress towards sustainability in the economic, social and environmental areas and in the field of governance, as follows:

- Objective 1: **Contribute to economic development** by enhancing Mediterranean assets;
- Objective 2: **Reduce social disparities** by implementing the MDGs and strengthen cultural identities;
- Objective 3: **Change unsustainable production and consumption patterns** and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources; and
- Objective 4: **Improve governance** at the local, national and regional levels.

31. Accordingly, it established seven priority fields of action:

- Better management of water resources and demand;
- Improved rational use of energy, increased renewable energy use and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
- Sustainable mobility through appropriate transport management;
- Sustainable tourism as a leading economic sector;
- Sustainable agriculture and rural development;
- Sustainable urban development; and
- Sustainable management of the sea, coastal areas and marine resources.

32. The decision to review MSSD was taken by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their 18th Ordinary Meeting in Istanbul in December 2013, with view to submitting a reviewed strategy for consideration and adoption next meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2015. Key opportunities for the MSSD review are the link to the global process to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus ensuring that the Mediterranean region remains a frontrunner in the area of environmental and sustainability governance, and, the building on synergies between the MSSD and other regional initiatives.

33. The Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (June 2014) recommended that the revised MSSD be focused on six thematic areas in line with the global process to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, the first one being Sea and Coast, towards reaching Good Environmental Status of the Marine and Coastal Mediterranean environments, thus encompassing the EcAp objectives. These six thematic areas are as follows:

- **Seas and coasts**; including efforts towards reaching Good Environment Status of Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems;
- **Natural resources**, rural development and food; including links not only to marine and coastal, but also terrestrial habitats, and to fresh waters;
- **Climate**; including the impacts of climate change on natural resources and socioeconomic sectors and possible responses;
- **Sustainable cities**; including coastal urbanization and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, land transport, waste management, infrastructure, housing and energy;
- **Transition towards a green economy**; including sustainable consumption and production, circular economy;

- **Governance;** including financing, Aarhus Convention–related issues such as public participation, and cooperation.

4.4. Regional Strategies and Action Plans

34. There exist a number of adopted **regional strategies and action plans**, of which some are legally binding and will **provide a strong basis for translating the responses into actions**, in addition to the **legally binding framework of the Convention and its Protocols**. These strategies and action plans are already being implemented, whereas few are under development and will be submitted to COP 19 for adoption. These are:

Biodiversity

- Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO)
- Action Plan for the management of the Mediterranean Monk Seal
- Regional Strategy for the conservation of Mediterranean Monk Seal
- Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles
- Action Plan for the conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea
- Action Plan for the conservation of Marine Vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea
- Action Plan for the conservation of Bird species listed in Annex II of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean
- Action Plan for the conservation of Cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea
- Action Plan for the conservation of the Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-Concretions in the Mediterranean Sea
- Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan)
- Regional Working Programme for the Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Sea including the High Sea
- Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea
- Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management

Coastal Management

- The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Action Plan

Climate Change

- Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean and Coastal Zone (under preparation)

Sustainable Development

- Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) (current and the reviewed)

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

- SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean (under preparation)

Pollution Reduction, Control and Prevention (Legally binding under Article 15 of the LBS Protocol)

- Regional Plan on the reduction of inputs of Mercury in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the reduction of BOD5 in the food sector (adopted in 2012)
- Regional Plan on the phasing out of Hexabromodiphenyl ether, Hetabromodiphenyl ether, Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and Pentabromodiphenil ether in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the on the phasing out of lindane and endosulfane in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the phasing out of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid , its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the elimination of Alpha hexachlorocyclohexane, Betahexachlorocyclohexane, Chlordecone, Hexabromobiphenyl, Pentachlorobenzene in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the Phasing Out of DDT in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the reduction of BOD5 from urban waste water in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Plan on the elimination of Aldrin, Chlordane, Dieldrin, Endrin, Heptachlor, Mirex and Toxaphene in the framework of the implementation of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol
- Regional Strategy for Prevention of and response to marine pollution from Ships
- Marine Litter Regional Plan
- The Draft Offshore Action Plan

5. PREPARATION OF THE UNEP/MAP MIDTERM STRATEGY 2016-2021

5.1. First Step – Internal Discussions

35. The Executive Coordination Panel (ECP), at its 20th Meeting (October 2014) discussed and identified initial lists of strategic axes, responses/actions/techniques/approaches, strategies/action plans/legal framework, means/tools and guiding principles to be considered in the development process of the Midterm Strategy for UNEP/MAP.
36. According to ECP, the Midterm Strategy should be:
- **Integrated and coherent across the system**
 - **Consistent**
 - **Inclusive**
 - **Adaptive and flexible**
 - **Attentive to regional and national needs**
 - **Collaborative**
 - **Based on participation and partnerships**
 - **Knowledge generating and sharing**
 - **Result-based and resource-based**
37. The ECP proposed the following issues that are “business areas” of UNEP/MAP to form the basis of the new Midterm Strategy:
- **Land and sea based pollution;**
 - **Biodiversity and ecosystems;**
 - **Climate change;**
 - **Natural resources;**
 - **Environmental governance**
 - **Mediterranean environment under review**
38. Additionally, overarching responses to the issues highlighted above considered by ECP are as follows:
- Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) implementation (including biodiversity protection, natural resources management, combating pollution and litter);
 - coastal and marine management (Integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning, integrated river basin management, marine and coastal protected areas etc);
 - sustainable consumption and production; and
 - climate change adaptation.
39. At its 21st meeting, the ECP agreed on a draft list of objectives per each “business area” as listed in paragraph 37 as follows:

BUSINESS AREA/THEME	OVERALL OBJECTIVES
Land and sea based pollution	<p>(1) To prevent and control contaminants inputs, oil discharges and spills, as well as human-induced eutrophication.</p> <p>(2) To prevent marine litter generation and reduce its impact on coastal and marine environment</p>
Biodiversity and ecosystems	<p>(1) To maintain and enhance biological diversity – (the quality and occurrence of coastal and marine habitats and the distribution and abundance of coastal and marine species are in line with prevailing physiographic, hydrographic, geographic, and climatic conditions.)</p> <p>(2) To keep non-indigenous species introduced by human activities at levels that does not adversely alter the ecosystem.</p> <p>(3) Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats.</p>
Climate change	To enhance the resilience of the Mediterranean Region to impacts of climate change and variability on coastal and marine environment
Natural resources	<p>(1) To achieve sustainable management of coastal and marine resources</p> <p>(2) To promote resource efficiency in key economic sectors</p>
Environmental Governance	To strengthen the regional and national governance mechanisms for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the adopted Strategies and Action Plans
Mediterranean environment under review	To deliver knowledge-based assessments of the Mediterranean environment and scenario development

40. The ECP also agreed on a draft format to be used in structuring the Midterm Strategy as follows:

Business line / Response	Key (<i>relevant/contributing</i>) output	Legislative authority	MAP Components	Synergies with Global / Regional processes / policy frameworks / initiatives

41. The MAP Components and the Coordinating Unit are developing and completing the above format during the months of January and February 2015. Any comments and guidance that the Bureau may provide at its 79th Meeting in February 2015 will be reflected in this work and in the final draft to be submitted to the first meeting of 2015 of the MAP Focal Points.