Technical Workshop on Selecting Indicators for the State of Regional Seas
Geneva, 1 July 2014

Tehran Convention

Nina A. Schneider
Tehran Convention (interim) Secretariat
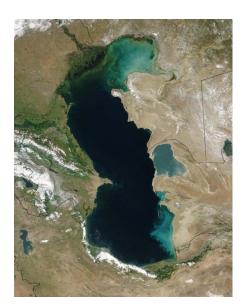**United Nations Environment Programme**

The Caspian Sea: "Pearl of the Planet"

- Largest inland water body on earth

- One of the world's most **valuable ecosystems**

- Over **400 endemic** species

- Diverse range of **habitats** from vast river systems to extensive wetlands

Imminent Threats

- Pollution from **oil spills**, **nuclear** and other **hazardous waste**;

- **Severe decline** in unique **biodiversity**

- Biological threats brought by **invasive species**

- Inputs of **POPs/OPs** from agricultural activities and pollution of the Caspian tributaries.

The Tehran Convention

- Recognition that **safeguarding** the health of the Caspian Sea for present and future generations requires **regional cooperation**

- Caspian Environment Program (CEP), established in 1998, supported by WB, UNDP, UNEP, financially supported by GEF,EU

- Major outcome: the **Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea**, Tehran Convention

- First legally binding treaty between all 5 Caspian littoral states

- Entered into force on 12 August 2006 («Caspian Day»)

"The Tehran Convention will benefit the health and livelihoods of millions of people"
(UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan)

The Tehran Convention II

- Convention Secretariat ad interim hosted by UNEP in Geneva

- COP5, 30 May 2014, celebrated outstanding success: Ministers signed «**Ashgabat Decision**» on the location and arrangements of Convention Secretariat and requested UNEP to administer the Secretariat

- Secretariat to be located in Caspian region on 4-year rotation basis, starting in **Baku, Azerbaijan from 2015**

After one decade of regional cooperation: Convention on the brink of **becoming operational**

The **oil and gas industry** to become **key partner** in implementation process:

The Tehran Convention: Key Achievements

- Strategic Action Plan and finalized **National Convention Action Plans** (including Public Participation Strategies)

- **Protocols developed, concerning:**

➢ Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in **Combating Oil Pollution Incidents** ("Aktau" Protocol, 2011)

➢ Protection of the Caspian Sea against **Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities** ("Moscow" Protocol, 2012)

➢ Conservation of **Biological Diversity** ("Ashgabat" Protocol, adopted 2014)

➢ **EIA in a Trans-boundary Context** (expected to be adopted at COP6, 2015)

The Tehran Convention: Key Achievements II

- **Caspian Environmental Information Centre (GRID/Arendal)**

- **Unified Convention reporting format** (3 years reporting)

- **First Caspian "State of the Environment" Report (2011)**

- **Caspian Environmental Monitoring Program**:
(conventional and biological monitoring)
•Regional environmental monitoring capacity with lead
institutions assessed
•EMP action agenda agreed
•Collaboration with CaspCom established (2013)
•Request to initiate negotiations on legal agreement for
environmental information
    sharing

Environmental Monitoring in the Caspian Sea

Vast number of monitoring activities and projects under the CEP and in the Caspian region, including:

- EU-TACIS "MAP" project;

- Monitoring activities undertaken by **Hydromet systems** in CIS countries

- Extensive monitoring activities carried out **by oil and gas companies**, such as BP or NCOC

**Yet,
no environmental
baseline
established
up until today!**

Next Steps for EMP implementation

- Establish institutional and operational basis
- Develop and agree on harmonized environmental indicators
- Negotiate regional legal agreement
- Fully operationalize Caspian Environmental Information Center
- Establish procedures for regular State of the Caspian Environment reporting
- Capacity-building
- Seeking alignment with EEA Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)

Sustainable management of the Caspian Sea requires cooperation between sectors and states through a coordinated ecosystem-wide approach

Thank you

Nina.Schneider@unep.org
www.tehranconvention.org