

21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols: 2-5 December 2019

In his opening remarks, Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, underscored the pioneering role that the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (the Barcelona Convention), underscoring its scope in addressing, among others, marine litter and plastic pollution, social and economic development, natural and cultural heritage, and the quality of life of those dependent on the Sea and its resources.

During the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Contracting Parties (COP 21) took 14 decisions to ensure the Barcelona Convention can continue its “pioneering role.” These included 13 thematic decisions, and one decision on the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021. Thematic decisions adopted included:

- The common regional framework for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM);
- Development of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products;
- Updated guidelines regulating the placement of artificial reefs at sea;
- Identification and conservation of sites of particular ecological interest in the Mediterranean, including specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance (SPAMIs); and
- The roadmap for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea area as an emission control area for sulphur oxides (Med SOx ECA) pursuant to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention), Annex VI, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

A key event at the meeting was awarding the second Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award to the Municipality of Ashdod, Israel. Presenting the award, Gaetano Leone

highlighted the action taken by Ashdod to reconcile development with environmental protection.

A key outcome of COP 21 was the Naples Ministerial Declaration, which committed parties to taking concrete action for enhanced safeguarding of the Mediterranean Sea as well as, inter alia, further addressing efforts in four priority areas effectively tackling marine litter, strengthening and expanding the MPA network, responding to the challenges arising from climate change, and supporting sustainable blue economy and a regional ecological transition. Sergio Costa, Minister of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, said the Declaration is not just a policy document, but a manifesto that is “oriented towards actions that puts countries on track to tackling common challenges.”

Barcelona Convention COP 21 took place from 2-5 December 2019, the Castel dell’Ovo in Naples, Italy. Over 200 participants from the 22 Contracting Parties as well as representatives from, UN agencies, international research organizations, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and civil society, attended the four-day event.

This report provides an overview of plenary discussions at COP 21.

In This Issue

A Brief History of the Barcelona Convention	2
COP 21 Report	2
Opening of the Meeting	2
Organizational Matters	3
Thematic Decisions.	3
Delegates agreed.	4
Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021	12
Ministerial Session	13
Date and place of COP 22	15
Naples Ministerial Declaration	15
Adoption of the Report and Closure of COP 21	17
Upcoming meetings	17
Glossary.	18

A Brief History of the Barcelona Convention

UNEP launched its Regional Seas Programme in 1974 with the aim of protecting the marine environment using a “shared seas” approach to address the accelerating degradation of the world’s oceans and coastal areas. More than 143 countries have joined 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans for the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment. Although the individual Conventions and Action Plans reflect a similar approach, each is tailored by its governments and institutions to suit the particular environmental challenges being faced.

Mediterranean Action Plan: The MAP was the first regional seas initiative to be developed. Initiated under the auspices of UNEP, the MAP was approved in 1975 by Mediterranean states and the European Commission as the institutional framework for addressing marine environmental degradation in the Mediterranean. It also endorsed the preparation of a framework convention for protecting the marine environment against pollution, as well as two related protocols that would provide a legal basis for action in protecting the Mediterranean marine environment against pollution.

Initial MAP objectives included: assisting Mediterranean governments to assess and control pollution, as well as to formulate their national marine environmental policies. Over time, the MAP’s focus widened gradually from a sectoral approach to pollution control to integrated coastal zone planning and management for solutions for protecting the marine environment.

MAP Phase II: The Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II) was adopted in 1995 to address weaknesses in the first action plan, specifically with respect to environmental protection. Its objectives include: ensuring the sustainable management of natural marine and land resources and integrating the environment into socio-economic development and land-use policies; protecting the marine environment and coastal zones through preventing and reducing pollution; protecting nature and enhancing sites and landscapes of ecological or cultural value; strengthening solidarity among Mediterranean states; and contributing to improving the quality of life.

The Barcelona Convention: The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention) was adopted in 1976 and entered into force in 1978. The Convention was subsequently amended in 1995, and entered into force in 2004. There are currently 22 Contracting Parties. The Convention’s specific objectives include: assessing and controlling marine pollution; ensuring the sustainable management of natural marine and coastal resources; and protecting natural and cultural heritage. The Contracting Parties meet every two years to decide on the MAP programme of work (PoW) and budget, policies, and plans.

Seven protocols have also been adopted under the Convention, addressing, *inter alia*, dumping from ships and

aircraft, pollution from land-based sources, specially protected areas (SPAs) and biological diversity, and ICZM.

COP 21 Preparatory Process

Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019): Focal points gathered to examine progress on activities carried out during the 2018-2019 biennium, as well as draft strategic and thematic decisions for consideration at COP 21, including the PoW for 2020-2021.

“Towards COP 21” Youth Meeting” (Naples, Italy, 23 October 2019): Youth representatives nominated by the Contracting Parties met to coordinate their message to COP 21. Two representatives were selected to convey the message to the Ministerial Session at COP 21.

Regional Stakeholders Consultation (Athens, Greece, 24-25 October 2019): The meeting provided MAP stakeholders an opportunity to reflect on the main themes of COP 21 and to contribute to the discussions on the Ministerial Declaration. The outcomes also provide input to the preparation of the new UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027.

COP 21 Report

Opening of the Meeting

Opening COP 21, Klodiana Marika, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, Albania, highlighted the more than 40-year history of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and noted substantial progress since COP 20, which was held in Tirana, Albania in 2017.

Luigi De Magistris, Mayor of Naples, said Naples is on the frontlines of protecting the Mediterranean and is currently experimenting with plastic-free areas and new pedestrian zones along the coast.

Sergio Costa, Minister of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy, highlighted that the Mediterranean has one of the highest concentrations of marine biodiversity in the world and added that Italy is committed to doubling its marine protected areas (MPAs). He called for more ambitious targets, especially on reducing sulphur oxide emissions from shipping.

Habib El-Habr, Coordinator, Global Programme of Action, UNEP, highlighted the importance of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, underscoring that it is the first legally binding instrument of its kind.

Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, noted that despite “bright spots having blossomed” during the last biennium, the decline of the Mediterranean ecosystem’s health is a cause for concern. He appealed for parties to look beyond the minutia of words and budget lines, and instead consider the decisions in light of the need for higher ambition.

Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO), addressed the meeting via video on the cooperative work with UNEP/MAP, especially on the SDGs. He highlighted the regional activity centers (RACs) as an effective way to protect the Mediterranean ecosystem from problems such as shipping emissions.

Organizational Matters

Gaetano Leone outlined the schedule of the plenary sessions and working groups. Maria Carmela Giarratano, COP 21 President, Italy, added that informal working groups could be proposed by the Contracting Parties as needed. Italy called a desire for inclusion of an informal contact group to discuss the Naples Ministerial Declaration.

Thematic Decisions

Compliance Committee: On Monday afternoon, Odeta Cato, Compliance Committee Chair, Albania, introduced draft decision IG. 24/1 (UNEP/MED IG.24/4).

In the ensuing discussions, Turkey requested deletion of text regarding a recommendation from the Committee for parties to establish and improve environmental assessments in transboundary contexts, noting that Contracting Parties have no obligations to do so under the Convention. Israel expressed concern, supported by the EU, on language to adopt the recommendations of the Committee to promote compliance with the Convention and its Protocols, as this could have budgetary implications. Gaetano Leone reminded delegates that, due to the independent nature of the Compliance Committee, Contracting Parties do not have the authority to change the recommendations of the Committee but only to accept or reject them. President Giarratano suggested changing the language from “adopt” to “take note” of the recommendations, which the parties accepted. WWF said they regretted that the Compliance Committee lacks the capacity to achieve its work due to the fact that not all countries are submitting compliance reports and that there are no consequences for not doing so. She also suggested that the meetings of the Compliance Committee be open to observers to increase transparency and accountability.

On Wednesday night, the EU proposed Evangelos Raftopoulos, Greece, as a new member of the Compliance Committee. The Contracting Parties agreed to allow the Bureau to accept a nomination for an alternate member of the Committee nominated from the EU.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.1), the COP takes note of the Activity Report of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2018-2019, set out in Annex I to the Decision, and adopted the PoW of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2020- 2021, set out in Annex II to the Decision.

The COP also:

- Takes note of the Recommendations to Promote Compliance with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and Improve their Implementation, set out in Annex III to the Decision;
- Urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet submitted their national implementation reports for the biennium 2016-2017 to do so as soon as possible before December 2019;
- Invites Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2018-2019 using the new online Barcelona Convention Reporting System by December 2020;



Maria Carmela Giarratano, COP 21 President, Italy

- Elects and/or renews, in accordance with the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance, the membership of the Compliance Committee, set out in Annex IV to the Decision; and
- Requests the Compliance Committee to report at COP 22 on the work it has carried out to fulfil its functions.

Annex IV to the decision sets out the members and alternate members of the Compliance Committee renewed or elected at COP 21.

For Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia: Samira Hamidi, Algeria (member); Heba Salah el din Sharawy, Egypt (member); Abdelaziz Zine, Morocco (alternate member); and Rola Jabbur, Syria (alternate member).

For Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain and the European Union: Evangelos Raftopoulos, Greece (member). An expert, as alternate member, will be nominated by the Bureau at their first meeting of the biennium 2020-2021.

For Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Monaco, Montenegro and Turkey: Odeta Cato, Albania (member); and Orr Karassin, Israel (alternate member).

Governance: Gaetano Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/2 (UNEP/MED IG.24/5) on Monday afternoon. He noted the different elements, providing an overview element-by-element. These included:

- UNEP/MAP Operational Communication Strategy 2020-2021;
- Main Elements and Roadmap for the Preparation of a UNEP/ MAP Data Management Policy;
- MAP partners;
- Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development 2020-2021;
- Roadmap for the Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy;
- Refined Appendix to the Updated Resource Mobilization Strategy;
- Areas of cooperation with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (UNESCO/MAB); and
- Development of Host Country Agreements for Regional Activity Centres (RACs);



Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

The Contracting Parties largely agreed on the decision text, but some areas did generate discussion. These discussions are reflected below.

On the **2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy**, Gaetano Leone noted the decision also included a request for the Secretariat to start preparing the 2022-2027 MTS. The EU said that they favored a hybrid approach for preparation, consisting of a steering committee and a working group. She suggested drafting language on a hybrid approach as well as related financial implications. The Contracting Parties requested that the Secretariat formulate language on this to propose to COP 21.

On the **shift to thematic focal points**, Gaetano Leone stated that in accordance with a decision taken at COP 19, the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) prepared and held on a trial basis a meeting of the thematic focal points for SPA/Biological Diversity for the biennium 2018–2019, with the objective of achieving the greatest possible integration with the other themes of the MTS.

The EU suggested including language be included requesting the Secretariat organize a SPA/Biodiversity focal points meeting based on lessons learned and possible scheduling of back-to-

back focal points meetings. Israel queried if the thematic focal points would be expanded to other thematic areas.

The Secretariat confirmed that it is up to the Contracting Parties to decide if participation should be expanded, and cautioned that the Convention is most likely not at a point where participation could be successfully broadened. Delegates agreed.

On the **Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity Among the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN-Med and UNEP/MAP** (the draft Joint Strategy), within the Annex, Chair Giarratano took interventions for edits to bracketed language regarding the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Turkey suggested mentioning that this strategy should not affect the legal status of nonparties to UNCLOS. The EU opposed, emphasizing that UNCLOS is essential for regional and global cooperation. The Chair requested the EU and Turkey to meet on the sidelines with the Secretariat to develop compromise language on this text.

On **areas of cooperation between UNEP/MAP and UNESCO/MAB**, Gaetano Leone said the Secretariat was still awaiting final clearance on the letter of agreement from UNESCO. The Contracting Parties agreed to maintain the relevant language so the Secretariat could continue to work toward a signed letter of agreement.

Ilias Mavroeidis, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, on **developing a host country agreement** for RACs, outlined language in the decision on RACs from the MAP focal points meeting, adding that some common provisions contained in the defined list of agreed minimum common provision are amenable to all host countries of RACs. He added that these common provisions would be listed in an Annex to the draft decision and ultimately finalized for presentation at COP 22 in 2021.

Parties agreed to revisit the discussion when language on the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and the Spatial-based



L-R: Irene Cavoura-Vasileiadi; Ilias Mavroeidis; and Luisa Rodriguez-Lucas, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat



L-R: **Elli Sfyroeras**, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat; **Ilias Mavroeidis**, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention; **Gabino Gonzalez Deogracia**, Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC); **Gaetano Leone**, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat; and **Maria Carmela Giarratano**, COP 21 President, Italy

Protection Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity had been finalized.

On Tuesday afternoon, when COP 21 President Giarratano resumed discussions, the EU said that compromise language for the Annex of the Joint Strategy section, and the preambular paragraph referring to UNCLOS for areas beyond national jurisdiction, were ongoing.

On areas of cooperation, the EU suggested a new paragraph stating that partners “will cooperate” in line with individual mandates “without prejudice to the outcomes of negotiations in the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.”

She suggested text in the paragraphs also be made more general to allow the Secretariats flexibility on which matters they wish to cooperate.

Gaetano Leone reminded parties that the language in the draft decision was agreed upon by many stakeholders and ACCOBAMS. ACCOBAMS stated if new language is introduced, the Secretariat may have to revert to the Bureau to further negotiate the text. Egypt, Turkey, and Algeria supported retaining the original text. The EU said the simplified language still leaves open the possibility for cooperation.

On the process preparing of the MTS, parties had requested the Secretariat to formulate language to reflect a hybrid of the two processes proposed. The Secretariat said in doing so, it proposed “under the guidance of the Bureau and through a dedicated steering committee that will be composed by the Bureau complemented by a limited group of interested Contracting Parties...Delegates agreed to submit a first draft

to an OEWG for final submission to the Contracting Parties at COP 22.”

On Wednesday evening, delegates noted agreement on language on the joint strategy “stressing the importance of strengthening linkages with, building on and coordinating with other secretariats in relation to spatial-based management and conservation in the Mediterranean.” On the Joint Strategy, delegates agreed, inter alia, on language requesting the Secretariat to continue to identify, promote and strengthen synergies with other secretariats.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.2), the COP adopts the UNEP/MAP Operational Communication Strategy 2020-2021 as set out in Annex I to the Decision and requests the MAP-Barcelona Convention system to fully implement the UNEP/MAP Operational Communication Strategy.

The COP:

- Endorses the main Elements and Roadmap for the Preparation of a UNEP/MAP Data Management Policy, as set out in Annex II to the Decision, and requests the Secretariat (INFO/RAC) to develop such a policy for submission at COP 22;
- Endorses the list of new and renewed MAP partners, set out in Annex III and requests the Secretariat and MAP components to further promote the participation and effective engagement of MAP partners and other relevant stakeholders in the delivery of the MAP- Barcelona Convention system mandate.
- Approves the Membership of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD) for the biennium 2020-2021, as set out in Annex IV to the decision; and
- Approves the Roadmap for the Evaluation of the 2016-2021 MTS and the preparation of the 2022-2027 MTS, as set out in Annex V to the Decision.



Mohamad Kayyal, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- Prepare the UNEP/MAP 2022-2027 MTS under the guidance of the Bureau and through a dedicated steering committee composed by the Bureau, complemented by a limited group of interested Contracting Parties, and to submit a first draft to an open-ended working group, for final submission at COP 22; and
 - Continue to identify, promote and strengthen the synergies with other Secretariats in spatial-based protection and management measures for marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean Area and report to COP 22 on action taken.
- The COP also:
- Takes note of the results of the assessment of the meeting of the thematic focal points for SPAs/Biodiversity organized on a trial basis in the biennium 2018– 2019 and the relevant analysis as set out in Annex VI to the Decision, and requests the Secretariat to organize a SPA/Biodiversity Focal Points meeting based on the lessons learned and considering organization of the back-to-back focal points meetings; and
 - Welcomes the agreed set of common provisions for Host Country Agreements as presented in Annex IX of this decision and urge the Secretariat in collaboration with the Contracting Parties hosting the RACs to finalize the set for presentation of the minimum common provisions to COP 22.

Implementation, Monitoring and MTE of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2025 and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean: On Monday afternoon, Gaetano Leone presented draft decision IG.24/3 (UNEP/MED IG.24/6/Rev.1). Discussions revolved around whether to endorse, or welcome and take note of the updated list of indicators of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard for monitoring the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025. The EU expressed concern that endorsing the indicators could have legal implications. On Tuesday afternoon the EU highlighted that the substantial part of the paragraph in question relates to requesting the Secretariat to populate the indicators. The decision was approved subject to minor language alterations.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.3), the COP:

- Endorses the updated List of Indicators of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard for monitoring the implementation of the MSSD 2016–2025, contained in the annex;
- Requests the Secretariat to integrate the List of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Indicators in the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard;
- Approves the “Roadmap of the MSSD 2016-2025 Mid-Term Evaluation (2020-2021)” and the “Roadmap of the Regional Action Plan on SCP in the Mediterranean Mid-Term Evaluation (2020-2021)”;
- Requests the Secretariat to undertake mid-term evaluations of the MSSD 2016–2025 and the Regional Action Plan on SCP in the Mediterranean;
- Urges Contracting Parties to support both mid-term evaluation processes by providing data and access to information for the effective and accurate monitoring of their implementation;
- Encourages Contracting Parties, in particular those which are Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development Steering Committee and those that have gone through the Voluntary National Review Process at the UN High-level Political Forum, to participate in the third edition of Simplified Peer Review Mechanism;



COP 21 participants

- Urges further intensified efforts towards the full implementation of the MSSD 2016–2025 and its flagship initiatives; and
- Requests the Secretariat to launch the first edition of the Mediterranean Green Business Award, as a flagship initiative of the MSSD 2016–2025.

Assessment Studies: Gaetano Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/4 (UNEP/MED IG.24/07) on Tuesday morning on the results of the Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED) 2019, saying it also included a roadmap for the next quality status report in 2023.

The EU suggested streamlining the draft decision, proposing the Contracting Parties approve the summary for policy makers and key messages of the 2019 SoED Report as important input for defining the 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS and other relevant policy and strategy developments of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

On an EU proposal requesting Contracting Parties to take concrete steps to incorporate the concerns in their environmental coordination, Algeria requested this be done in coordination with the Secretariat. Algeria further suggested language encouraging, not requesting, parties and the Secretariat to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps identified.

Egypt and others suggested, and delegates agreed, that the recommendations should be implemented with the support of, rather than in coordination with, the Secretariat.

Delegates approved the draft decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.4), the COP:

- Endorses the key messages of the SoED 2019 Report, as well as the Summary for Decision-Makers;
- Urges Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations of relevance to the mandate of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system;
- Recognizes the importance of considering the findings of the SoED 2019 as a crucial input for defining the 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS and other relevant policy and strategy developments of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system;



Victor Escobar, EU

- Requests the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps identified in SoED 2019;
- Endorses the proposed revised roadmap for the MED 2050 foresight study, and requests the Secretariat to implement the proposed roadmap; and
- Requests the Secretariat to undertake an extensive dissemination and communication campaign for the 2019 SoED and communication on the development of the MED 2050 Foresight Study and the Mediterranean Expert Network on Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean.

Common Regional Framework for ICZM: On Tuesday morning, Gaetano Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/5 (UNEP/MED IG.24/8). Italy announced that the feasibility study for a transboundary Coastal Areas Management Programme (CAMP) project between Albania and Italy had been completed and said the project was ready for activation in the next biennium.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.5), the COP:

- Adopts the Common Regional Framework for ICZM for use as a guide for implementation to facilitate the implementation of the ICZM Protocol;
- Recognizes the living nature of the Appendix to the Common Regional Framework for ICZM and the need to keep it under review;
- Requests the Secretariat to continue refining the Appendix to the Common Regional Framework for ICZM;
- Urges the Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to ratify the ICZM Protocol as early as possible, with a view to ensuring its entry into force for the entire Mediterranean region;
- Urges Contracting Parties to continue developing or updating their National ICZM/Coastal Strategies in accordance with the provisions of the ICZM Protocol and by using the Common Regional Framework for ICZM as a guiding tool; and
- Urges Contracting Parties to support and proceed with the introduction and implementation of Marine Spatial Planning tools in line with the ICZM Common Regional Framework and undertake to exchange best practices in the region.



Samira Hamidi, Algeria



Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, with **Maria Carmela Giarratano**, COP 21 President, Italy

Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including SPAMIs:

Gaetano Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/6 (UNEP/MED IG.24/9) on Tuesday morning. He highlighted elements of the document, including four proposed areas for the SPAMI list, a group of experts on MPAs, and a designated periodic review schedule for certain SPAMIs. The EU, supported by Egypt, requested retaining a preambular paragraph referring to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The Contracting Parties approved the decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.6), the COP:

- Strongly encourages Contracting Parties to take significant action towards achieving Aichi Target 11 (by 2020, 10% of coastal and marine areas are under protection);
- Requests the Secretariat to elaborate an ambitious and transformational post-2020 roadmap on MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean, for consideration at COP 22;
- Decides to set up a multidisciplinary ad hoc group of experts for MPAs to support the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 MPAs agenda in the Mediterranean and to work on related issues;
- Requests the Secretariat to establish a directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) according to Articles 16 (guidelines and common criteria), 19 (publicity, information, public awareness and education) and 23 (reports of the Parties) of the Protocol concerning SPAs and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, and the SPA/RAC to elaborate criteria for including of SPAs in the directory, for consideration at COP 22;
- Encourage Contracting Parties to promote the role of MPAs as reference sites under the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria;
- Decides to include the Cerbère-Banyuls Marine Nature Reserve (France), the Egadi Islands Marine Protected Area (Italy), the Landscape Park Strunjan (Slovenia) and the Cetaceans Migration Corridor in the Mediterranean (Spain) in the list of SPAMIs;

- Encourages further cooperation and collaboration in the management and conservation of SPAMIs among Contracting Parties, as well as among individual SPAMIs, mainly through technical, institutional and financial support, technology transfer, capacity building, best practices and experience sharing, twinning and other appropriate means;
- Requests the Secretariat to draft the concepts in order to establish SPAMI Day and the SPAMI Certificate (Mediterranean Diploma for SPAMIs) and submit them for to COP 22;
- Decides to include the five SPAMIs in a period of provisional nature of a maximum of six years, namely Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon), Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon), Kneiss Islands (Tunisia), La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia), and Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia);
- Requests the Secretariat to support Lebanon and Tunisia in identifying and launching a set of adequate corrective measures and informing on the progress made, and encourage other Parties, SPAMIs and appropriate funding mechanisms to contribute to their implementation;
- Requests Lebanon and Tunisia to inform the 15th Meeting of the SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points about the identification and launching of the adequate corrective measures for these areas;
- Adopts the updated format for the periodic review of SPAMIs and requests the Secretariat to reflect it accordingly in the SPAMIs online evaluation system;
- Requests the Secretariat to work with the relevant designated national authorities in Cyprus, France, Italy, Morocco and Spain to carry out the ordinary periodic review for the 11 SPAMIs listed, for submission to COP 22;
- Decides the following five SPAMIs are to be reviewed in 2020: Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve (Cyprus), MPA of Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo (Italy), MPA and Natural Reserve of Torre Guaceto (Italy), Miramare MPA (Italy), and Plemmirio MPA (Italy); and
- Decides the following six SPAMIs are to be reviewed in 2021: Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve (France), Capo Caccia-Isola Piana MPA (Italy), Punta Campanella MPA (Italy), -Al- Hoceima National Park (Morocco), Archipelago of Cabrera National Park (Spain), and Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs (Spain).



Tidiani Couma, Monaco, in a discussion with **Gabino Gonzalez Deogracia**, REMPEC



Giuseppe Di Carlo, WWF

Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol: This agenda item concerned SPAs and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean. Gaetano Leone opened discussion on Draft Decision IG.24/7 (UNEP/MED IG.24/10), noting that the text had agreed language without brackets.

WWF, on behalf of multiple NGOs, said that there is an urgent need to act to restore nature by 2030. He called on Contracting Parties to set clear indicators of effectiveness and targets in line with the CBD and other related conventions. Egypt added that financial support is necessary to carry out the needed programme implementation. Contracting Parties approved the draft decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L.2/Add.7), the COP:

- Requests the Secretariat to prepare in 2020-2021 the Post-2020 SAP BIO, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and harmonized with the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework for consideration at COP 22;
- Invites the relevant organizations, in particular the members of the SAP BIO Advisory Committee, to contribute in developing the new Post-2020 SAP BIO;
- Adopts the Updated Strategy for the Conservation of Monk Seal in the Mediterranean, the Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles, the Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea and the Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea;
- Requests Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures for implementing the updated Strategy and Action Plans and to report in a timely manner, using the online reporting system;
- Also requests the Secretariat to continue to provide technical support and capacity building for the full and effective implementation of the updated Strategy and Action Plans;

- Further requests the Secretariat to update the Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and the 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, and submit to COP 22; and
- Adopts the Updated Classification of benthic marine habitat types for the Mediterranean region and the Updated Reference List of Marine Habitat Types for the Selection of Sites to be included in National Inventories of Natural Sites of Conservation Interest in the Mediterranean.

RoadMap for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea Area as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention: On Tuesday afternoon, Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/8 (UNEP/MED IG.24/11).

In the ensuing discussion, several countries highlighted the need for further technical studies into the potential socio-economic impacts of the Mediterranean Sulphur Oxides Emission Control Area (Med SOx ECA), as well as support for capacity building to implement the initiative. Tatjana Hema, Deputy Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, clarified that the PoW and budget working group had agreed to make an additional allocation for activities that improve the understanding of the socio-economic impacts of the Med SOx ECA. Citadini per l'Aria, on behalf of a number of several NGOs, said the current Med SOx ECA proposals timeline lacks ambition and expressed disappointment that Nitrous Oxide (NOx) has been neglected despite its negative impacts.

The EU proposed a considerable number of changes and new text. She argued this was a “step up” from the current roadmap, as it emphasizes that the Med SOx ECA is established with the maximum geographical scope where all Contracting Parties are involved in order to maximize environmental and health benefits as well as to alleviate distortion of competition. She proposed including text on formally submitting the proposal to the 78th session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee, scheduled for April 2022. She also highlighted that the proposals were faithful to the existing draft and mindful of the need for further technical evidence and capacity building on the road to implementation of the Med SOx ECA.

Israel supported the EU proposals, but several parties, including Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, as well as the IMO, expressed concerns regarding their ability to consider and understand the large number of new proposals within the timeframe of COP 21. WWF questioned the intention of the EU in making these considerable changes, as doing so would create a need for additional consultations. He also expressed disappointment at the low level of ambition of the roadmap mandate. Gaetano Leone expressed concern that the new text required fresh rounds of consultation. He noted that work on this initiative had been ongoing for several years and it would be disappointing to not have an outcome at COP 21. After



Ayelet Rosen, Israel

discussions, Contracting Parties returned to considering the original draft decision and reached agreement after lengthy negotiations.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.8), the COP adopts a roadmap for a proposal for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides pursuant to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) Annex VI, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, set out in the Annex to the Decision and with the view of formally submitting the proposal to the 78th Session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee scheduled for 2022.

The COP agrees to:

- Finalize, based on the outcome of the further studies and the preparatory work, the development of a mutually agreed joint and coordinated proposal for the possible designation by the IMO of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI; and
- Extend the mandate of the MAP SOx ECA Technical Committee of Experts, until 30 April 2021, to oversee the completion of the knowledge gathering and the preparations of



Florence Descroix-Comanducci, Executive Secretary, Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS)

further studies, notably socio-economic impacts on individual Contracting Parties, *inter alia*, as indicated in the Annex to the decision, including the development of their respective ToR, through correspondence coordinated by the REMPEC, when examining the possibility of designating the proposed Med SOx ECA.

The COP requested the Secretariat to:

- Provide the necessary technical and financial support to Contracting Parties and to address any needs identified with the studies before the designation of the proposed Med SOx ECA;
- Update the initial draft submission to the IMO for a proposal for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an ECA for sulphur oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, under the guidance of the MAP SOx ECA Technical Committee of Experts in line with the agreed roadmap; and
- Prepare an information document related to the adoption of the Decision and submit it to the next session of the IMO's Marine Environment Committee for its consideration.

Further, the COP:

- Calls upon Contracting Parties to provide full support to the further work of the MAP SOx ECA Technical Committee of Experts in order to ensure that the above-mentioned knowledge gathering is completed and the above-mentioned further studies are carried out in a coordinated, timely and effective manner;
- Encourages all Contracting Parties to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI as soon as possible;
- Underlines the need to encourage and support preparation efforts and mitigate potential impacts as relevant, in line with outcomes of further knowledge gathering through relevant frontrunner activities and financial and capacity building mechanisms.

Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines and Standards:

This agenda item included common standards and guidance on the disposal of oil and oily mixtures and the use and disposal of drilling fluids and cuttings; and common standards and guidelines for special restrictions or conditions for specially protected areas (SPAs) within the framework of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan. Gaetano Leone introduced the draft decision IG.24/9 (UNEP/MED IG.24/12) on Tuesday morning. He noted that these guidelines were developed through a consultative process, including Contracting Parties and oil companies.

Discussions ensued on how to acknowledge that geographical surveys should be conducted using the lowest sound intensities and over the smallest geographical areas possible. OceanCare lamented there had been no independent scientific review of the guidelines and the decision did not reference the more progressive guidelines, which address anthropogenic noise-generating activities and mitigating its impacts, adopted by ACCOBAMS and the Convention on Migratory Species. In response, ACCOBAMS proposed text that acknowledged these guidelines, which was agreed after minor edits.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.9), the COP adopts the two Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines and Standards as set out in Annex I and II to the Decision. The COP also:

- Requests Contracting Parties to make every effort for the effective implementation of the two Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines and Standards;
- Urges Contracting Parties to control and report on the disposal of oil and oily mixtures and the use and disposal of drilling fluids and cuttings, and to report on the adoption of special measures to prevent, abate, combat and control pollution arising from offshore activities in SPAs; and
- Invites Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, relevant international organizations and the industry to explore a collaborative approach to strengthen the financial and human resources of the MAP System;
- Requests the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Offshore Protocols and the Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines and Standards; and to continue the work and finalize the Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments, mandated by the Offshore Action Plan, for the consideration at the next Offshore Oil and Gas meeting during the first year of the 2020- 2021 biennium, for submission to COP 22.

Main Elements of the Six Regional Plans to Reduce/ Prevent Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources; Updating the Annexes to the LBS and Dumping Protocols of the Barcelona Convention: On Tuesday afternoon, Gaetano Leone introduced draft decision IG.24/10 (UNEP/MED IG.24/13). The decision was agreed after minor clarifications from the Secretariat.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.10), the COP endorses the main elements and the timeline for the development of six Regional Plans to reduce and prevent marine pollution from land-based sources, as set out in Annex I to the Decision, and establishes Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to develop the following, and report to COP 22:

- Upgrade the Regional plan on the reduction of BOD5 from urban wastewater in the framework of the implementation of article 15 of the Land-based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.19/7);
- Develop a new Regional Plan for Sewage Sludge Management and its technical annexes; and
- Upgrade the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (Decision IG.21/7).

The COP also:

- Requests the Secretariat to launch the formal process for updating the annexes of the LBS and Dumping Protocols, for consideration at COP 22;
- Establishes Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to review the annexes and make proposals for consideration at COP 22.

Guidelines: This agenda item addressed several guidelines, namely: Adopt-a-Beach; Phase-out of Single Use Plastic Bags;

Provision of Reception Facilities in Ports and the Delivery of Ship-Generated Wastes; Application of Charges at Reasonable Costs for the Use of Port Reception Facilities. Gaetano Leone introduced Draft Decision IG.24/11 (UNEP/MED IG.24/14) on Tuesday afternoon. The Basl, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions outlined the synergies among the conventions. Gaetano Leone noted cooperation with the BRS Conventions is important for intensifying action.

Delegates agreed on the decision, following minor amendments.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.11), the COP adopts the guidelines set out in Annexes I-IV to the decision.

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- Facilitate the work of the Contracting Parties in implementing the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and its associated Guidelines; and
- Explore with the IMO steps that could be taken within their respective mandates to establish synergies with a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination in implementing their respective plans or strategies on marine plastic litter from ships.

Updated Guidelines Regulating the Placement of Artificial Reefs at Sea: Gaetano Leone introduced Draft Decision IG.24/12 (UNEP/MED IG.24/15) on Tuesday afternoon. He said that, following the meeting of the MAP focal points in September 2019, the EU had proposed amendments to provide additional clarification. Delegates approved the draft decision with the proposed changes.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.12) the COP adopts the Updated Guidelines, set out in the Annex to the Decision, which replace the 2005 Guidelines, and:

- Requests Contracting Parties to ensure their effective implementation, keeping in mind that the updated guidelines shall be without prejudice to stricter provisions with respect to the placement of artificial reefs in the Mediterranean Sea Area;
- Urges Contracting Parties to report on placement activities in the Mediterranean Sea Area; and
- Requests the Secretariat to facilitate the work of the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Updated Guidelines.

Development of a Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products:

Gaetano Leone introduced Draft Decision IG.24/13 (UNEP/MED IG.24/16), and noted that there was agreement on text as it did not contain bracketed language. Lebanon, welcoming this draft decision, noted it planned to phase out single-use plastic and develop a circular economy strategy.

The Contracting Parties approved the draft decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L2/Add.13), the COP requests the Secretariat to:

- Prepare a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and strengthen the demand for more sustainable products;

- Ensure that regional measures target those economic sectors identified by the relevant Protocols to the Barcelona Convention and have a particular impact on the marine and coastal environment, and address related cross-cutting issues; and
- Develop specific criteria for the definition of green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean, based on existing initiatives at global, regional and national levels for consideration at COP 22.

The COP also requests the Secretariat to make every effort to ensure that the preparation of the set of regional measures and the development of criteria are in synergy with existing regional and national policy frameworks supporting the development of green and circular businesses.

Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-2021

Gaetano Leone opened discussion on Monday morning. Tatjana Hema, Deputy Coordinator UNEP/MAP, presented on the budget and PoW (UNEP/MED IG.24/17, 17/Add.1, 17/Corr.1) and how these contribute to the SDGs. She explained that the overarching theme for the PoW is governance, and that many activities fall under this umbrella. She also outlined the MTS, the strategy to combat pollution from ships, and the results-based PoW.

Hema summarized proposed work under the various themes such as land and sea pollution, marine spatial planning, ICZM, SCP, and climate change adaptation. This includes: proposed future work to reduce sewage sludge and dumping within the theme of “land and sea pollution”; and, future work on renewable marine energies under climate change adaptation.

On the budget, Hema explained two scenarios to the Contracting Parties: a 0% increase; and a 4% budget increase. She said the Secretariat favors the second option as this will help parties better achieve the more ambitious PoW. Hema added that they are currently operating with a surplus, mostly from staffing, and hope to continue into the next biennium with a surplus. The EU asked for clarification on which activities the surplus will cover for both budget options and requested more detail regarding the use of external resources. Delegates established a budget contact group to continue discussions.



Doumi El Hassane, Morocco

On Tuesday evening, Hema reported on discussions from the budget contact group, saying delegates agreed to budget option two, but reduced to a 2% increase. Doumi El Hassane, Chair of the Budget Contact Group (Morocco), summarized other amendments, including additional funds to support analyses for the designation of the Med Sox ECA and funding for certain RACs.

On Wednesday morning, Hema summarized outstanding issues, such as that of the budget calculations under the chosen Option Two with a 2% increase for RACs and more dedicated funds for RACs. She said the Contracting Parties would then need to agree on the remaining bracketed language in the draft decision that refers to the specific budget for the biennium. Hema also noted reference to the surplus and requests for reporting on allocation of the surplus to the Contracting Parties had been included. She stated they prioritized a close relationship between the MTS and the PoW.

Israel, with Malta and Croatia, highlighted with concern that the offshore protocol has not been fully implemented by REMPAC because of an ongoing lack of resources. Israel further said he could not approve this budget without allocating additional human resources to REMPAC.

The EU highlighted that the MTS and future work preparation need to be clearly linked in this budget outline and that he cannot currently approve additional resources, as Israel requested. He asked for additional time to discuss details of the budget with his delegation. The IMO added that the COP cannot continue approving increased workloads without a concomitant budget. She said there needs to be a compromise if Contracting Parties want initiatives like the Med SOx ECA and the offshore protocol to be implemented. Chair Giarratano urged the EU and others to meet informally to resolve the issues.

On Wednesday evening, the EU said that, as a result of the surplus, he could agree to the additional position for offshore work requested by Israel, as long as all RACs also have funds allocated to them from the surplus. He said this would only apply to this biennium. Egypt and Tunisia supported this, stating the importance of financial justifications for needs as well as an evaluation of effectiveness after the two years.

The Secretariat sought clarification on the new post and exact costs and tenure. The EU suggested eliminating the 2% increase for this biennium’s budget and recalculating it based on the available surplus.

The Secretariat agreed to recalculate the budget table for final approval. Gaetano Leone emphasized that the review of PoW and budget should have been completed at the MAP focal point meeting and, as it was not, it has led to these complex negotiations. He said the Secretariat would review the need for a focal point meeting, and if more effective, it could allocate more time to the COP instead.

On Thursday afternoon, the Secretariat presented the requested budget table recalculations. Hema noted that the changes reflect a new balance total, and that instead of reference to a “surplus,” the amount is referred to as “unutilized Mediterranean Trust Fund” funds.



Tatjana Hema, Deputy Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

Gaetano Hema stated the Secretariat did account for a REMPEC consultancy, as requested by the Contracting Parties. She said the new total, eliminating the 2% increase for this biennium, with a percentage added for overall programmatic support, amounts to just over EUR1 million.

Leone noted that the MAP coordinating unit is charged with managing the MTF, so should be involved throughout the budget process instead of just at the final stages.

Delegates approved the decision with amendments as discussed.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.24/L.2/Add.14), the COP approves:

- The 2020-2021 PoW and Budget;
- The budget appropriations, as set out in Table 1 of the Annex, including income of EUR13,296,144, composed of the MTF amount of EUR 11,413,577, the EU discretionary contribution of EUR1,192,968 and the host country contribution of EUR689,600, as well as the use of the MTF positive cash balance up to the amount of EUR2,945,838;
- The staffing of the Coordinating Unit, including MED POL; and
- The assessed 2020-2021 ordinary contributions from the Contracting Parties.

The COP also requests:

- The UNEP Executive Director and the MAP Coordinator to execute the Budget taking into consideration Decision IG.21/15 on the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures for the Contracting Parties;
- That in future budget preparations, the Secretariat base potential budget scenarios exclusively on the level of the assessed contributions;
- The UNEP Executive Director, in consultation with the UN Environment Assembly, to extend the Mediterranean Trust Fund through 31 December 2021;
- The Secretariat to keep up-to-date information on the status of Contracting Parties' contributions to the Mediterranean Trust Fund;

- The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to prepare for consideration and approval by COP 22, a result-based PoW and Budget for 2022-2023;
- The Secretariat to submit a budget for 2022-2023, sufficient to cover the implementation of the mandate deriving from the 2022-2027 MTS and the required capacity and operational costs of the entire Secretariat; and
- The Secretariat to closely link the preparation of the 2022-2023 PoW and Budget with the process of the preparing the new MTS 2022-2027, and to assess the adequacy of the entire MAP-Barcelona Convention system to achieve new MTS objective and its financial sustainability.

The COP further:

- Invites the Contracting Parties to consider increasing their voluntary contributions;
- Urges the Contracting Parties and other partners, including industry, to contribute adequate human and financial resources to meet external funding requirements for priorities still unfunded under the 2020-2021 PoW;
- Urges the Government of Greece to undertake all the required steps to ensure fully adequate premises are made available to the Coordinating Unit within the shortest delay, and requests the Secretariat to report on progress made; and
- Agrees on the need to retain a net cash balance to ensure, as a temporary measure, the timely implementation of the PoW, and to report to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties on its utilization.

An itemized budget table showing the detailed calculations discussed in Plenary as well as a detailed PoW with costs is included in an annex to the decision. UNEP/MAP accounts for the previous biennium and operational costs of the RACs are also included in annexes to the decision.

Ministerial Session

Sergio Costa, Minister of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, opened the Ministerial Session on Wednesday morning, lauding the establishing of 4 new SPAMIs. Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, read a message from the President of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, who highlighted that the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols confirms the commitment of the Contracting Parties to organize targeted initiatives to promote sustainable development and tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

Via a video message, Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, said "you cannot have a healthy planetary system without a healthy ocean system" and highlighted the need to address the "plastic plague," which has permeated the food chain to the point where we are "eating the consequences."

Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, said that progress on improving the marine environment in the Mediterranean region can serve as a powerful driving force towards achieving the SDGs for the world as a whole. Gaetano Leone said the Barcelona Convention must be central to the events taking place during 2020, as the "super year" for the global development and environment agenda.

Youth representatives, providing an overview of their involvement in the preparatory process for COP 21, underscored that they view the Mediterranean identity as a strength and the diversity in the region as tool to be harnessed.

Report on Activities carried out in the framework of UNEP/MAP since COP 20: Gaetano Leone reported on activities (UNEP/MED IG.24/3, 20 & 21, and UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.3-9, 11 & 12), stating that there have been two ratifications received: Croatia ratified the offshore protocol and Malta, the ICZM Protocol. He said one more ratification is required for the Dumping Protocol to enter into force and one ratification is needed for universal ratification of the amended Barcelona Convention. On implementation, he lamented that reporting is lacking and available resources are insufficient.

Interactive Ministerial Policy Review Session: High-Level Panel discussion on Protecting the marine environment and coastal region of the Mediterranean: game-changing action for sustainability: This panel was moderated by Xenia Loizidou, Ambassador for the Coast in the Mediterranean for 2019.

Session 1: Periscope – Scanning the Mediterranean Horizon and Beyond: The first session focused on challenges and opportunities that should factor into policymaking to achieve good environmental status in the Mediterranean.

Thomas Frölicher, Lead Author, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), summarized the highlights of this report, for example shifting fish populations, which will impact food security and livelihoods.

Kostas Bakoyannis, Mayor of Athens, stated that cities should be at the center of the decision-making paradigm, which can rebuild trust among citizens by working from the bottom-up toward real solutions.

Gavin Edwards, Global Coordinator, New Deal for Nature & People 2020, WWF, said challenges remain such as that of the increasing amount of marine plastic pollution, and that many of the MPAs are still only ‘paper parks’ due to lack of enforcement. He called 2020 a “super year” of opportunity for the planet and



Kostas Bakoyannis, Mayor of Athens, Greece

said many sectors, including business and finance, are taking biodiversity and climate protection more seriously.

Session 2: Propulsion – Entry Points for Action-Oriented and Climate-Resilient Policymaking: This session provided an action-oriented collective reflection on leverage points that could accelerate the required transition.

Lilia Hachem Naas, Director, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Office for North Africa, underscored that Africa is lagging behind on achieving the SDGs and said that the continent needs to transform challenges into opportunities in order to generate a different kind of growth.

Jacob Duer, President and CEO, Alliance to End Plastic Waste, argued that the current challenges require the commitments of not only nation-states but also the private sector. He stated that in the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, 42 global companies have come together and committed USD 1 billion to end plastic waste in the environment.

Augusto Giuseppe Navone, Director, Tavolara MPA, Sardinia, Italy, said MPAs are sustainable spaces, highlighting that good management of MPAs is based on social cooperation networks where all stakeholders are involved.

During the ensuing discussions, delegates highlighted, inter alia, the need to: not scare people about the current climate situation but instead instill optimism; not underestimate the climate challenge; and to scale up efforts and restore science and evidence-based policies in order to increase confidence.

Statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegation: Many outlined their national activities to implement the Barcelona Convention, including integrating its provisions into relevant national legislation. Some delegates also outlined their steps to combat marine litter, focusing in particular on single-use plastics.

The EU said that in the Mediterranean, expansion and enforcement of the MPA network, as well as greening maritime transport, is essential. Finland, for the EU Presidency, expressed support for a Med SOx ECA. France emphasized the importance of sulphur oxide regulations in the Mediterranean. Croatia said



Thomas Frölicher, Lead Author, IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

climate change and biodiversity should be addressed together, and it strongly supports nature-based solutions.

Slovenia said it is committed to achieving SDG 14 (life below water), especially through implementing circular economy principles. Cyprus underscored that marine litter is a major concern, as it negatively affects both as its economy relies on tourism.

Egypt said his country implements cross-cutting environmental protection policies for coastal areas and tries to use diversified, multi-tiered approaches for implementing MAP activities. Turkey outlined initiatives for zero waste, which in turn reduces the pressure of solid waste pollution on the seas. Greece highlighted a planned national single-use plastic ban. Israel gave examples of best practices, citing its success in reducing land-based pollutant discharge by 90% by ensuring strict adherence to local legislation.

Montenegro said the Barcelona Convention's holistic integral, and integrated approach requires decisive action, and that its innovative solutions are integral to strengthening the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Morocco lauded the Barcelona Convention for its adaptability to changing circumstances and requirements of Contracting Parties, despite its complex nature. Spain underscored the importance of conducting the SoED 2023 and called for sufficient support.

ACCOBAMS highlighted that collaboration has greatly contributed to data collection and monitoring on cetaceans. WWF said reaffirming the Aichi target to protect 10% of oceanic waters is meaningless when protection of most Contracting Parties' national waters is below 5%. The GEF highlighted the Mediterranean Sea Programme, which receives USD 47 million from the GEF and over USD 800 million in co-financing, and emphasized its exciting and powerful partnerships. IUCN lamented that implementation of the Convention is weak and said civil society should be better included in its processes.

IMO said its work underpins many of the SDGs, especially SDG 14, and emphasized the 0.5% sulphur oxide cap under

MARPOL Annex VI, which will be introduced on 1 January 2020.

Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award 2018-2019: On Monday afternoon, Gaetano Leone introduced the award, which, he said, is one of the flagship initiatives of the MSSD. He recalled the remarks of the Mayor of Naples that although coastal cities face many challenges, many solutions can be found in their urban realities.

Yecheil Lasry, Mayor, Municipality of Ashdod, Israel, received the award, thanking the Government of Turkey for initiating this prize and encouraging all to do more. He said that Ashdod is a young city that has numerous unique natural resources and is multicultural in nature. Mayor Lasry stressed the city's efforts to balance quality of life with environmental protection, while also ensuring that no one is left behind and the city maintains its sense of identity during this period of progress.

Date and place of COP 22

On Thursday evening, Gaetano Leone announced that Turkey has offered to host COP 22 in December 2021.

Naples Ministerial Declaration

The Secretariat introduced this agenda item (UNEP/MED IG.24/19/Rev.1 and UNEP/MED IG. 24/Inf.14) item on Monday morning, and delegates addressed this item throughout the week. On Monday morning, Gaetano Leone summarized the consultation process which, to ensure inclusivity, included both Contracting Parties and stakeholders including UNEP and youth groups.

During the Ministerial Session, the Contracting Parties approved the Naples Ministerial Declaration. Minister Sergio Costa stated that the Declaration is not just a policy document, but a manifesto "oriented towards actions that puts countries on track to tackling common challenges."

Final Outcome: In the Declaration (UNEP/MED IG.24/19/Rev.2), the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols:

- Welcome the approval of the Summary for Decision Makers and the key messages of the 2019 SoED as important for defining the 2022-2027 MTS and other relevant regional policy and strategy developments of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system;
- Commit to taking concrete action to enhance the level of safeguard of the Mediterranean Sea;
- Are determined to further address efforts in four priority areas—effectively tackling marine litter, strengthening and expanding the MPA network, responding to the challenges arising from climate change, and supporting sustainable blue economy and a regional ecological transition;
- Recognize the urgency to prevent and significantly reduce plastic leakage in the Mediterranean Sea by 2025 with clear commitments to reduce plastic consumption, support eco-



Yecheil Lasry, Mayor, Municipality of Ashdod, Israel, received the "2019 Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award" presented by **Maria Carmela Giarratano**, COP 21 President, Italy



L-R: **Isidro González Alfonso**, Union for the Mediterranean; **Gavin Edwards**, WWF; **Xenia Loizidou**, 2019 Ambassador for the Coast in the Mediterranean; and **Lilia Hachem Naas**, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

design and innovation, resource efficiency and effectively improved waste management, as well as enhanced control and prevention measures;

- Recommit to the sustainable use of natural resources and to implement science-based management for the benefits of the local communities, to mainstream biodiversity conservation into sectoral strategies and programmes, to achieve at least the 10% of coverage of the Mediterranean region with MPAs by the end of 2020 and to support their sustainable financing, including through the Med Fund initiative;
- Agree to finalize the development of a mutually agreed joint and coordinated proposal for the possible designation by the IMO of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an SECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI;
- Recognize that “thinking green,” in terms of the environmental impact of our everyday life, requires acting accordingly, and implies a call for action for all actors, locally and globally, on which the quality of life of our children depends;

- Agree on the four priority areas for actions and commitments identified at COP 21 to be part of the 2022-2027 MTS of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, and to foster its governance and enforcement mechanisms; and
- Ultimately engage themselves and their countries to renew the decades-long obligation toward a responsible path for the protection and the sustainable development of the Mare Nostrum—a common heritage they are only trustees of and therefore are called to preserve, enhance, clean up and pass on to future Mediterranean generations.

They further decide to scale-up efforts to address the issue of marine litter by empowering the regulatory framework for reducing single-use plastic products, setting ambitious quantitative targets, and incorporating reduction measures in national marine litter agendas, and to:

- Promote prevention measures and circular approaches, supporting long-term viable recycling targets, adopting national plans to progressively achieve 100% plastic waste collection and recycling by 2025, and addressing the private sector to minimize plastic packaging;
- Make the IMAP-based marine litter monitoring in the Mediterranean fully operational; and
- Launch awareness raising campaigns on the impacts of litter on the marine environment.

They are also engaged to share responsibilities and targets among actors and stakeholders at all levels, to reach long-term structural solutions, with a view to adopting additional protection measures and therefore, to:

- Support a new ambitious plan for biodiversity and ecosystems through developing the revised SAP BIO, and fostering capacity building and synergies with biodiversity-related Conventions;
- Encourage the designation of MPAs in the Mediterranean, accelerate the effective management of the current MPAs network, and enhance the science-policy interface to increase efforts for key species, habitats and ecosystem conservation; and
- Develop mechanisms for exchanging information and promoting cooperation on thematic areas and interdisciplinary approaches in MPAs, as twinning agreements, and for their



UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat COP 21 family photo

participatory planning and management to actively involve local socio-economic stakeholders, including fishermen and tourism actors.

They reaffirm their commitment toward governance and policy responses based on scientific evidence, to strengthen the application of ICZM and its role, and commit, therefore, to support:

- Collecting scientific findings in an easily accessible form on behalf of decision-makers at any level and develop transdisciplinary research and inter-sectoral policies to address climate change through a cross-cutting approach;
- Evaluating the environmental, economic and social impacts of sea level rise and coastal hazards associated with climate change in coastal areas, with a view to ensuring land-use planning and infrastructure take full account of relevant climate change scenarios and uncertainties; and
- Boosting capacity building and involvement of a range of stakeholders in designing and implementing adaptation strategies, and mobilizing funding resources.

They further reaffirm their commitment to implementing the ICZM Protocol by increasing its ratification level, to foster the green transition, and the linked initiatives promoted by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, and commit to:

- Ensuring sustainable and integrated uses of marine and coastal areas and resources, as well as circular economy and innovative tourism products and services, sharing experiences and information at all levels between institutions and projects, including marine renewable energies;
- Ensuring the efficient implementation of the ICZM provisions; and
- Developing a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism.

They also urge implementing cross-cutting flagship and pilot initiatives as strategic generational and transformational trends for the protection of the environment of the Mediterranean, contributing to its sustainable development, including:

- Creating of special protected areas or MPAs in line with the Barcelona Convention;
- Strengthening of the cooperation of UNEP/MAP in common areas with other UN programmes or initiatives;
- Implementing a strategy for environmental communication and dissemination for the promotion of sustainable development, and of high quality and innovative education and training plans targeted according to the different contexts for reaching a diversified audience and the young; and
- Enhancing a regional science-policy interface to base policies on scientific expertise, to have a strategic decision-making process with a sound scientific basis.

Adoption of the Report and Closure of COP 21

Gaetano Leone introduced the draft decisions (UNEP/MED IG.24/L.2; UNEP/MED IG.24/L.2/Add.1-14), and the report of the meeting (UNEP/MED IG.24/L.1), both of which were adopted with minor amendments.

COP 21 President Giarratano thanked all of the staff, Contracting Parties, and interpreters for their hard work on many long nights. She gave a warm and special thank-you



Maria Carmela Giarratano, COP 21 President, Italy, closed the meeting at 6:06 pm.

to Gaetano Leone. In closing, Gaetano Leone expressed appreciation for the collaboration among all stakeholders and Contracting Parties. He said their amount of energy, advice, and help in delivering action is crucial to getting work done. Gaetano Leone also offered a warm thanks to the UNEP/MAP team for their extraordinary dedication and skills. Giarratano closed the COP at 6:06pm.

Upcoming Meetings

Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development

Goal 14: This meeting will convene as part of the preparatory process of the 2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below water). Delegates are expected to consider the themes for the interactive dialogues and elements for the declaration, in particular the call for a brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally-agreed declaration. **date:** 1 February 2020 [tentative] **location:** New York City, US **www:** <https://undocs.org/A/73/L.82>

26th Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Assembly and Council (Part I): At Annual Sessions of the ISA, representatives from Member States of the Authority meet to discuss and formulate the work and regulations of the Authority and its Secretariat. These regulations, once concluded, will govern future activities in the world's oceans. **dates:** 13 February – 6 March 2020 **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** <https://www.isa.org.jm/sessions/26th-session-2020>

High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) 2020: The overarching theme of the Conference is, 'Scaling Up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions.' Co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, the Conference is expected to adopt an intergovernmental declaration on science-based and innovative areas of action, along with a list of voluntary commitments, to support SDG 14 implementation. **dates:** 2-6 June 2020 **location:** Lisbon, Lisboa, Portugal **www:** <https://oceanconference.un.org/>

IUCN World Conservation Congress: The 2020 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress will be held in Marseille, France. **dates:** 11-19 June 2020 **location:** Marseille, Provence-Alpes-Cote D'Azur, France **www:** <https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/201805/france-host-iucn-world-conservation-congress-2020>

26th Session of the ISA Assembly and Council (Part II): At Annual Sessions of the ISA, representatives from Member States of the Authority meet to discuss and formulate the work and regulations of the Authority and its Secretariat. These regulations, once concluded, will govern future activities in the world's oceans. **dates:** 6-31 July 2020 **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** <https://www.isa.org.jm/>

Our Ocean Conference 2020: The seventh Our Ocean Conference will draw partners globally to identify solutions to sustainably manage marine resources, increase the ocean's resilience to climate change, and safeguard its health for generations to come. The six areas of focus at the conference will include climate change, marine pollution, marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, sustainable blue economy, and maritime security. **dates:** 17-18 August 2020 **location:** Palau **www:** <https://www.ourocean2020.pw/>

1st Meeting on the Preparation of the Regional Plans on Pollution: The 1st Meeting on the Preparation of the Regional Plans on Pollution, to be hosted by UNEP/MAP, is expected to be held in September 2020 in Athens, Greece. **dates:** tbc, September 2020 **location:** Athens, Greece **www:** <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/meetings/calendar>

Fifteenth meeting of the COP to the CBD: This conference is designed to adopt the next 10-year strategic plan for the CBD and its Protocols, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** tbc, October 2020 **location:** Kunming, China **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

1st meeting on the Preparation of SAP BIO: The Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO) in the Mediterranean Region was implemented from 2004-2018—its agreed lifespan. Following an extensive evaluation of its implementation, Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties at COP 21 have tasked the Secretariat with developing a post-2020 SAP BIO for adoption at COP 22 in 2021. **dates:** tbc, October/ November 2020 **location:** tbc **www:** <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/>

2nd Meeting on the Preparation of the Regional Plans on Pollution: The 2nd Meeting on the Preparation of the Regional Plans on Pollution, to be hosted by UNEP/MAP, is expected to be held in February 2021 in Athens, Greece. **dates:** tbc, February 2021 **location:** Athens, Greece **www:** <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/>

2nd meeting on the Preparation of SAP BIO: Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties at COP 21 have tasked the Secretariat with developing a post-2020 SAP BIO for adoption at COP 22 in 2021. This is the second meeting. **dates:** tbc, March/April 2021 **location:** tbc **www:** <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/>

Barcelona Convention COP 22: The 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols will take place in Egypt in December 2021. It will

discuss relevant issues to its mandate, including: assessing and controlling marine pollution; ensuring sustainable management of natural marine and coastal resources; protecting the marine environment and coastal zones through preventing and reducing, and as far as possible, eliminating pollution; protecting natural and cultural heritage; strengthening solidarity among Mediterranean coastal States; and contributing to improving quality of life. **dates:** 7-10 December 2021 **location:** Antalya, Turkey **www:** <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/>

Glossary

ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area
Dumping Protocol	Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria
IMO	International Maritime Organization
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
Med SOx ECA	Mediterranean Sulphur Oxides Emission Control Area
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSCD	Mediterranean Committee on Sustainable Consumption
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
MTF	Medium Term Framework
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
PoW	Programme of Work
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
SAP BIO	Strategic Action Plan for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SoED	Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean
SPAMIs	Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance
SPAs	Specially Protected Areas
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea