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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 13-16 October 2015

**Agenda items 5.1: Draft Decision on Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021**

**Report of the MAP Focal Points Meeting, 19-21 May 2015, Athens, Greece**

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### **Report of the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points**

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## **Introduction**

1. In accordance with the programme of work adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its protocols at their eighteenth meeting, held in Istanbul in 2013, a meeting of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) focal points was held at the Royal Olympic Hotel in Athens from 19 to 21 May 2015.

## **Attendance**

2. The following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were represented at the meeting: Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, European Union, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey (Annex IV).

3. The following non-governmental organizations and MAP partners were represented as observers: Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMPEA), Institute of sustainable development and management of natural resources (INARE), Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN CENTRE), Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET) and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE).

### **I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)**

4. The meeting was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 19 May 2015 by Mr Gaetano Leone, MAP Coordinator. Welcoming and opening statements were delivered by Mr Yiannis Tsironis, Alternate Minister of Environment of Greece, and by the Coordinator.

5. In his remarks, Mr Tsironis said that the Contracting Parties were gradually leaving behind recent difficulties and turning their attention back to the environmental and ecological challenges facing the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, many countries in the region were still confronted with significant economic, social and political challenges, some of which could be met through an approach based on green growth and sustainable development. MAP provided a framework for cooperation and served as a model for other regions of the world. His country had provided continuous support to the MAP system in the belief that MAP and the Barcelona Convention were catalysts for environmental protection, sustainable economic development, and peace and stability. It was important to remember achievements in that regard, including the MED POL programme, the adoption of amendments and protocols to the Barcelona Convention, and the work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development. The meeting, which was of strategic importance, provided an opportunity to celebrate 40 years of UNEP/MAP and the Barcelona Convention. It was also a chance to increase the visibility of the UNEP/MAP system and renew the commitment to implementing the Convention and its protocols.

6. In his remarks, the Coordinator said that it was an honour to address the MAP focal points for the first time. In the 11 months since he had taken up his position, the Secretariat had endeavoured to implement an ambitious programme of work with suboptimal resources. A key part of his role had been to strengthen trust with stakeholders, most importantly with Contracting Parties, and also with partners in the region and MAP system components, and to develop a relationship characterized by collegiality and pragmatism. Among the many achievements of the previous biennium, he drew particular attention to the adoption of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) national strategies for Algeria, Croatia and Montenegro; the development of a number of mandated strategic documents to be approved at the nineteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties; the disposal of more than 900 tons of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in three countries; the very high level of contributions in 2014, including some early payments for 2015; a strengthening of the role of UNEP/MAP in the Horizon 2020 initiative; and the mobilization of resources to support the ecosystem approach and the follow-up to other major activities of the MAP system. His term had, however, to date also been marked by several challenges, including incomplete ratification of the Convention and its protocols; issues of

compliance, particularly delays by some Contracting Parties in submitting reports; the need to better define the relationship of UNEP/MAP with some important partners in the region, including the Union for the Mediterranean; the introduction of a new enterprise resource planning tool, Umoja, in the United Nations system that was considerably slowing down the work of UNEP/MAP; the late payment of some contributions; and the limited visibility of the MAP system. Despite those issues, he remained optimistic that the situation would improve and looked forward to receiving constructive advice and guidance from the focal points.

## **II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)**

### **A. Rules of procedure**

7. The focal points agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/IG 43/6, annex XI, as amended by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.1/5 and UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.3/5), would apply mutatis mutandis to their deliberations.

### **B. Election of officers**

8. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the focal points unanimously elected the following Bureau:

|              |                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Chair:       | Ms Jelena Knežević (Montenegro)    |
| Vice-Chairs: | Ms Maria Peppas (Greece)           |
|              | Mr Nadim Mroueh (Lebanon)          |
|              | Mr Rachid Firadi (Morocco)         |
|              | Mr Victor Escobar (Spain)          |
| Rapporteur:  | Mr Charalambos Hajipakkos (Cyprus) |

### **C. Adoption of the provisional agenda**

9. The focal points adopted their agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda circulated in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/1, with the inclusion of additional items on information, the preparations for the nineteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties, and an announcement regarding the Secretariat (Annex V)

### **D. Organization of work**

10. The focal points agreed to work in plenary session and to establish small groups to consider specific issues as necessary.

## **III. UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy for the period 2016–2021: draft strategic framework (agenda item 3)**

11. The Coordinator introduced the draft strategic framework of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016–2021, contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/1/Rev.1, and reported on the progress of various MAP initiatives.

12. In the discussion that followed, several focal points expressed appreciation for the draft strategic framework. A focal point suggested that the Offshore Protocol Action Plan should be discussed further at the eleventh meeting of the focal points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC).

13. One focal point, supported by a number of others, said that the framework should be restructured with a greater focus on concision and coherence. The six themes in the framework were given different weight in the Convention and should thus be treated differently. The link

between the themes should also be explained. One focal point said that the resources allocated to the implementation of the framework should not be spread too thinly. The objectives should be well-defined and achievable (“smart”) rather than overambitious.

14. One focal point highlighted the need for consistency between the framework and other MAP initiatives, particularly the draft reviewed Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, while another enquired about the implementation of the framework. It was important to know how, when and by whom the stated objectives would be achieved. One focal point said that additional data should be gathered on the current status of the Mediterranean. Having more information would make it possible to identify priorities and optimize the allocation of resources. Climate change, as a cross-cutting theme, should be considered a priority within the framework.

15. One speaker said that consideration should be given in the general strategy to global processes such as the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nagoya Protocol) and issues relating to the establishment of a legally-binding instrument, under the UNCLOS, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). He also stressed that references to climate change adaptation in the strategy should not exceed the scope of the Convention.

16. The Chair, summarizing the discussion thus far, said that there was clearly a need to restructure the document for the sake of coherence within the framework strategy and consistency with the wider framework of MAP. In addition, the strategy needed to be innovative and implementable and must focus on the core areas of the Convention. Furthermore, the issue of climate change adaptation should be fully integrated, as appropriate, across the strategy as a whole.

17. The Coordinator said that it should be borne in mind that the document was only a draft framework and that, once fully developed, it would address the comments made with respect to, among other things, coherence, clarity, the means of implementation and the need to integrate different instruments. He was aware that resources were limited, and that fact would be reflected in the final document. He reassured participants that there was no intention to go beyond the mandate of the Convention. He agreed with the proposals to include climate change adaptation and sustainable development as cross-cutting themes.

18. It was agreed that, although most substance required for the finalization of the strategic framework was contained in the draft submitted by the Secretariat, there was a need to adjust its structure. For this purpose, it was decided to establish an informal drafting group, to be chaired by Mr Escobar (Spain) that would prepare a proposal regarding the structure of the draft strategic framework and its objectives, outcomes and outputs, to be submitted to the plenary for endorsement.

19. In the ensuing discussion, it was agreed that the drafting group would focus primarily on the structure of the framework and that the details of the key outputs would be addressed later in the drafting process.

20. Later during the meeting, the chair of the informal working group, presenting the new structure also in diagram form, said that agreement had been reached on the three themes that would constitute the core of the Mid-Term Strategy: land- and sea-based pollution; biodiversity and ecosystems; land and sea interaction and processes. Four cross-cutting issues had also been identified: integrated coastal zone management (ICZM); sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the circular economy; sustainable development and climate change adaptation. Governance and “the Mediterranean Environment under review”, including knowledge, information and communication, were overarching points and should be taken into account from the outset. The ecosystem approach would be the vital principle of the methodology.

21. The outcome of the work of the informal drafting group is set out in part III, section G of the present report.

#### **A. Land- and sea-based pollution**

22. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the first strategic theme, entitled “Land- and sea-based pollution”, as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/3.

23. During the ensuing discussion, one focal point welcomed the topic of land- and sea-based pollution stemming from the Barcelona Convention’s legal requirements and programmes of measures in existing regional strategies and action plans, including the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. Another focal point said that greater emphasis should be placed on the ecosystem approach and regional plans. A third suggested that consideration of indicator 4 should be postponed, since there was currently no agreed definition of “hot spot”. A number of focal points said that, in the interests of clarity and coherence, climate change, sustainable development and means of implementation should be highlighted as specific elements within each strategic theme. Emphasis should also be placed on the need for prior consultation with the Contracting Parties, since in recent years some projects had been agreed and implemented without effective consultation with them. Several speakers said that the issues of underwater noise, as it is included among the EcAp EO and OO, and emergencies should be explicitly referred to in the objectives.

24. It was also widely agreed that the indicators should be revised in order to make them more concise and measurable. In particular, indicator 2 should be rephrased to make it easier to interpret in terms of the progress made. Baseline indicators reflecting the current state of the Mediterranean should also be included. One focal point said that it would be more logical for the indicators to be placed after the outputs and more closely linked thereto, thus making them measurable and easier to develop. Many of those who spoke said that the language of the outputs needed to be refined and made less descriptive.

25. The representative of MED POL said that, in the framework of the MAP update process, there was already agreement regarding the definition of “hot spots” and “sensitive areas”. However, the Secretariat would request clarification of the matter at the meeting of the MED POL focal points scheduled for June 2015.

26. The representative of REMPEC agreed that the indicators should be repositioned to ensure closer linkage with outputs. While emergencies and underwater noise were currently encompassed by the objectives, the latter could be rephrased to give clearer evidence to those issues.

27. The representative of a MAP partner, supported by two focal points, pointed out that the objectives did not mention the elimination of pollution, which was a legal obligation under the Barcelona Convention and its protocols.

#### **B. Biodiversity and ecosystems**

28. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the second strategic theme, entitled “Biodiversity and ecosystems”, as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/3.

29. In the ensuing discussion, a focal point welcomed the topic of biodiversity and ecosystems being based on the Barcelona Convention legal system and relevant regional strategies and action plans. Another focal point said that the most important issues were the implementation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and national ownership of the management of marine settings. A third said that it would be useful to know the Secretariat’s view on incorporating the issue of the impact of climate change on biodiversity. A fourth said that the objective lacked clarity and practicality, while a fifth said that, though all the necessary aspects of the theme were reflected, the links between them were unclear.

30. A focal point, supported by several others, said that the Mid-Term Strategy should take into account the Nagoya Protocol, the ABNJ process and the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), and that the objectives of the Mid-Term Strategy should be consistent with the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. Moreover, the indicators should be in line with

commitments made in other international forums. Another focal point noted that it was important to distinguish between the EBSAs, which were not in any way commitments but scientific findings, and the Mid-Term Strategy, whose purpose was inter alia to assess the measures taken in respect of the significant marine areas.

31. A focal point said that the ecosystem approach had to be given more visibility in the objectives or indicators and that indicator 7 was irrelevant to the theme. He suggested adding an indicator on the number of countries that had incorporated climate change into their ecosystem monitoring programmes. Two focal points said that indicator 7 was tenuous because the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments had not yet come into force. The representative of REMPEC said that indicator 7 related to the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management that the Contracting Parties had adopted in 2012, the action plan for which was coordinated by his organization.

32. A focal point said that some of the outputs exceeded the scope of the Barcelona Convention, were inconsistent with each other or were not based on any legal obligation. A focal point said that technical assistance should be subsumed under capacity-building and that the topic of emerging issues should be included.

33. A focal point, urging UNEP/MAP to build synergies with relevant regional and subregional entities, said it was crucial for countries to have a clear vision of how to implement the various international instruments. The focal point of Slovenia, speaking as a chair of the environmental pillar of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), provided information about the subregional EUSAIR process and invited UNEP/MAP to cooperate in the process.

### **C. Climate change**

34. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the third strategic theme, entitled "Climate change", as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/3.

35. In the ensuing discussion, all the focal points who took the floor acknowledged the importance of including climate change adaptation, a cross-cutting issue, as a priority in the MAP programme of work for the coming years. Several speakers noted that the strategic theme was based on the draft Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, which had not yet been formally presented to the NFPs for approval. Several focal points expressed concern about the lack of clarity of the objective, one mentioning that it went far beyond the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and another stating that it should mention the marine and coastal environment. One focal point suggested that the reference to leveraging existing and emerging finance mechanisms should also be applied to the other strategic themes, and another said that the same was true of the point on strengthening the interface between science and policy-making. One speaker proposed that one of the objectives should be to consolidate and manage regional actions and initiatives in a more tangible manner, thus ensuring better coordination and regional coherence within UNEP/MAP. One focal point suggested that the strategic objectives and key outputs should include the regional planning of actions and coordination of mechanisms. Another focal point suggested that the integration of climate change into policies and strategies for coastal and marine ecosystems should be one of the indicators.

36. Referring to the key output of a regional knowledge platform, some focal points stressed that MAP did not need, and could not afford, to establish any new mechanisms or institutions related to climate change. One speaker, supported by others, said that it would be necessary to identify who would work on the issue, and that climate change adaptation related to marine and coastal issues should be mainstreamed into the work of all the MAP components in all thematic areas.

37. While recognizing that climate change was an extremely vital issue for the Mediterranean region, one focal point, supported by a number of others, said that it was necessary to be very clear



on the role of the MAP system in that context, to avoid duplicating the efforts of other Conventions working in that area, and to use, to the extent possible, tools that had already been developed, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Given the MAP system's limited human and financial resources, it was necessary to identify specific gaps at the Mediterranean level on which MAP could focus its efforts and to ensure that those efforts remained relevant to the Convention and its protocols. One focal point stressed that climate change must be prioritized despite a lack of resources, another claimed that the UNFCCC did not address marine ecosystems and a third said that the existence of the Convention on Biological Diversity had never prevented the MAP system from dealing with that issue. Two focal points agreed that adaptation and resilience were key areas to be developed. One focal point said that the issue of sea acidification should also be tackled.

38. The focal points agreed to include climate change adaptation relevant to the marine and coastal environment as a vertical issue in the Mid-Term Strategy for the period 2016–2021.

#### **D. Natural resources**

39. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the fourth strategic theme, entitled "Natural resources", as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/3.

40. One focal point welcomed the reference to both areas elaborated under this topic: SCP as mandated by the decision of the meeting of the Contracting Parties and ICZM related to the legal framework of the Barcelona Convention. She welcomed the focus on marine spatial planning, which was an important cross-cutting area. Several focal points said that the title of the strategic theme was somewhat misleading; one focal point, supported by other speakers, suggested renaming it "natural resource management". Several speakers said that the above-mentioned two elements of the strategic theme appeared to be unrelated and that the rationale for combining them was not clear.

41. Several focal points, supported by the representative of PAP/RAC, said that it was necessary to clarify objective 1, noting that ICZM and marine spatial planning (MSP) were merely the tools needed to achieve the objective, which was the sustainable management of natural resources. One focal point said that, in objective 1, it was important to differentiate between ICZM, on which there was a specific protocol of the Barcelona Convention, and MSP, for which there was no internationally recognized approach. Another said that it was important to have a very clear understanding of how MSP could be used in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the role of MAP in that context. One focal point stressed the need to address land-sea interaction, which was what linked ICZM and MSP. The representative of PAP/RAC recalled that a pilot project was being implemented with Greece to clarify a number of issues in relation to MSP. One focal point said that, as important practical experience had already been gained in relation to MSP, it was now necessary to evaluate it and identify any outstanding gaps.

42. In relation to objective 2, one focal point suggested referring to the circular economy rather than or in addition to sustainable consumption and production (SCP), while another said that SCP went beyond what was provided for in the Barcelona Convention and was a Mediterranean approach that could perhaps be dealt with elsewhere. In response, the representative of SCP/RAC recalled Decision IG.21/10, according to which "SCP instruments are central to the implementation of article 9 of the ICZM Protocol" and "SCP tools are well anchored in the articles of the LBS Protocol", and that the SCP key outputs were embedded in all the strategic themes.

43. With regard to the indicators, one focal point requested clarification of whether the ICZM Protocol projects included projects other than coastal area management programmes (CAMPs); in response, the representative of PAP/RAC said that there could also be other projects from external sources. Referring to indicator 1, a focal point said that simply preparing national strategies was not sufficient and that there was a need for indicators that reflected sustainable use of resources and referred specifically to the need for sustainable fishing.

44. A focal point, supported by several others, said that consideration should be given to incorporating elements related to climate change adaptation into the key outputs for that strategic theme. The representative of PAP/RAC agreed that the section on ICZM was the most appropriate place to include climate change issues given that several articles of the ICZM Protocol contained references to climate change.

### **E. Governance**

45. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the fifth strategic theme, entitled "Governance", as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/3.

46. In the ensuing discussion, two focal points said that it would be helpful to elaborate on the science-policy interface mentioned in paragraph 52 of the document, while two others were of the opinion that the topic would be more adequately addressed under the sixth strategic theme. One focal point, referring to objective 1, stressed the need to draw a clear distinction between mandatory and non-mandatory compliance. He said that resource availability should not be placed under governance and that clearer links should be established between the objectives and the indicators. In the key outputs, emphasis should be placed on the necessity to comply with the obligations on regular reporting, and reference might usefully be made to flagship projects.

47. All the focal points who took the floor welcomed the inclusion of educational programmes in the key outputs. The representative of a MAP partner suggested that awareness-raising and targeted training should also be mentioned. He said that synergies should be developed between ICZM and the European Landscape Convention, and that it would be worth exploring the concept of public trusteeship which provided a legal framework for implementing the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean.

48. Several focal points sought clarification on the status and responsibilities of the SCP Steering Committee, the Mediterranean SCP Action Network, the ICZM Governance Platform and formal national ICZM coordination structures. The focal points stressed that in the Mid-Term Strategy efforts should be directed towards ensuring the effective use of existing institutions and resources and no new legislation, new institutions or new funding burdens on the Contracting Parties should be established, unless fully justified and acknowledged by the Contracting Parties.

49. The representative of PAP/RAC explained that the ICZM Governance Platform should be boosted to give continuity to earlier initiatives and include a CAMP Network in response to the need for a critical mass of decision makers, practitioners, scientists and other stakeholders at all levels to help implement ICZM, and to facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices. The representative of the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) confirmed that, as had been proposed by a focal point, SCP/RAC focal points would take on the role of steering committees to follow up on the implementation of the SCP Action Plan. Likewise, he suggested that the representatives of other relevant regional institutions could be members of the steering committee, since the implementation of the Action Plan would require the collaboration of relevant partners of UNEP/MAP

50. One focal point, recalling that rules for the allocation of funds by the Mediterranean Trust Fund varied depending on the type of organization, said that, in objective 2, the meaning of "organizations active in the Mediterranean region" should be clarified. Another focal point enquired about the link between the Joint Resource Mobilization Plan and the strategy that had been formulated in that area. He said that the key output related to financial and human resources should be redrafted in the interest of clarity.

51. One focal point said that the issue of visibility should feature under the fifth strategic theme, while another said that the indicators should be both qualitative and quantitative, so as to give a clearer idea of the tangible impact of the Convention. One focal point said that the Contracting Parties had considerable expertise in the area of governance that should be identified and utilized. One focal point sought clarification on the principle of representativeness, particularly

on how it differed from level of participation. Another said that the strengthening of internal coordination mechanisms should be included as an outcome or output.

52. The representative of the Secretariat said that the Joint Resource Mobilization Plan was a way of translating the related strategy into action. In the revised draft strategic framework, the issue of visibility would be given appropriate coverage, the principle of representativeness would be clarified and the need to tap into existing expertise would be highlighted. Given that synergies with other regional stakeholders were crucial, an indicator on cooperation could perhaps be added.

53. The Coordinator said that the Secretariat was not advocating the establishment of new mechanisms or structures. With regard to the science-policy interface, he said that the aim was to build on previous work and strengthen the capacity of MAP to put scientific research at the disposal of policy-makers.

54. One focal point said that improving the exchange of information between RACs and MAP focal points would be mutually beneficial as the deliberations and decisions of one group informed the work of the other. Another said that the MAP system could learn lessons from the OSPAR Commission, whose Contracting Parties had developed a scientific agenda including identified science needs for the different OSPAR working strands.

#### **F. “Mediterranean Environment under Review”**

55. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the sixth strategic theme, entitled “Mediterranean Environment under Review”, as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)MED WG.415/3.

56. In the ensuing discussion, one focal point emphasized that the Mediterranean Environment Review should be undertaken primarily by the MAP components in collaboration with the Contracting Parties, before resorting to outsourcing. Several focal points welcomed the incorporation of the theme into the draft strategic framework but were of the view that the introductory narrative should better explain the reason for its inclusion and the thinking behind the choices made. One focal point suggested placing particular emphasis on ensuring strong links with university research centres working on the Mediterranean ecosystem, especially those in southern countries, in order, among other things, to help them build capacity. A number of focal points expressed concern about the length and specific nature of the list, in paragraph 56 of the document, of bodies with whom cooperation would be strengthened or developed. It was suggested that the list be either replaced with a generic reference to relevant bodies or deleted altogether.

57. With regard to objective 1, one focal point said that the aim should be not so much to deliver assessments as to develop sound and comprehensive science-based knowledge of the Mediterranean environment. The phrase “stakeholder work” was too restrictive and should be replaced with language more in line with the Aarhus Convention. As to objective 2, several speakers pointed out that the indicators relating to ensuring the visibility of the Barcelona Convention were solely quantitative and restricted to the Internet. Provision should be made for including qualitative indicators, and consideration should be given to broadening the range of media monitored.

58. Several speakers expressed concern about the emphasis within the theme on the production of state of the environment reports and about the potential for unnecessary duplication of efforts. It was felt that, rather than expanding reporting requirements and increasing other burdens, efforts should be directed at streamlining reporting procedures, building synergies with related reporting processes and providing targeted support for decision makers. Some speakers said that, while foresight studies were useful, it might be more important to have reliable information on the current state of the Mediterranean and its ecosystem.

59. As to the key outputs, one focal point said that, because of the level of detail provided, they were tantamount to operational requirements and would therefore be better placed in the

programme of work and accompanied by feasibility assessments. He suggested transforming the outputs into strategic targets.

60. The representative of the Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (BP/RAC) said that the aim of the reporting requirements was to add value to existing assessments and enhance the capacity to implement the Convention. That aspect of the requirements could be further clarified. Although the MAP framework did not encompass a socioeconomic dimension, it was nonetheless important to assess the socioeconomic impact of any decisions taken within that framework. As to foresight studies, they were an effective means of mobilizing research and assessing the impact of possible decisions.

#### **G. Outcome of the work of the informal drafting group**

61. After further discussion of the draft strategic framework by the informal drafting group, the chair of the drafting group introduced three draft documents, which respectively provided an overview of the proposed Mid-Term Strategy for the period 2016–2021, outlined the proposed objectives for it, and listed suggestions to the Secretariat by the informal drafting group on a possible structure of strategic outcomes and key outputs.

62. The focal points approved the three documents as set out in annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the present report and agreed that the Secretariat should use the document in annex 3 as a suggested guide in developing the Mid-Term Strategy.

63. It was agreed that the Secretariat would continue to work on the suggested structure of the MTS and its objectives, to be shared with the focal points by the end of June for consultation.

64. Furthermore, the Secretariat would define the strategic outcomes, key outputs and introductory texts in order to submit a new draft, incorporating feedback provided by the focal points and taking account of developments in other ongoing strategic processes, for discussion at the focal points' next meeting, in October 2015.

#### **IV. Fortieth anniversary of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention (agenda item 4)**

65. The Coordinator provided an overview of the various activities planned in connection with the anniversary and encouraged the Contracting Parties to organize events at the national level. Owing to a shortage of resources and the lack of a communications officer, many of the activities envisioned by the Secretariat remained at the planning stages or would be held in conjunction with other larger events. The Secretariat was negotiating the funding of a junior professional officer post with the support of UNEP headquarters to fill the communications gap, and help from the Contracting Parties in that regard would be most welcome.

66. In the ensuing discussion, the focal points agreed to settle on a common date, as far as possible, on which their countries would all hold events at the national level. It was suggested that events be held in southern countries, such as Tunisia, and that they should go hand in hand with specific actions. It was pointed out that they would provide opportunities to liaise with subregional counterparts, and that they would have a greater impact if the media were involved.

67. Later during the meeting, a brief documentary video containing archival footage of the first meeting of the Barcelona Convention was shown.

#### **V. Compliance issues (agenda item 5)**

68. The Chair of the Compliance Committee gave a slide presentation on the work of the Committee. Briefly describing the various types of non-compliance, she said that the compliance

procedure could now be initiated by the Committee, in addition to Contracting Parties and the Secretariat. Measures to address non-compliance were taken either by the Committee or by meetings of the Contracting Parties and might include assistance, recommendations, progress reports and the making public of cases of non-compliance.

69. No cases of non-compliance had been submitted during the current biennium. Furthermore, none of the Contracting Parties concerned had responded to requests for information on the recommendations contained in Decision IG.21/1, adopted at the eighteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties, so that the Committee had had to ask the President of the Bureau of the Barcelona Convention to send them reminders. Presenting a table listing national reports submitted under article 26 of the Barcelona Convention, she said that it did not include information on whether the content of the reports met the reporting requirements. At its ninth meeting, in November 2014, the Committee had finalized the criteria for the evaluation of reports, had considered a draft revised paper on the reporting format, and had agreed on actions that it would take to improve compliance.

70. At the seventy-ninth meeting of the Bureau it had been proposed to include, as observer, a representative of the Committee in all Bureau meetings on compliance issues, to require that Bureau members be from Contracting Parties that fulfilled their reporting obligations, and to appoint a dedicated legal officer to assist the Committee. The Bureau had agreed to remind all countries to submit their pending reports promptly, to send a letter co-signed by the President of the Bureau and the Chair of the Committee to countries that had not submitted their reports for at least two consecutive biennia, and to ask the Secretariat to allocate adequate funding for the provision of assistance with reporting.

71. The Director of the Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC) gave a slide presentation on the online reporting system for the Barcelona Convention and its protocols (BCRS). The main objective of the system was to collect, store, manage and process compliance reporting data. The MAP Secretariat had legal responsibility for BCRS, while INFO/RAC was responsible for its operation and development. There were currently 140 users with different levels of access, 125 of them from the Contracting Parties and the remainder from the MAP components. Under the BCRS, it was possible to track the “life cycle” of the reporting process, from working draft to official submission. According to statistics on access, almost 80 per cent of users had logged into the system at least once during the 2012–2013 biennium and almost 65 per cent of connected users had submitted a final report. In that biennium, only 18 reports had been submitted, marking a decrease over the previous biennium, and only 9 of those had been official submissions. Improvements to the system included report pre-filling, improved print layout, SPAMI data pre-filling functions and the implementation of a single sign-in feature. Future work would involve implementing an ICZM module, streamlining reporting obligations, integrating BCRS into the MAP Data Centre and providing online training and technical assistance.

72. In the discussion that followed, one focal point said that it was necessary to have a clearer understanding of the definition of non-compliance and the formal obligations that required compliance. Consideration needed to be given to the reasons for non-compliance and how to assist Contracting Parties that had properly justified why they did not meet their reporting obligations. He suggested presenting, at the next meeting of the focal points, a programme of work for the Compliance Committee highlighting the operational requirements for it to achieve its objectives. The Director of INFO/RAC said that one option for assisting non-reporting countries might be a twinning mechanism between countries. The Chair of the Compliance Committee replied that compliance with reporting obligations was only the first stage and that the Committee would welcome input on the criteria and guidelines for the second stage, namely evaluating the actual content of the reports. While knowing the reasons for non-reporting was important, the Committee had difficulty determining them when non-reporting Contracting Parties did not respond to its requests for further information.

73. A focal point said that her country's submission had been delayed by several months because of technical difficulties in accessing the online system. She added that the information contained in the Committee's compliance table concerning her country's reporting status in previous biennia was inaccurate.

74. Another focal point thanked the Secretariat for its support in the preparation of his country's report, adding, however, that the low overall reporting rate pointed to difficulties with the reporting format. Several focal points said that, although reporting was an essential component of processes under MAP, the format should be made more practical and realistic and restructured to minimize the burden on Contracting Parties, most of which faced major resource constraints, and to ensure that they did not simply reproduce the same information from one biennium to the next. One focal point, supported by another, said that the reporting requirements and the explanatory note on reporting produced by the Compliance Committee were overly detailed and prescriptive and seemed particularly complicated compared to the formats used for other UNEP conventions. Several speakers stressed that reporting should help Contracting Parties make progress and not merely be a bureaucratic exercise. In response, the Chair of the Compliance Committee, supported by the Director of INFO/RAC, said that the current format had been agreed upon by the Contracting Parties and that any changes to it would have to be approved by them and would involve changes to the software. However, the format could certainly be amended to meet the needs of Contracting Parties and ensure that they reported more efficiently. She invited the focal points to submit concrete proposals on how the format might be improved. A degree of prescriptiveness was necessary in the explanatory note to ensure that the Contracting Parties understood what information was required of them, but the Committee was open to input in that regard.

## **VI. Other matters (agenda item 6)**

### **A. Statement by the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention**

75. Mr Mehmet Emin Birpinar, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, said that the eighteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties had been a crucial step for the Convention. Progress was being made on a number of the decisions taken at that meeting, in particular regarding the national baseline budget, the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development, the ecosystem approach, the Offshore Protocol Action Plan and the SPAMIs. In his opinion, the Mid-Term Strategy was vital for the future and should be carefully crafted to frame the vision of the Convention.

76. Giving an overview of the Bureau's activities, he said that two meetings had been held during the presidency of Turkey. In conjunction with the Secretariat, the Bureau had improved and simplified its report format to enable Contracting Parties to track the implementation of its decisions. In 2014, 98 per cent of annual contributions had been paid and the working capital reserve had risen to the desired level. Negotiations were under way on a number of cooperation agreements, including the agreement regarding the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), which was nearly complete and would shortly be submitted for adoption. The Bureau dealt with compliance issues in a careful and detailed manner: the Compliance Committee had produced a report containing tangible proposals, and reminders would be sent to non-compliant Contracting Parties. He strongly urged Contracting Parties to discuss their compliance problems with the Bureau. The Barcelona Convention was nearing universal ratification, which would be a great achievement in the light of the fortieth anniversary. A visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina was planned in June 2015 to facilitate that country's pending ratification.

77. An award for environmentally friendly coastal cities had been established at the eighteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties, and Turkey would shortly host an expert workshop to determine

the nomination and selection criteria; he looked forward to reporting on the outcome of that workshop at the next meeting of focal points.

78. The President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, speaking on behalf of the Turkish Government, said that climate change was a high-priority issue and UNEP/MAP should be at the forefront of progress in that domain. He stressed the need to take more concrete steps to address that challenge. He would support the establishment of a RAC dedicated to that topic to be hosted by Turkey.

#### **B. European Union Neighbourhood Policy**

79. The focal point of the European Union reported that consultations on the revision of the European Union Neighborhood Policy would continue until the end of June 2015, with the revised policy expected to be issued before the end of 2015. The Coordinator said that the Coordinating Unit and RACs were fine-tuning their input, which would be shared with the focal points, given that the policy would have an impact on MAP-related work in the Contracting Parties concerned.

#### **C. Memorandum of understanding with the Union for the Mediterranean**

80. A focal point requested an update on cooperation between MAP and the Union for the Mediterranean under the recently concluded memorandum of understanding. The Coordinator replied that discussions had begun in 2014 to implement the memorandum and identify areas in which cooperation could be strengthened. The MAP Secretariat had been invited to participate in expert meetings on, inter alia, climate change.

#### **D. Strategic processes**

81. A focal point, referring to the table on strategic processes circulated in the meeting (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.415/CRP.1), requested clarification on next steps and the distinction between review and endorsement of the strategic documents. The Coordinator said that the language used in the table accurately reflected the wording of the respective mandates. Another focal point suggested adding to the table a column indicating the legal basis for the development of the strategic documents to ensure that the focal points, in taking their next steps, would have a clear overview of the ultimate aim of their discussions. The Coordinator said that a revised table including that information would be made available.

#### **E. Preparations for the nineteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties**

82. The Coordinator said that communication with the host country, Greece, was ongoing and that invitations to the meeting would be sent in due course, as soon as the confirmation of the hosting of the meeting was received from Greece.

### **VII. Date and venue of the second meeting of the MAP focal points (agenda item 7)**

83. The focal points agreed to hold their second meeting in Athens from 13 to 16 October 2015.

### **VIII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 8)**

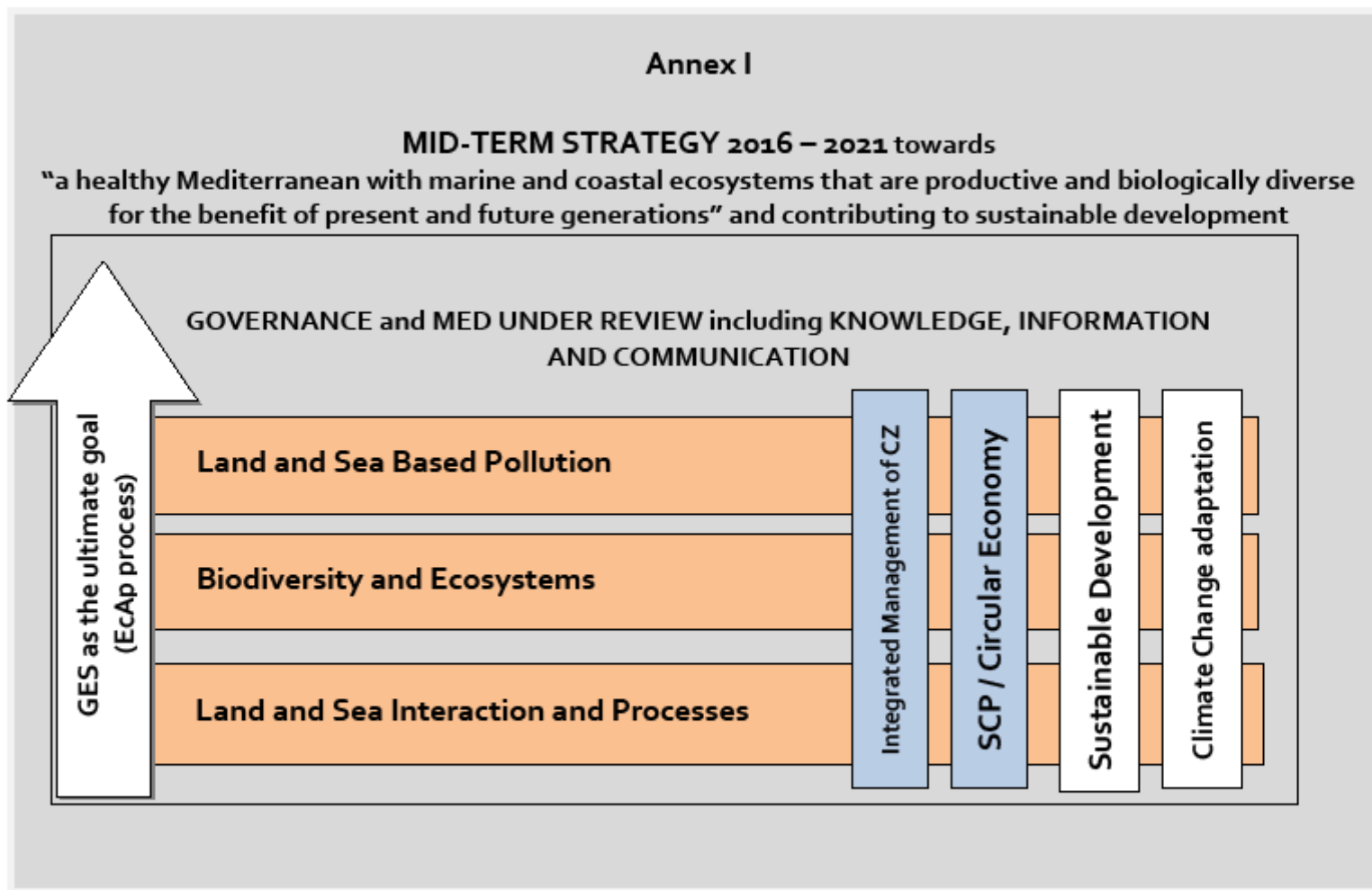
84. The focal points adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report circulated at the meeting, as orally amended, with the understanding that the Rapporteur, working in consultation with the Secretariat, would be entrusted with its finalization.

**IX. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 9)**

85. Following the customary courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.05 p.m. on Thursday, 21 May 2015.



**Annex I**  
**Structure of the Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021**



**Annex II**  
**Objectives of the Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021**

**OVERARCHING THEME****GOVERNANCE and MED UNDER REVIEW including KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION****Objectives:**

1. Strengthen the regional and national governance mechanisms.
2. Mobilize resources.
3. Strengthen capacity for the implementation of and compliance with the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the adopted Strategies and Action Plans.
4. To strengthen synergies, complementarities, and collaboration among international and regional partners and organizations active in the Mediterranean region.
5. To enhance stakeholders' participation and outreach.
6. To deliver knowledge-based assessments of the Mediterranean environment and scenario development for informed decision-making and stakeholder work.
7. To ensure visibility of the MAP/Barcelona Convention, its role and achievements.

**MAIN THEME 1****LAND- AND SEA-BASED POLLUTION****Objectives:**

1. 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.
2. Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health.
3. Marine and coastal litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments.
4. Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems.
5. New and emerging land-based pollution related problems are identified and tackled, as appropriate.

## **MAIN THEME 2**

### **BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS**

#### **Objectives:**

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. Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats.
6. New and emerging biodiversity and ecosystems related problems are identified and tackled, as appropriate

## **MAIN THEME 3**

### **LAND AND SEA INTERACTION AND PROCESSES**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Alteration of hydrographic conditions does not adversely affect coastal and marine ecosystems.
2. The natural dynamics of coastal areas are maintained and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved.
3. New and emerging land and sea interactions and processes related problems are identified and tackled, as appropriate.

**Annex III**  
**Suggestions to the Secretariat by the informal drafting group on a possible structure of strategic outcomes and key outputs**

**Suggestions to the Secretariat by the informal drafting group on a possible structure of strategic outcomes and key outputs**

| <b><u>Strategic Outcomes per theme</u></b>   | <b><u>Key outputs-Governance</u></b>         | <b><u>Key outputs-Pollution</u></b> | <b><u>Key outputs-Biodiversity and Ecosystems</u></b> | <b><u>Key outputs-Land and Sea Interactions and Processes</u></b> |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Strengthening <b>regional implementation</b> of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans | (1) regional level<br><br>(2) national level |                                     |   |   |
| Development of <b>new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines</b>   |  |                                     |   |   |
| Strengthening <b>national implementation (*)</b> <i>Secretariat to consider the need of this box</i>   |  |                                     |   |   |
| <b>Monitoring and assessment</b>   |  |                                     |   |   |
| <b>Technical assistance and capacity building</b>  |  |                                     |   |   |
| <b>Cooperation with partners</b>   |  |                                     |   |   |
| Identifying and tackling with <b>new and emerging issues</b> , as appropriate  |  |                                     |   |   |
| Climate change adaptation related outcome  |  |                                     |   |   |
| Sustainable development related outcome  |  |                                     |   |   |
| SCP related outcome  |  |                                     |   |   |
| Integrated management of coastal zones related outcome   |  |                                     |   |   |

Additional objectives on cross-cutting themes/tools to be considered by the Secretariat,

For ICZM

To implement ICZM for the sustainable management and use of coastal zones (Art 2.f)

MSP

To promote MSP (or sea use planning), harmonize with EcAP with the aim to contribute to the sustainable use of the sea areas and conservation of marine ecosystems

**Annex IV**  
**List of Participants**



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**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION  
AND COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN  
SECRETARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN  
D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**

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| <p><b>PLAN BLEU REGIONAL<br/>ACTIVITY CENTRE (BP/RAC) /<br/>PLAN BLEU, CENTRE<br/>D'ACTIVITE REGIONAL<br/>(PB/CAR)</b></p>   | <p><b>Mr Hugues Ravenel</b><br/>Director</p> <p>Tel.: +33 4 92387138<br/>Fax: +33 4 92387131<br/>E-mail: hravenel@planbleu.org</p>  |
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| <p><b>REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC) / CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR L'INTERVENTION D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)</b></p> | <p><b>Mr Gabino Gonzalez</b><br/>Head of Office</p> <p>Tel.: +356.22.583113<br/>Fax: +356.21.339951<br/>E-mail: ggonzalez@rempec.org, rempec@rempec.org</p> |
| <p><b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP/RAC) CENTRE D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES POUR LA CONSOMATION ET LA PRODUCTION DURABLES (CAR/CPD)</b></p>                                   | <p><b>Mr Enrique de Villamore Martin</b><br/>Director</p> <p>Tel. +34 93 553 87 92<br/>Fax +34 93 8823637<br/>Email: evillamore@scprac.org</p>              |
| <p><b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER FOR SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS (SPA/RAC) CENTRE D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES POUR LES AIRES SPECIALEMENT PROTEGEES (CAR/ASP)</b></p>  | <p><b>Mr Khalil Attia</b><br/>Director</p> <p>Tel.: +216 71 206649, 216 71 206 851<br/>Fax: +216 71 206490<br/>E-mail: director@rac-spa.org</p>             |

**Annex V**  
**Agenda**

## **Agenda**

- Agenda item 1.** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda item 2.** Organizational Matters:
- a) Rules of Procedure
  - b) Election of Officers
  - c) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
  - d) Organization of Work
- Agenda item 3.** UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021: Draft Strategic Framework
- Agenda item 4.** 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MAP and Barcelona Convention
- Agenda item 5.** Compliance Issues
- Agenda item 6.** Any Other Matters
- Agenda item 7.** Date and Venue of the Second Meeting of the MAP Focal Points
- Agenda item 8.** Adoption of the Report of the Meeting
- Agenda item 9.** Closure of the Meeting