



**UNITED
NATIONS**

EP

UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/Inf.5



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

31 October 2017
Original: English

20th Ordinary 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

Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017

Agenda items 3: Thematic Decisions

Agenda Item 4: Programme of Work and Budget for 2018-2019

Agenda item 5: Ministerial Session

Report of the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

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UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/9



UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

25 August 2017
Original: English

17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

Athens, Greece, 4-6 July 2017

Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

Report of the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2017

Table of contents

	Pages
Report	1-13
Annexes	
Annex I List of Participants	
Annex II Welcome addresses and speeches	
Annex III Agenda	
Annex IV Core set of indicators for the monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025	
Annex V Reports of the interactive session focusing on MSSD flagship initiatives, good practices, national and regional actions under agenda item 5	
Annex VI General conclusions from the three volunteer Contracting Parties having participated in the SIMPEER pilot phase 2016-2017	

Introduction

1. The 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) was held on 4-6 July 2017 in Athens and generously hosted by the Government of Greece, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP).

Participation

2. The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Ms. Christina Baritaki, addressed a welcome speech on behalf of the Hellenic Minister of Environment and Energy. She acknowledged the work of the MCSD with regard to promoting a sustainable model of development which is holistic and balanced, and which integrates the social, the economic and the environmental dimensions in concrete and practical actions at the Mediterranean level. She also mentioned that the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD 2016-2025) represents a bridge between the global 2030 Agenda and the national level to promote structural changes with positive impacts on the local economies, the society and the environment. The full speech is provided in Annex II.

4. In his opening statement, the outgoing President of the MCSD Steering Committee, Mr. Rachid Firadi, elected at the 16th Meeting of the MCSD in Marrakesh, Morocco, in June 2015, highlighted that the MCSD has gained momentum through the adoption of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the constitutive Reform of the MCSD (COP 19 Decisions IG.22/2 and IG.22/17 respectively), thanks to the successful pilot test of the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) and the preparation of the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard, among other initiatives and activities undertaken by MCSD members, MAP partners and the Secretariat. The full speech is provided in Annex II.

5. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, also welcomed the participants, recalling that the 19th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 19, Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2017) confirmed that the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system continues to be a very relevant and effective regional and the only legally-binding framework at the Mediterranean level, to implement sustainable development policies and concrete actions on priorities agreed at global, regional, and sub-regional levels. He emphasized that, in this context, the MCSD is a very important body, which benefits from a full and increasing support from the Secretariat. The full speech is provided in Annex II.

II. Agenda item 2: Organizational Matters

A. Election of the Steering Committee

B. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

C. Organization of Work

6. In conformity with its Rules of Procedure, the MCSD elected its Steering Committee, as indicated below.

7. The President of the new MCSD Steering Committee suggested that the MCSD Steering Committee will consult, when needed and as appropriate, with previous members of the MCSD Steering Committee, through informal arrangements, to address adequately the issue of continuity.

8. The Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/1 and annotated in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/2, was reviewed and adopted by the MCSD. The Agenda is provided in Annex III.

Conclusions:

9. The MCSD expressed gratitude to the outgoing President of the MCSD Steering Committee, Mr. Rachid Firadi, Morocco.

10. The MCSD elected its Steering Committee for the intersessional period from July 2017 to June 2019, on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution, and among the various groups in accordance with Rule 17 of the MCSD RoP, as follows:

- **President: Greece, Ms. Maria Papaioannou;**
- **Vice-President: Albania, Ms. Iida Shahu;**
- **Vice President: Israel, Ms. Rotem Shamay;**
- **Vice-President: Tunisia, Mr. Lotfi Ben Said;**
- **Vice-President: COMPSUD (Parliamentarians Group), Dr. Dionysia Theodora Avgerinopoulou;**
- **Vice-President: Med-SDSN (Scientific Community Group), Ms. Christina Fossi; and,**
- **Rapporteur: RAED (Socio-economic Stakeholders Group), Dr. Emad Adly.**

11. The MCSD encouraged the Secretariat to launch in a timely manner prior the next meeting of the MCSD a call to all MCSD members on their interest to participate in the MCSD Steering Committee.

III. Agenda item 3: Report by the Secretariat on Work Carried Out and Progress in the Implementation of Recommendations of the 16th Meeting of the MCSD

12. The working document for this agenda item UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/3 “Progress Report on Work Carried Out Since the 16th Meeting of the MCSD” was presented by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone.

13. The MCSD reacted very positively to the Secretariat’s participation and outreach in global processes where the Mediterranean issues have received much attention.

14. The MCSD members stressed the need to invest more on synergy building with regional and sub-regional initiatives and bodies, e.g. the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), etc.

15. MEPIELAN Centre noted that the Progress Report should make reference to the Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), which is a cross-cutting one, in line with the MSSD Objective 6 on Governance, and underlined the need for more emphasis on the institutional (law and policy) dimension. MEPIELAN Centre also reported on its actions supporting the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025 and linked to SDGs.

Conclusions:

16. The MCSD welcomed the report presented by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator and the progress achieved on the implementation of the recommendations of the 16th Meeting of the MCSD. The fact that recommendations of the 16th Meeting of the MCSD were reflected in the COP 19 Decisions shows the relevance of the MCSD as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties.

17. The MCSD members stressed the need to invest more on synergy building with regional and sub-regional initiatives and bodies.

IV. Agenda item 4: From global to regional: Implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

A. Reflecting most recent global developments

18. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, introduced the progress in relation to sustainable development, from the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and through the work of UN Environment to the regional MAP system, as well as the national level.

19. He reminded of the crucial role of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its SDGs, noting that matching exists between 2030 Agenda and its SDGs at the global level, the MSSD 2016-2025 at the regional level, and National Strategies on Sustainable Development (NSSDs) at the national level.

20. He also highlighted France and Morocco's efforts, as host countries, for the extraordinary achievements of the COP 21 (Paris, 2015) and COP 22 (Marrakesh, 2016) under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

21. He reminded that recently, on 5-9 June 2017, in New York, United States, the *United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14* confirmed the strong commitment of the international community to reverse the decline in the health of the oceans for people, planet and prosperity. Then, the fourth high-level *Our Ocean Conference*, to be held on 5-6 October 2017 in Malta, will provide the opportunity to translate that commitment into further action at the Mediterranean level.

22. A specific session under this agenda item aimed to foster exchange of experiences between Contracting Parties having participated in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) process at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, in 2016 and 2017, i.e. Egypt, France, Montenegro, Morocco, and Turkey in 2016; and, Cyprus, Italy, Monaco, and Slovenia in 2017, with the rest of the MCSD members.

23. This session provided an overview of the process of the VNRs, how it contributes to peer-learning between Mediterranean countries, and how it is relevant to the Peer Review Mechanism implemented under MAP auspices (SIMPEER). MCSD members representing Contracting Parties shared lessons learnt from their respective VNR. They pointed out that the SIMPEER is closer to the peer review approach than the VNRs, and mentioned that the VNRs at the HLPF represent a very relevant source of inspiration to better align SIMPEER with the 2030 Agenda and meet countries' needs in terms of transposition of SDGs in national legislation and policies. In other words, VNR at global level and SIMPEER at regional level can feed each other to benefit practical pursuit of sustainable development at the national level, and such synergies shall be sought in the future.

24. The Head of the Gender and Safeguards Unit, Policy and Programme Division of UN Environment, Ms. Janet Kabeberi-Macharia, provided an overview of the integration of gender considerations in the SDGs and, in particular, the environment related SDGs.

25. She explained how gender equality has to be considered as a multiplier of environmental sustainability. She reminded that the dignity of the individual is fundamental and that the SDGs should be met for all nations and people and for all segments of society, reaching first those who are furthest behind. She also considered that the key principle of "*leaving no one behind*" is well reflected in the inclusive approach of the MSSD Objectives 2 and 5.

26. The discussion raised the issue of the lack of available disaggregated data to monitor gender equality and social inclusion aspects of sustainable development, e.g. in the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard.

Conclusions:

27. The MCSD welcomed the UNEP/MAP system contribution to the recent global and regional events that has highlighted the relevance of the regional dimension and resulted in an increased attention to the work on sustainable development in the Mediterranean and to the visibility and impact of the UNEP/MAP system.

28. The MCSD welcomed the exchange of experiences between Contracting Parties represented at the meeting and having participated in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2016 and 2017, i.e. Egypt, France, Montenegro, Morocco, Turkey, and Slovenia. These experiences have to be considered as an effective mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and a source of inspiration for other Mediterranean countries which would like to participate in the process.

29. The MCSD urged Contracting Parties which are planning to submit their VNRs to follow a process which meaningfully involves relevant stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, NGOs, private sector, academia/scientists, etc.) throughout the process.

30. The MCSD emphasized the value of initiatives that are designed and implemented at regional and sub-regional levels and the need to ensure stronger linkages with the HLPF.

31. The MCSD recommended to strengthen the involvement of MCSD members and of all Mediterranean stakeholders in the nexus “gender, environment and the SDGs”. The MCSD recommended that this issue continues to receive attention in the work of the Commission.

B. Sustainability considerations in the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019

32. The working document for this session UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/4 “Sustainability considerations in the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019” was presented by the UNEP/MAP Deputy Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema.

33. In accordance with the mandate of the MCSD, i.e. “*To produce opinions of the overall MAP Work Programme, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP / Barcelona Convention system as a whole*” (Decision IG.22/17), the members of the MCSD were invited to provide opinions on the working document describing the draft MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019.

34. Members of the MCSD appreciated the clarity of the presentation of the MAP Programme of work 2018-2019, linking topics related to specific protocols such as LBS or ICZM (in lines) and topics which are more transversal and cross-cutting such as SCP or climate change (in columns). They highlighted the crucial need that each of the Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 themes addressed by the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019 integrates in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development. They also noted that for UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system’s investment in promoting environmental sustainability and environment-related themes to be fruitful, social and economic development improvements are also required in parallel. As an example, depollution goals are strongly depending on smart pricing policies of waste management services, including by taking into account social considerations such as support to the poorest parts of the society. In this regard, it is important that the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019 pays attention to partnerships with socio-economic stakeholders and the private sector.

Conclusion:

35. The MCSD appreciated the effort of the Secretariat and expressed the opinion that the working document describing the draft MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019 adequately integrates sustainability considerations – and would welcome its approval by the MAP National Focal Points.

V. Agenda item 5: MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring - Good Practices and Challenges Faced

A. MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring Plan

36. The working document for this agenda item UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/5 “Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD 2016-2025): Implementation and Monitoring Plan” was presented by the Secretariat. The intention of this document was to highlight the general timeline of the plan for the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025 and stimulate inputs from the MCSD members on their action within that timeline.

37. Given the fact that the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025 should be a collective effort by all members that goes beyond the responsibilities of the Secretariat, the members of the MCSD were invited to report on their own efforts and plans, both collective and individual, to support the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the work of the MCSD.

38. The MCSD considered that, as a living document, the MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring Plan has to be fed continuously with inputs from the MCSD, the Secretariat and relevant stakeholders, through increased ownership to its implementation by all members.

39. The MCSD confirmed that it is the participation and active role of all stakeholders that will play a decisive role in the delivery of the MSSD 2016-2025, supported and facilitated by the Secretariat, as appropriate. The MCSD is a key structure within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system for supporting the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025. Therefore, both collective efforts of the MCSD as a whole and individual responsibility of MCSD members, MAP partners and observers are of a paramount importance for a joint and successful undertaking.

Conclusions:

40. The MCSD reviewed the MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring Plan and considered it as a living document.

41. The MCSD members agreed to provide inputs in line with their responsibilities and areas of expertise for the completion MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring Plan, in particular regarding the state of play, in order to deliver a state of progress by all MCSD members and the Secretariat as complete as possible. To this end the Secretariat will circulate a document/table to the MCSD members, asking them to fill it with relevant activities they undertake.

42. The meeting reiterated that the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025 is a collective effort and a joint undertaking from all MCSD members, the Secretariat and Mediterranean stakeholders.

B. The Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) of National Strategies for Sustainable Development

43. The information documents for this agenda item UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.4 “SIMPEER Methodological Report” and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.5 “Report of the Peer Review Meeting, Nice, France, 27 April 2017” were presented by the Secretariat. These documents focus on the context and background, methodological approach, and the outputs of the SIMPEER 2016-2017 pilot test.

44. The volunteer Contracting Parties that participated in the SIMPEER pilot test in 2016-2017, namely France, Montenegro and Morocco, were invited to present their national reports, the outputs of the pilot test in their countries and their proposals for the next phase of the SIMPEER process. General conclusions from the three Contracting Parties are reproduced in Annex VI.

45. The interactive discussion that followed focused on capitalization, ways to further raise the added-value of SIMPEER and of capacity building opportunities, as well as the way forward for the next biennium. In particular, there was an overall wish to build upon the success of first exercise with new volunteer Contracting Parties but still involving the three volunteer Parties of the pilot phase 2016-2017. Inter alia, the organization of regional workshops on shared challenges and issues of common interest such as environmental taxation or bilateral twinning were also proposed, as well as to carry out

a specific exercise comparing the targets of NSSDs, the MSSD 2016-2025 and the SDGs, in order to identify possible gaps and to clarify what is of national, regional or global responsibility.

Conclusions:

- 46. The MCSD welcomed with deep interest the work done by the Secretariat, through its Plan Bleu/RAC, and the very interesting results of the SIMPEER pilot test.**
- 47. Building on the positive output of the pilot test edition of the SIMPEER and based on the presentations given by the 3 volunteer Contracting Parties involved in the process in 2016-2017, i.e. France, Montenegro and Morocco, the MCSD recommended to further implement the SIMPEER during the next biennium, as a tool to strengthen linkages between the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, the VNRs presented at the HLPF, the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025, and the NSSDs. The MCSD recommended also to disseminate the outputs of this innovative activity at all levels and to further involve stakeholders.**
- 48. The MCSD welcomed that two members of the MCSD representing Contracting Parties, namely Egypt and Tunisia, expressed their interest to participate in the SIMPEER during the next biennium.**
- 49. The MCSD invited the Secretariat to call for an expression of interest in order to identify additional candidates, especially from the Northern and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean basin.**
- 50. The MCSD recommended the Contracting Parties to mobilize sufficient resources for this activity in the MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2018-2019.**
- 51. The MCSD also recommended to involve MCSD members in this process, particularly the non-Contracting Parties, i.e. stakeholders. A more targeted strategy should be planned to disseminate related best practices on different aspects of NSSD/MSSD implementation and their linkages with SDGs to larger audiences.**

C. Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard

52. The working and information documents for this agenda item UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/6 “Proposed List of MSSD Indicators” and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.3 “Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard” were presented by the Secretariat through its Plan Bleu/RAC (Mr. Jean-Pierre Giraud).
53. The Secretariat presented the participatory process implemented in 2016-2017 for building the new Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard and the Proposed List of MSSD Indicators.
54. The MCSD members were then invited to comment on the draft dashboard and on the list of proposed indicators for submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting and, consequently, to COP 20.
55. The MCSD considered that the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard and the proposed MSSD indicators are necessary to ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025. This indicators’ framework should be populated with reliable data from existing sources of information collected through existing reporting channels to avoid duplication of efforts and unnecessary reporting burden to Contracting Parties, in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
56. The MCSD considered the list of proposed indicators as a living document to be continually assessed and updated in order to address the themes of the MSSD 2016-2025 in a balanced way, in synergy with the on-going work for the further elaboration of the global SDGs indicator framework and implementation at national level.
57. In this regard, the core set of indicators should correspond to “priority indicators” and could be further enriched and/or adapted, at a later stage, following reliable data availability, with other relevant indicators complementing or substituting already listed ones. For instance, the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) – which corresponds to an action recommended by the MSSD 2016-2025 – will be a process to be regularly monitored, since

Contracting Parties will be reporting on national progress based on the action plan of this regional strategy.

58. The working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/7 “Draft MED 2050 Roadmap – Towards a New Foresight Study on Environment and Development in the Mediterranean” was also presented by the Secretariat through the President of Plan Bleu/RAC, Mr. Thierry Lavoux, who recalled that the MTS includes among its Indicative Key Outputs “*scenarios and prospective development analysis in the long term*” (1.4.1) and that the MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017 (Decision IG.22/20) includes a specific Main Activity 1.4.1.3 “*Develop a roadmap for the preparation of Med2050 report*”.

59. The MCSD considered that the last MAP foresight exercise was performed in 2005-2006, over ten years ago, and that the socio-economic, environmental and governance context in the Mediterranean has completely changed since then. Therefore, it is essential to include this perspective of rapid changes in MAP policies: MED2050 should provide valuable information on future developments based on science-based scenarios and on anticipating actions to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

Conclusions:

60. The MCSD reviewed the list of proposed indicators and made several suggestions. Following discussions, the MCSD recommended the list of proposed indicators as presented in Annex IV for submission to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 20 for consideration, as a part of an overall draft Decision on the MSSD 2016-2025 and the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean.

61. In general, the MCSD considers the list of proposed indicators as a living document to be periodically updated and improved in the future, based *inter alia* on the outcome of the ongoing exercise on data collection, in order to address the themes of the MSSD 2016-2025 in a balanced way.

62. In parallel of the discussion on the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard, the MCSD expressed the need for a new foresight analysis and new scenarios on the environment and sustainable development in the region, pointing out that objectives for 2025 are very close and that there is a need to look at a longer term vision (horizon 2050).

63. There was a general consensus on the draft MED2050 Roadmap proposed by the Secretariat, through its Plan Bleu/RAC, and the MCSD considered this as a very useful endeavor.

64. The MCSD requested the Coordinating Unit and Plan Bleu/RAC to further elaborate the draft MED2050 Roadmap for inclusion in the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019, and submission to the MAP National Focal Points at their next meeting (September 2017) and then to COP 20 (December 2017).

65. The MCSD also requested to pay more attention to participatory approaches towards large stakeholder consultations, notably by electronic means (web platform), in addition of involvement of national governments.

D. Flagship initiatives

E. Good practices, national and regional actions

66. The progress made towards the implementation of MSSD flagship initiatives and regional and national actions was presented during an interactive session.

67. The 17th Meeting of the MCSD discussed the flagship initiatives which are in progress, as well as good practices and national and regional actions under the six Objectives of the MSSD 2016-2025.

68. MSSD Objective 1

Focusing on the Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas (MPA Trust Fund) and on the target of 10% protection for the Mediterranean Sea and coast in line with the SDG target 14.5, the session was moderated by WWF MedPo (Mr. Paolo Lombardi), who introduced brief presentations from:

- Med-SDSN (Ms. Christina Fossi), *Plastic Blusters Project – Impact of Marine litter on Mediterranean Biodiversity*
- MedPAN (presentation delivered by the Secretariat on behalf of MedPAN), *The System of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas: Challenges and Priorities*; and,
- SPA/RAC (Mr. Khalil Attia), *The Trust Fund for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPA Trust Fund)*.

While a major effort is necessary to achieve the target of 10% protection, the MPA Trust Fund has been formally established and has the potential to become a key tool to fund innovative management in MPAs, facilitate set up on new MPAs, and integrate national funding. Breakthrough initiatives are also necessary to achieve a turning point on recovery of Mediterranean fisheries.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

69. MSSD Objective 2

The session was moderated by CEDARE (Ms. Dahlia Kesseba), who introduced a brief presentation from IUCN Med (Ms. Violeta Barrios), *The IUCN Green List of Protected Areas in the Mediterranean region – Progress towards the implementation of MSSD Flagship initiatives*.

Recognized as the flagship initiative under MSSD Objective 2, the IUCN Green List aims at encouraging, achieving, and promoting effective, equitable and successful protected areas. The overarching objective is to increase the number of protected and conserved areas that are effectively and equitably managed and deliver conservation outcome.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

70. MSSD Objective 3

The session was moderated by UCLG (Ms. Catherine Simo), who introduced brief presentations from:

- MedCities (Mr. Oriol Barba), *The Sustainable Urban Toolbox for the Mediterranean*; and,
- The Secretariat, *The Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA)* (information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.6).

The IEFCA is implemented by the Secretariat, while the Sustainable Urban Toolbox for the Mediterranean is benefiting of a relevant proposal from MedCities in cooperation with other partners.

The IEFCA corresponds to COP 19 Decision IG.22/19; relevant applications by 17 Mediterranean cities/municipalities are under examination by the technical committee in view of the award conferring during a specific side event at COP 20. In parallel, building on existing partnerships and available tools, MedCities is committed to develop the Sustainable Urban Toolbox to be used, adapted and updated by Mediterranean local authorities and agencies.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

71. MSSD Objective 4

The session was moderated by MEPIELAN Centre (Dr. Alexandros Kailis), who introduced a brief presentation from Prof. Wolfgang Cramer (invited speaker) on *The Mediterranean Expert Network on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC – information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.9)*.

Prof. Cramer explained that MedECC works towards two directions, which are of specific interest for the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, as follows: (i) producing improved assessments and a comprehensive synthesis of global

change knowledge in the Mediterranean region; and, (ii) building a regional Science-Policy Interface on climatic and other environmental changes across the Mediterranean.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

72. MSSD Objective 5

The session was moderated by RAED (Dr. Emad Adly), who introduced brief presentations from:

- ANIMA (Ms. Zoé Luçon), *Supporting the Private Sector Answers to Global Sustainable Development Challenges - Synergies between the MSSD and 2 initiatives led by ANIMA*;
- SCP/RAC (Mr. Matthew Lagod and Mr. Daniel Hires), *Green entrepreneurship as a key leverage for implementing the MSSD 2016-2025*.

The information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.7 was introduced by SCP/RAC, who delivered a presentation referring to the successful example of the SWITCH MED Programme and to the Eco-Design Award of the Catalan Waste Agency. In addition, ANIMA delivered a complementary presentation on the EDILE project (Economic Development through Inclusive and Local Empowerment), which is developing innovative tools, key indicators, networking, and labeling approach for improving the local impacts of investment projects in Mediterranean countries.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

73. MSSD Objective 6

The session was moderated by Malta (Dr. Marguerite Camilleri), who introduced brief presentations from:

- MIO-ECSDE (Ms. Vasiliki Malotidi), *The implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD)* (information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/Inf.8); and,
- UNECE (Mr. Theodore Koukis), *The Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)*.

The moderator noted that the governance theme links UNEP/MAP to other key international bodies and frameworks such as UNESCO and UNECE. She noted also that, in terms of governance, the Mediterranean region already has certain advanced instruments in place, such as the MSSD 2016-2025 and the MSESD.

The report delivered by the moderator is provided in Annex V.

Overall discussion:

74. The MCSD appreciated the presentations by MCSD members and other actors, and expressed support to the continuation of on-going activities, such as the support of green entrepreneurship in the region, for example through the SWITCH MED Programme.

75. The important role of stakeholders in initiating, and galvanising support for sustainable development initiatives was also emphasized. In this respect, the MCSD considered that the MSSD flagship initiatives and the actions with targets should be the priority focus for the implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025.

76. The MCSD urged the Contracting Parties, MCSD Members, MAP Partners, the Secretariat and other actors to increase ownership in delivering the MSSD 2016-2025 as a collective effort and to undertake actions to launch the MSSD 2016-2025 flagship initiatives which are not yet implemented or which are at a very early stage of implementation – and which are listed below:

- Under Objective 3: *Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction;*

- Under Objective 5: *Create and promote a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation;*
- Under Objective 5: *Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels;*
- Under Objective 6: *Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;*
- Under Objective 6: *Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments;*
- Under Objective 6: *Establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of the environment.*

Conclusions:

77. The MCSD welcomed the efforts of its members and the Secretariat for the implementation of MSSD 2016-2025 flagship initiatives and regional and national actions.

78. The MCSD appreciated the presentations by MCSD members and other actors listed below, and expressed support to the continuation of the on-going activities:

- **The Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas, with remarkable efforts from and synergies between WWF Med Po, Med-SDSN, SPA/RAC, and MedPAN;**
- **The “IUCN Green List of Protected Areas” in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of protected areas managing bodies, presented by IUCN Med;**
- **The Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA), initiated as a pilot edition by the Secretariat, with support from the Government of Turkey;**
- **The creation of a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with an innovative and relevant proposal from MedCities to mobilize resources and existing partnerships;**
- **The establishment of a regional science-policy interface mechanism on climate change, thanks to the ambitious and promising Mediterranean Expert Network on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC);**
- **The SWITCH MED Programme and SCP/RAC’s activities to foster green entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region, as well as the successful example of the Eco-Design Award for businesses developed by the Catalan Waste Agency;**
- **The EDILE project (Economic Development Through Inclusive and Local Empowerment) for improving the local impacts of investment projects, presented by ANIMA;**
- **The implementation of the “Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD)” disseminated by MIO ECSDE;**
- **The implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, with a specific presentation from a representative of UNECE.**

79. The MCSD urged the Contracting Parties, MCSD Members, MAP Partners, the Secretariat and other actors to undertake actions to launch the MSSD 2016-2025 flagship initiatives which are not yet implemented.

80. In relation to the flagship initiative on a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation, the MCSD welcomed the experience of the Catalan Waste Agency in

the organization of an Eco-Design Award, which can provide a strong basis for this MSSD 2016-2025 flagship initiative.

81. The MCSD called upon its members to provide strong support and leadership in advancing the implementation of the flagship initiatives as a contribution to MSSD and SDGs implementation, and making this work known at global and regional fora.

VI. Agenda item 6: Contribution of the MCSD to COP 20

82. Prepared in accordance with the advisory nature and the mandate of the MCSD, the working document for this agenda item UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.441/8 “Preparation of COP 20” was presented by the Secretariat.

83. Taking into account the decision of the Bureau for the COP 20 theme, which is “*Implementation of SDG 14 within the 2030 Agenda, with a Focus on Marine Pollution and Biodiversity*”, the MCSD members discussed various proposals and suggestions as inputs of the MCSD to COP 20.

84. The following views and recommendations were expressed:

- The implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols is a most important way to achieve SDG 14 in the Mediterranean as part of delivering the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. It is also important for all stakeholders to work together under the common regional strategic frameworks, notably the MSSD 2016-2025 and other related strategies and action plans such as the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (SCP Action Plan).
- It is important to ensure that all countries have political ownership and leadership in the issues tackled by the COP 20 theme. These issues should be analyzed from a governance perspective, promoting education and research for sustainable development. In this regard, it is recommended to explore new legal concepts related to governance such as the “public trust approach”, which constitutes an interesting legal perspective for the coherent implementation of a number of SDGs.
- The Contracting Parties are encouraged to update national legislation and policy frameworks to adequately reflect the provisions of international conventions and multilateral environmental agreements as well as of international commitments. The aim is to put SDG 14 in the center of national agendas for sustainable development in Mediterranean countries, following innovative ways in terms of institutional setup to foster synergies between various ministries/departments and by effectively engaging local authorities, the private sector, civil society, etc.
- The Contracting Parties should also increase efforts to break down the “silos” and enhance policy coherence for sustainable development by strengthening interlinkages across all policy sectors and to enhance synergies between the various frameworks, initiatives and activities at the regional, the sub-regional and national levels.
- The implementation of SDG 14 implies to take into account a large series of factors and to involve a wide range of actors. Regarding the private sector, it was noted that cruise ships and cruise ship tourism represent emerging and increasing activities that have to be better monitored, *inter alia* regarding impacts on air pollution. New policies, initiatives and instruments should pay attention to the need for adapting harbors and port services to greener energy sources, together with monitoring measures.
- Marine pollution and its reduction are multifaceted, with cumulative pressures and impacts that should be tackled in a coordinated and integrated manner, mobilizing best available knowledge for depollution. Policy responses have also to be explored on sustainable spatial planning, both at sea (marine spatial planning - MSP) and on the coast (Integrated Coastal Zone Management – ICZM), and by promoting a sustainable blue and green economy

(including solid waste management, plastic recycling, etc.). Marine litter/marine plastic pollution is a key challenge for healthy seas and the MAP system should look at it also from a socio-economic perspective.

- Regarding Biodiversity, it is important to have in mind two very strong calls for actions of the last 12 months in the Mediterranean; e.g. (i) the Tangier Declaration to scale-up the MPA Roadmap; and, (ii) the MEDFISH4EVER Malta Conference Declaration calling to specific actions and efforts to recover fish stocks and marine ecosystems. In addition, it was recommended to improve knowledge on impacts on biodiversity of marine litter/plastics, as well as to connect oceans health and human health. It was also suggested to tackle challenges regarding invasive species, in link with climate change impacts.
- COP 20 is also considered as a good opportunity to call for action from Ministers on integrated information management; there is a need to feed assessment reports (state of the environment and development, Quality Status Report, etc.) and statistical databases, taking advantage of the emerging developments and increasing opportunities for the Science-Policy Interface.

Conclusions:

85. Taking into account the decision of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention about the COP 20 theme, i.e. “Implementation of SDG 14 within the 2030 Agenda, with a Focus on Marine Pollution and Biodiversity”, the MCSD members discussed various inputs of the MCSD to COP 20.

86. In accordance with the MCSD Terms of Reference, i.e. “MCSD recommendations will be presented for consideration to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, following discussion at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points with the aim of advising on making practical and effective use of the MSSD and on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols”, the MCSD contribution to COP 20 are reflected in the present report to be submitted as recommendations to the MAP National Focal Points for their consideration in view of COP 20.

87. Among the relevant ideas submitted by the participants, the MCSD highlighted that marine litter and pollution of plastics have to be considered as key challenges for healthy seas. Together with Biodiversity and MPAs, these issues must be tackled from a socio-economic perspective – and not only through an environmental point of view.

88. The MCSD urged the Contracting Parties to confirm their support to the MSSD 2016-2025 implementation and monitoring, insisting on the paramount importance of a full delivery of the flagship initiatives and regional and national actions.

VII. Agenda item 7: Next Meeting of the MCSD and Any Other Matters

89. The MCSD welcomed Montenegro’s expression of interest to host the 18th Meeting of the MCSD.

90. COMPSUD suggested “coastal erosion” as a possible theme to be considered by the Steering Committee for the next MCSD Meeting.

91. The MCSD also discussed possible dates for the 18th Meeting of the MCSD, to be set for June/July 2019.

Conclusions:

92. The MCSD accepted with gratitude the offer by Montenegro to host the 18th Meeting of the MCSD.

93. The Secretariat will inform the members of the MCSD about the dates of the 18th Meeting of the MCSD in the coming months.

VIII. Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

94. The MCSD agreed on the draft Conclusions and Recommendations, which are presented in their final form in the present document.

IX. Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

95. The meeting was closed at 12:30 on 6 July 2017 by the President of the MCSD Steering Committee. The closing remarks are provided in Annex II.

Conclusions:

96. The MCSD congratulated and thanked its Steering Committee for the work and guidance provided to the Secretariat during this biennium and its contribution to ensure ownership, implementation, and monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025.

97. The MCSD payed tribute to the government of Greece for hosting the 17th Meeting of the MCSD.

98. The MCSD in particular recommended to its President and to the Secretariat to inform the forthcoming MAP National Focal Points Meeting (September 2017) and the COP 20 (December 2017) on its outcome and recommendations.

Annex I
List of Participants

Annex I: List of Participants**MEMBERS OF THE MCSD / MEMBRES DE LA CMDD**

ALBANIA / ALBANIE	<p>Ms. Ilda Shahu Expert on EIA, SEA and Environmental Standards Directory of Environment Ministry of Environment</p> <p>Tel: +355692964531 Email: Ilda.Shahu@moe.gov.al, ilda_shahu@hotmail.com</p>
ANIMA Investment Network (Cooperation platform for economic development in the Mediterranean)	<p>Ms. Zoé Luçon Key Partnership and Publication Director</p> <p>Tel: +334 9611 1817 Fax: +334 9611 6761 Email: Zoe.lucon@anima.coop</p>
Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)	<p>Dr. Emad Adly General Coordinator</p> <p>Tel: +202 2516 1519 Email: eadly@hotmail.com</p>
Association of Italian Local Agenda 21	<p>Mr. Emilio D'Alessio Spokesperson Agende 21 Locali Italiane</p> <p>Tel: +390 5920 9434 Email: emilio@dalessio.eu</p>
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE HERZEGOVINE	<p>Mr. Tarik Kupusovic HEIS director MAP B&H FP and MCSD member</p> <p>Tel: +387 3320 7949 Fax: +387 3321 2466 Email: tarik.kupusovic@heis.ba</p>
Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	<p>Ms. Dahlia Abbas Kesseba Senior Regional Programme Specialist</p> <p>Tel: +2012 2217 8073 Email: dkesseba@yahoo.com</p>
Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)	<p>Dr. Dionysia Theodora Avgerinopoulou Chair</p> <p>Tel: +3069 4401 0141 Email: isidora2001@hotmail.com</p>

EGYPT / ÉGYPTE	<p>Ms. Gehan El Sakka Head of the Central Department of International Relation and Cooperation and Technical Support Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency</p> <p>Tel: +201113357651 Email: gelsakka14@gmail.com</p>
FRANCE	<p>Mr. François Guerber General inspector for Environment and Sustainable Development Environments, resources and risks Ministry of Transition for Ecology and Solidarity</p> <p>Tel: +331 4081 2354 Email: francois.guerber@developpement-durable.gouv.fr</p>
GREECE / GRÈCE	<p>Ms. Baritaki Cristina Secretary General Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0696 9850 Email: ch.baritaki@prv.ypeka.gr</p> <p>Ms. Maria Papaioannou National Expert Dept.of European and International Environmental Affairs Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy</p> <p>Tel: + 3021 0696 9313 Email: m.papaioannou@prv.ypeka.gr</p> <p>Mr. Nikolaos Mavrakis Head of the Department of European and International Environmental Affairs Hellenic Ministry of Environment And Energy</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0696 9900 Email: n.mavrakis@prv.ypeka.gr</p>
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) / Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature (UICN)	<p>Ms. Violeta Barrios Species Programme Officer Mediterranean Species Programme Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation</p> <p>Tel: +349 5202 8430 Email: violeta.barrios@iucn.org</p>

ISRAEL / ISRAËL	<p>Ms. Rotem Shamay Head of Policy Planning Unit Ministry of Environmental Protection</p> <p>Tel: +972 2655 3851 Email: RotemSh@sviva.gov.il</p>
LIBYA / LIBYE	<p>Dr. Ali Elkekli Director Technical Cooperation & Consultation Environment General Authority</p> <p>Tel: +21 8219 1377 7246 Email: arelkekli@gmail.com</p>
MALTA / MALTE	<p>Dr. Marguerite Camilleri Unit Manager International Affairs Environment & Resources Authority</p> <p>Tel: +356 2292 3514 Email: marguerite.b.camilleri@era.org.mt</p>
Mediterranean Cities Network (MedCities)	<p>Mr. Oriol Barba Executive Director</p> <p>Tel: +349 3506 9351 Email: obarba@amb.cat, contact@medcities.org</p>
Mediterranean Information Office For Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)	<p>Ms. Anastasia Roniotes Head Officer</p> <p>Tel: +30 210 3247490 Email: roniotes@mio-ecsde.org</p> <p>Ms. Vasiliki Malotidi Programme Officer</p> <p>Tel: +210 324 7490 Email: malotidi@mio-ecsde.org</p> <p>Dr. Thomais Vlachogianni Programme/Policy Officer</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0324 7490 Email: vlachogianni@mio-ecsde.org</p>
Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation (MEPIELAN) Centre	<p>Pr. Evangelos Raftopoulos Professor of International Law & International Environmental Law Founding Director, MEPIELAN Centre Director of Postgraduate Studies Panteion University of Athens UN Consultant</p>

	<p>Tel: +3021 0920 1841 Email: evanraft@otenet.gr</p> <p>Dr. Alexandros Kailis Researcher</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0931 0992 Email: alexkailis76@gmail.com</p> <p>Dr. Sokratis Konstantinos Zachos Researcher</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0920 1884 Email: socrateszachos@gmail.com</p>
Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Med-SDSN)	<p>Ms. Maria Cristina Fossi Professor Siena University</p> <p>Tel: +3932 0437 4459 Email: fossi@unisi.it</p>
MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO	<p>Ms. Marija Mijuskovic Division for Sustainable Development and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism</p> <p>Tel: +382 2044 6388 Email: marija.mijuskovic@mrt.gov.me</p>
MOROCCO / MAROC	<p>Mr. Rachid Firadi Head of International Cooperation Division Secretary of State In Charge of Sustainable Development</p> <p>Tel: +2125 3757 0640 Email: firadi@environnement.gov.ma, firadienvironnement@gmail.com</p>
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE	<p>Mr. Mitja Bricelj Secretary Directorate for Water and Investments Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning</p> <p>Tel: +386 1478 7477 Email: mitja.bricelj@gov.si</p>
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	<p>Mr. Jorge Andreu Economic and Commercial Counsellor Embassy of Spain</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0724 6980</p>

	<p>Email: atenas@comercio.mineco.es, jjandreu@comercio.mineco.es</p> <p>Mr. Eduardo Obispo Market Analyst Economic and Commercial Office Embassy of Spain</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0724 6980 Email: atenas@comercio.mineco.es, eobispo@comercio.mineco.es</p> <p>Mr. Antonio Fajardo Economic And Commercial Officer Embassy of Spain</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0724 6980 Email: atenas@comercio.mineco.es, afajardo@comercio.mineco.es</p> <p>Ms. Maria Carillo Economic and Commercial Officer Economic and Commercial Office Embassy of Spain</p> <p>Tel: +3021 0724 6980 Email: mcarrillo@comercio.mineco.es</p>
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	<p>Mr. Lotfi Ben Said Director General Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment</p> <p>Tel: +216 7024 3911 Email: b.said.lotfi@gmail.com</p>
TURKEY / TURQUIE	<p>Mr. Musa Rahmanlar Planning Expert Environment and Sustainable Development Dpt. Ministry of Development</p> <p>Tel: +9031 2294 6545 Email: mrahmanlar@dpt.gov.tr</p> <p>Ms. Nazlı Yenil Expert MED POL Focal Point of Turkey Marine and Coastal Management Department General Directorate of Environmental Management Ministry of Environment and Urbanization</p> <p>Tel: +9031 2586 3132 Email: nazli.yenal@csb.gov.tr</p>

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat / Secrétariat de l'Union pour la Méditerranée(UpM)	Mr. Almotaz Abadi Managing Director Water and Environment Tel: +349 3521 4162 Email: almotaz.abadi@ufmsecretariat.org
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) - Mediterranean Commission / Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis (CGLU) - Commission méditerranéenne	Ms. Catherine Simo Project Officer Tel: +334 6966 3684 Email: c.simo@territoires-solidaires.fr
World Wide Fund for Nature – Mediterranean Programme Office (WWF MedPO)	Mr. Paolo Lombardi Director Tel: +3906 8449 7381 Fax: +390 6841 3866 Email: plombardi@wwfmedpo.org

**INVITED SPEAKERS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS / INTERVENANTS
INVITES ET ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES**

<p>United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE)</p>	<p>Ms. Janet Kabeberi-Macharia Head, Gender and Safeguards Unit, Policy and Programme Division</p> <p>Tel: +25 4762 5142 Email: janet.macharia@unep.org</p>
<p>Aarhus Convention Secretariat, Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) / Secrétariat de la Convention Aarhus, Division Environnement, Commission Economique pour l'Europe des Nations Unies (UNECE)</p>	<p>Mr. Theodore Koukis Associate Environmental Affairs Officer</p> <p>Tel: +412 2917 1324 Email: theodore.koukis@unece.org</p>
<p>Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology / CNRS - France</p>	<p>Prof. Wolfgang Cramer Directeur de Recherche Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology</p> <p>Tel: +334 4290 8486 Email: wolfgang.cramer@imbe.fr</p>

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

<p>European Environment Agency (EEA) / Agence Européenne pour l'environnement (AEE)</p>	<p>Ms. Cécile Roddier-Quefelec Project coordinator - ENI SEIS Support Mechanism South European neighborhood policy activities – Mediterranean area cooperation</p> <p>Tel: +45 3343 5940 Email: cecile.roddier-quefelec@eea.europa.eu</p>
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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**

**UNEP/MAP
PNUE/PAM**

Mr. Gaetano Leone
Coordinator

Tel: +3021 0727 3101
Email: gaetano.leone@unep.org

Ms. Tatjana Hema
Deputy Coordinator

Tel: +3021 0727 3115
Email: tatjana.hema@unep.org

Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis
Programme Management Officer

Tel: +3021 0727 3132
Email: ilias.mavroeidis@unep.org

Mr. Julien Le Tellier
Programme Management Officer

Tel: +3021 0727 3133
Email: Julien.Letellier@unep.org

MED POL

Ms. Jelena Knezevic
Programme Management Officer

Tel: +3021 0727 3116
Email: Jelena.Knezevic@unep.org

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE
(INFO/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITES
REGIONALES POUR L'INFORMATION
ET LA COMMUNICATION (CAR/INFO)**

Ms. Giuseppina Monacelli
Director

Tel: +3906 5007 4471
Email: giuseppina.monacelli@isprambiente.it,
giuseppina.monacelli@info-rac.org

**PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY
CENTRE (BP/RAC) / CENTRE
D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES PLAN BLEU
(CAR/PB)**

Mr. Thierry Lavoux
President

Tel: +336 0703 8002
Email: t.lavoux@gmail.com

Mr. Jean-Pierre Giraud
Deputy General Secretary

Tel: +334 9238 7130
Fax: +334 9238 7131
Email: jpgiraud@planbleu.org

**SPECIAL PROTECTED AREAS
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE
(SPA/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITES
REGIONALES POUR LES AIRES
SPECIALEMENT PROTEGEES
(CAR/ASP)**

**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND
PRODUCTION REGIONAL ACTIVITY
CENTRE (SCP/RAC) / CENTRE
D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES POUR LA
CONSOMMATION ET LA PRODUCTION
DURABLES (CAR/CPD)**

Mr. Spyridon Kouvelis
Senior Advisor

Tel: +3021 0362 2966
Email: skouvelis@hol.gr

Mr. Khalil Attia
Director

Tel: +216 7120 6465
Fax: +216 7120 6486
Email: director@rac-spa.org

Mr. Matthew Lagod
Project Manager

Tel: +349 3553 8784
Email: matthew.lagod@scprac.org

Mr. Daniel Hires
Project Manager

Tel: +346 1086 2982
Email: daniel.hires@scprac.org

Mr. Artur Nadcrinicinii
Associate Expert

Tel: +3469 3826 1829
Email: arturpas@gmail.com

Annex II
Welcome Addresses & Speeches

Welcome address by the Secretary General of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, Ms. Christina Baritaki

Colleagues,

Esteemed guests, Mr Coordinator,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our great honour and pleasure to host the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development in Athens. Despite the original planning for holding this Meeting in France, plans have changed and the Government of Greece and in particular our Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, has happily offered to host this Meeting, so here we are in Athens once again.

As the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the last 15 months, I had the privilege to gain a very good insight of the work that is being carried out by the MAP/Barcelona Convention system including its protocols, the various RACs, the Coordination Unit, its various components, and projects. This work with regard to promoting sustainable development on the regional level is of tremendous value and importance to translate the vague idea of promoting a model of development which is holistic and balanced, and which integrates all three dimensions – the social, the environmental and the economic – at the same time, in concrete and practical actions.

In particular now with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the global level, this work of the MAP system becomes even more crucial, as a bridge between a global challenge and an opportunity at the national level to promote structural changes with positive impacts on local economies, environment and society.

In this context, the role of this Commission, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD) established already in 1995, is very important as it serves as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties and other regional actors to assist in their efforts to integrate environmental considerations in socioeconomic programmes and, in so doing, promoting sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean. It is also unique in its composition, with Contracting Parties and stakeholders participating on an equal footing.

Our region, is a pioneer also for its revised Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 that was elaborated by this Group and adopted in COP 19, here in Athens, in this very place, in February 2016.

During the next 2.5 days, you will discuss and provide your guidance and recommendations on important issues like:

- the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025 that sets the foundation and vision to integrate sustainability into the overall work of the MAP/Barcelona Convention system;
- the elaboration of a list of concrete indicators to measure progress in achieving the MSSD;
- innovative tools like the SIMPEER mechanism and its linkages to the global HLPF and VNR (Voluntary National Reviews) process;
- you will discuss key recent developments like the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference that took place in New York, a month ago, where MAP participated very actively, and I also had the pleasure to personally participate;
- and finally you will also be providing your input to the preparations for COP 20, also taking into account the results of the recent Bureau Meeting that took place in Athens 2 weeks ago, regarding the theme of COP 20, that suggested to be the “Implementation of SDG 14 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a Focus on Marine Pollution and Biodiversity”.

Unfortunately due to pressing commitments in the Ministry I am not able to attend the whole Meeting. I wish you every success in your discussions and deliberations and, once more, a very pleasant stay in Athens.

Opening address by the outgoing President of the MCSD Steering Committee, elected at the 16th Meeting of the MCSD in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2015, Mr. Rachid Firadi

Madame la Secrétaire générale du Ministère de l'Environnement de la Grèce

Monsieur le Coordinateur du Plan d'Action pour la Méditerranée

Mesdames et messieurs les membres de la CMDD, observateurs, intervenants et participants,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

C'est un honneur et un privilège pour moi d'ouvrir les travaux de la 17^{ème} Réunion de la Commission méditerranéenne du développement durable.

Je voudrais saisir cette opportunité pour vous souhaiter la bienvenue et surtout exprimer, au nom de la Commission, mes sincères remerciements au Gouvernement de la Grèce et son Ministère de l'Environnement, d'avoir accepté d'abriter cette réunion.

Mes remerciements vont également au Secrétariat de la Convention de Barcelone pour toutes les dispositions prises sur le plan technique et logistique pour l'organisation de cette réunion.

Mesdames et Messieurs ;

Les deux dernières années, au cours desquelles le Maroc a assuré la présidence de la CMDD, ont été marquées, à l'échelle globale, par l'adoption de décisions historiques dans le domaine de l'environnement et du développement durable avec une contribution très active de notre région à ces processus.

L'Agenda 2030 de développement durable et ses ODD, l'Accord de Paris sur le Climat, la COP22 sur le Climat à Marrakech et les MEDCOP de Marseille et de Tanger ont été des moments importants de mobilisation de la communauté internationale pour faire face aux défis du développement durable.

Cette dynamique globale a été mise à profit au niveau méditerranéen pour l'adoption de la Stratégie méditerranéenne pour le développement durable (SMDD 2016-2025), lors de la 19^{ème} Conférence des Parties à la Convention de Barcelone, organisée à Athènes en février 2016. Une stratégie qui constitue un document d'orientation stratégique intégré permettant à tous les partenaires et parties prenantes de traduire l'Agenda 2030 et ses ODD aux échelles régionale, sous-régionale, nationale et locale.

La COP19 a aussi adopté la Réforme de la CMDD, portant son nombre de membres à 40, avec la création d'un nouveau groupe de parties prenantes, celui des Parlementaires. Cette réforme précise aussi le rôle, les modalités et les règles de fonctionnement de la Commission.

Je suis convaincu que cette adhésion élargie à la Commission, telle que décidée à la COP19, ouvre la voie à une opportunité plus large pour un dialogue multi-acteur constructif dans la Région, ce qui sera certainement bénéfique et productif pour les années à venir.

Je suis également très satisfait qu'à la fin de mon mandat, la CMDD assume pleinement le rôle important qui est le sien au sein du système PAM et dans la région méditerranéenne, pour un dialogue avancé sur les problématiques liées du développement durable.

Mesdames et Messieurs ;

En tant que président achevant son mandat de deux années, je suis très heureux que la mise en œuvre de la SMDD montre déjà des réalisations concrètes, comme nous allons le voir au cours de ces deux journées et demie de réunion.

Au-delà de la réforme constitutive de la Commission, cet exercice biennal 2016-2017 a été marqué par le lancement, de manière innovante, du Mécanisme simplifié d'examen par les pairs, le SIMPEER, en tant que cadre d'amélioration et d'apprentissage mutuels pour promouvoir un dialogue entre les pays méditerranéens sur l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des Stratégies nationales de développement durable (SNDD). Ce mécanisme d'examen par les pairs représente un incitatif important pour assurer l'examen des SNDD au regard de la SMDD 2016-2025 et de l'Agenda 2030.

Je voudrais, ici et aujourd'hui, remercier la France, le Monténégro et le Maroc qui se sont résolument portés volontaires pour participer à cette première édition du SIMPEER, tout en encourageant les autres Parties contractantes à s'engager dans ce processus au cours des années à venir. A cet égard, il est bon de noter que ce mécanisme de « Peer review » fait écho aux Examens volontaires nationaux du Forum politique de haut niveau des Nations Unies (HLPF). Je voudrais saisir cette opportunité pour féliciter le Secrétariat de la Convention de Barcelone et son Centre d'activités régionales Plan Bleu, pour l'excellent travail effectué pour mener à bien cette activité innovante du SIMPEER.

Cet exercice biennal a vu également, un certain nombre d'initiatives phares et actions régionales lancées. Néanmoins, il nous appartient d'engager des actions pour les faire aboutir et atteindre les cibles et objectifs ambitieux que nous nous sommes fixés.

Nous pouvons, aussi nous réjouir du fait que, grâce aux efforts des Parties contractantes, des partenaires du PAM et du Secrétariat, la Région Méditerranée ait reçu une très haute attention lors de la récente Conférence des Nations Unies « Our Ocean » à New York, en lien avec la mise en œuvre de l'ODD 14.

Mesdames et Messieurs ;

À la fin de mon mandat, je voudrais exprimer ma satisfaction pour le professionnalisme et le soutien que j'ai reçu au cours des deux dernières années de la part de tous les membres de la CMDD et de son comité de pilotage.

Ces remerciements sont tout particulièrement adressés aux membres du Comité de pilotage 2016-2017 de la CMDD, à savoir le CEDARE, la Croatie, la Grèce, Malte, MedCités, le MIO-ECSDE et le Maroc.

Mes remerciements s'adressent aussi à l'Unité de coordination du Plan d'Action pour la Méditerranée et à son Coordinateur, M. Gaetano Leone, pour avoir mobilisé les ressources nécessaires au bon fonctionnement de la Commission, et pour le recrutement d'un poste de Chargé de gestion de programme « Développement socio-économique durable » au sein du département Gouvernance du PAM. Nous nous réjouissons de ce recrutement dans la mesure où la Commission doit être soutenue par des ressources adéquates, avec un personnel à temps plein dédié au développement durable. Ces ressources sont fondamentales pour faciliter l'appropriation, la mise en œuvre et le suivi de la SMDD.

Chers Membres de la CMDD, cher collègues, la Commission a pris de l'ampleur grâce à l'adoption de la SMDD, la Réforme de la CMDD, le lancement du Mécanisme d'examen par les Pairs, et la préparation du nouveau tableau de bord méditerranéen du développement durable.

Il nous appartient, il vous appartient, de poursuivre ces efforts et de continuer de vous impliquer dans le travail de la Commission, en promouvant la SMDD et en œuvrant à sa mise en œuvre dans nos sphères d'influence respectives, et à travers nos programmes, projets et actions à tous les niveaux.

Avant de clore mon intervention, je souhaite exprimer mes meilleurs vœux de succès à la prochaine présidence de la Commission.

Merci encore pour la confiance que vous m'avez donnée.

Je vous souhaite une réunion fructueuse et pleine de succès et vous remercie de votre attention.

Welcome address by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone

Madam General Secretary Christina Baritaki,

Mr. Rachid Firadi, President of the MCSD Steering Committee,

Distinguished Members of the MCSD,

Directors of MAP Regional Activities Centres,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Mediterranean Action Plan and of the Barcelona Convention Secretariat, I welcome you warmly to the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD).

I want to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Greece for their hospitality in this unique historical City of Athens, one of the world's oldest cities.

Athens, centre for the arts and philosophy, cradle of Western civilization, birthplace of democracy, was a powerful city-state during the Antiquity and its destiny was and is anchored to the sea and maritime affairs. Athens, which host the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan since its creation, has a long and auspicious tradition of hosting important UN and Barcelona Convention processes, most recently the 19th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 19), in February 2016.

Madam Secretary-General, I wish to recall with deep appreciation the invaluable support that your country has consistently provided to the MAP and the important contributions that it has made to its success. I wish also to recall how our cooperation is fruitful and dynamic under your Presidency of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention during the current biennium 2016-2017.

Ladies and gentlemen,

After having celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2015-2016, the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system is still the unique institutional cooperation and environmental governance framework gathering the 21 Mediterranean countries and the European Union (EU), as Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, for addressing common issues and challenges of environmental degradation and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea. The UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system is also a model for other regions and regional seas of the world.

The present period is crucial, sensitive and challenging for our region, which is characterized by rapid and profound changes: many Mediterranean countries face economic, social and political concerns and challenges. Our region presents significant environmental, political, and economic challenges, with ecosystems that continue to be under threats. The cumulative pressures are heavy on such limited and vulnerable resources, coastal zones and the marine environment. To ensure good environment status there is a need to focus on enhancing measures that reduce pressures on marine and coastal environment, to stop the decline of endangered species and ecosystem services, to promote resource efficiency and to enhance Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices.

The UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system is also a relevant framework for regional cooperation towards peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. In other words, our mandate is still crucial, ambitious, and relevant towards a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Mediterranean region, in which societies enjoy a high quality of life within healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.

The most recent Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, COP 19, confirmed that the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system continues to be a very relevant and effective regional instrument to implement sustainable development policies into concrete action on priorities agreed at regional and sub-regional levels. In addition to celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Convention,

COP 19 was important to confirm the relevance of the mandate and work of the MAP system, and the renewed confidence of its Contracting Parties and Partners.

At COP 19, a number of strategic documents and policy instruments were delivered, including the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD 2016-2025). The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted an ambitious and remarkable actionable agenda for a responsible use of our Mediterranean natural capital. A responsible use that preserves and enhances the health and productivity of the ecosystems – goods and services – while ensuring human dignity through decent livelihoods for our people and building strong and inclusive economies in our region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was followed up by the process on the development of the SDGs, with an unprecedented public engagement and intense involvement of UN Member States across the globe. This process came to an end in September 2015, with an agreed consensus by the UN General Assembly on “*Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” (the 2030 Agenda), with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

The agreement on the SDGs has been a recognition of the interconnectivity of economic development and environment and of the opportunities offered by green and blue economy, with the first time specifically having an international development goal dedicated to the oceans; i.e. SDG 14. Half of the SDGs directly focuses on environmental issues or address the sustainability of natural resources: from poverty to food and agriculture, to water and sanitation, to energy, human settlements, SCP, climate change, oceans and terrestrial ecosystems. At the same time, over 86 of the targets concern environmental sustainability, including at least one in each of the 17 SDGs.

Regional and sub-regional frameworks are recognized by the 2030 Agenda as facilitating the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda welcomes the cooperation of regional and sub-regional commissions and organizations for follow-up and review and encourages States to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage.

Created in 1996, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable development (MCSD) responds to these provisions. The MCSD is a unique consultative body, devised as a forum for dialogue, communications and proposals for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The Commission brings together, on an equal footing, representatives from the twenty-one riparian States around the Mediterranean and the European Community, and from six stakeholders groups

The Mediterranean region remains and must remain a frontrunner within the Regional Sea Conventions under UNEP auspices by implementing the SDGs. With the MSSD 2016-2025, the Mediterranean countries, under the guidance of the MCSD and supported by the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention, managed to translate the 2030 Agenda and to adapt it into the regional context. By reviewing the MSSD, initially adopted in 2005, the MCSD put forward a transformative agenda that places the people and the natural capital at the centre: a sustainable development for all.

Allow me to note that the vision of the MTS – “*a healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse contributing to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations*” – is inspired by the vision of the MSSD 2016-2025. The following elements of the MSSD 2016-2025 have contributed to the vision of the MTS 2016-2021: (a) Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development, and (b) Addressing cross-cutting issues that lie in the interface between environment and development.

Both the approval of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the Reform of the MCSD provide a new impetus to the MCSD, which is a very important player in the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, with a full and increasing support from the Secretariat after the recent recruitment of a Socio-Economic and Sustainable Development Programme Management Officer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to recall that today's meeting is very close from two major global events: (1) the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (New York, United States, 5-9 June 2017); and (2) the High Level Policy Forum (HLPF), from 10 to 19 July 2017, including the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from 17 to 19 July 2017.

“Human-induced problems have human-devised solutions. We know enough about the state of the ocean to act now and save it”. UN General Assembly President Peter Thompson's words with the two key messages of the Ocean Conference, noting that the state of the ocean is dire and any further decline would seriously jeopardize the world's chance to achieve not only SDG 14, but the entire 2030 Agenda.

The Ocean Conference was a unique event that primarily aimed to create high-level momentum for the implementation of SDG 14. The conference produced three outcomes: a Call for Action, a registry of voluntary commitments, and key messages from the partnership dialogues.

UNEP/MAP inputted all these outcomes, with specific input into the Call for Action through UN Environment, registration of voluntary commitments and providing input into the partnership dialogue concept papers.

As the outcome of the Conference, the Call for Action reaffirmed pre-existing commitments on sustainable development and resource mobilization in line with the 2030 Agenda. It underlined the urgency to take action and provided examples of strategies that can advance implementation toward individual targets and as such inspire action under existing frameworks. It highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, as well as the role of regional organizations to implement SDG 14 and enhance the 2030 Agenda.

The most significant result of the Conference, however may not be found in its formal outputs. Instead, it may be the awareness raised at the highest political level about the vital importance of the oceans and seas.

Looking ahead, the next session of the HLPF on Sustainable Development (10-19 July, 2017) is for many an obvious port of call to review progress on ocean health. Its thematic review of selected SDGs, including SDG 14, provides an opportunity for a more formal stocktaking of the activities presented during the conference and potentially an evaluation of their impact and remaining gaps. The review could also firmly “center” SDG 14 at the heart of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and further explore the linkages between the ocean and other SDGs.

The final Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) PrepCom session (also scheduled for July 2017 in New York) will also benefit from the momentum generated by the Ocean Conference, including the numerous reports on MPAs and on innovative capacity-building ideas and scientific cooperation. In addition to governments' and NGOs' calls to convene an intergovernmental conference to finalize and adopt a legally binding instrument on BBNJ, with a possible new ocean treaty to have “ambitious, measurable goals”, as well as “teeth and a vision”.

Finally, the Ocean Conference outcome will feed into the upcoming *Our Ocean* Conference to be held in October 2017, hosted by the EU and the Government of Malta, which will further register of commitments through which participants can not only communicate their actions but also track progress in implementation.

Recent and upcoming events of global dimension on oceans and marine issues represent all great opportunities in terms of visibility to promote the work of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and of the MCSDD, as well as the MSSD 2016-2025. They allow to highlight the importance of the regional dimension and of showcasing the Mediterranean region as an example for environmental governance.

Many opportunities were and are offered to increase visibility such as: the G7 Italian Presidency, which focused on the Mediterranean marine environment; the high-level Conference organized by France in February 2017 on “Mediterranean Plan for blue growth”; the 2017 *Our Ocean* Conference to be held in Malta in October 2017; the HLPF meetings to take place in New York by a couple of weeks; the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3), etc.

This sequence of events will be concluded by COP 20 in Tirana, Albania, in December 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global and regional processes I have just mentioned are inspirational and will undoubtedly bear fruit in the next few months. This 17th Meeting of the MCSD is for you to inspire each other and discuss the progress done and next steps for the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD flagship initiatives and regional actions, towards achievement of key targets and the delivery of the Strategy. I am convinced that your fruitful dialogue will open paths for innovative measures and concrete actions to help facing today's sustainability challenges and shaping the economic development of tomorrow. I have no doubt that you will touch on new approaches and innovative ways in this regard. The Secretariat is committed to supporting the work of the MCSD, for our Sea, our Region, our People and our common future.

I extend my best wishes for a very productive meeting.

Closing remarks by the President of the MCSD, Ms. Maria Papaioannou, Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

It has been an extremely rich Meeting in terms of variety of discussions. It has also been a highly informative Meeting and discussions have been very fruitful. A lot of interesting comments, ideas and inputs have been raised and expressed, and wealth of information has been shared.

Many thanks to all the participants and to all the members of the Commission for their commitment, their important contributions and for all the comments and proposals made.

With this opportunity, let me once more stress that the MSSD and its implementation is a collective endeavour for all the Mediterranean stakeholders. It goes far beyond the responsibilities of the MAP Secretariat that is strenuously supporting the effort, from a practical as well as from a substantive point of view. Therefore it is important that everybody does their bit and contribute to its implementation through their respective work and activities.

We also need to benefit from opportunities like this one to communicate what we do in our own fields of work and raise awareness and visibility on our respective projects, initiatives and activities, because only through the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences can synergies be built. And only through synergies we can have results in practices and break down the silo mentality which, as mentioned several times during in our Meeting, is still the biggest challenge we have to face in our work, in order to move to truly integrated approaches, from policy design to policy implementation.

Let me warmly thank again, all the members of the Commission, Party and non-Party ones. Many sincere thanks also to the Secretariat, the Coordinator, the Deputy Coordinator, Ilias, Julien, Rena, Ellie, and all the rest of the colleagues in the Secretariat, for their invaluable support, guidance and excellent organisation of this Meeting.

Let me also welcome, once more, the new members of the Steering Committee - we are looking forward to a productive term and relying a lot on the experience of its members and also on the experience of previous members. And of course many thanks to the interpreters.

With this the Meeting is officially closed. Wishes to everybody for a safe journey home!

Annex III
Agenda

Annex III: Agenda

Agenda item 1 Opening of the Meeting

Agenda item 2 Organizational Matters

- a) Election of the Steering Committee
- b) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
- c) Organization of Work

Agenda item 3 Report by the Secretariat on work carried out and progress in the implementation of Recommendations of the 16th Meeting of the MCSD

Agenda item 4 From global to regional: Implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

- a) Reflecting most recent global developments
- b) Sustainability considerations in the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019

Agenda item 5 MSSD 2016-2025 implementation and monitoring - Good practices and challenges faced

- a) MSSD 2016-2025 Implementation and Monitoring Plan
- b) Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) of National Strategies for Sustainable Development
- c) Mediterranean Sustainable Development Dashboard
- d) Flagship Initiatives
- e) Good practices, national and regional actions

Agenda item 6 Contribution of the MCSD to COP 20

Agenda item 7 Next Meeting of the MCSD and Any Other Matters

Agenda item 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Agenda item 9 Closure of the Meeting

Annex IV
Core set of indicators for the monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025
List revised during the 17th meeting of the MCSD

Annex IV: Core set of indicators for the monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025 - List revised during the 17th meeting of the MCSD

No.	MSSD 2016-2025 Objective	Name of indicator
1	Global	Ecological footprint
2	Global	Human Development Index
3	Global	Gross Domestic Product
4	Global	Youth literacy rate
5	Global	Girl/Boy primary and secondary school registration ratio
6	1	Number of ratifications and level of compliance as reported by BC Contracting Parties
7	1	Percentage of protected coastal and marine areas [under national jurisdiction]
8	2	Water efficiency index
9	2	Number of protected areas participating in the Green list initiative
10	2	Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems
11	2	Global Food Security Index
12	2	Water demand, total and by sector, compared to GDP
13	2	Share of population with access to an improved water source (total, urban, rural)
14	2	Share of population with access to an improved sanitation system (total, urban, rural)
15	2	Proportion of agriculture quality products and Share of the agricultural land area used by organic farming
16	2	Number of Mediterranean threatened species included in legal documents
17	3	Proportion of urban population with access to a decent dwelling
18	3	Status of UNESCO world heritage sites or population trends in historic urban areas
19	3	Waste generated and treated by type of waste and treatment type
20	4	Green House Gas emissions (related to GDP)
21	4	Energy consumption (related to GDP)
22	5	Material intensity of the economy
23	6	Number of National Strategies for Sustainable Development adopted or updated [and number of updates since first edition]
24	6	Proportion of bank credit allocated to the private sector – Existence of alternative financing systems using bank credit
25	6	Public and private expenses for research and development in percentage of GDP
26	6	Existing mechanisms to ensure public participation and access to environmental publication

Annex V:
Reports of the interactive session focusing on MSSD flagship initiatives, good practices, national and regional actions under agenda item 5

Annex V: Reports of the interactive session focusing on MSSD flagship initiatives, good practices, national and regional actions under agenda item 5

MSSD Objective 1:

MSSD Objective 1 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 1 Target
Support the Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas (on-going)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information (SDG Target 14.5);</i> - <i>By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics (SDG Target 14.4).</i>

The moderator delivered the following report:

The Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas (MPA Trust Fund) is getting traction and has been formally established. Public and private donors allowed to start funding pilot projects. The MPA Trust Fund can become a key tool to fund innovative management in MPAs, facilitate set up on new MPAs, and integrate national funding. Countries and private donors should commit to increase the MPA Trust Fund capital.

A major effort is necessary to achieve the target of 10% protection for the Mediterranean Sea and coast. The main obstacle is limitation in resource investment. Mediterranean countries and international funding institutions should significantly and urgently scale up investment in MPAs. This call for investment is based on the role that MPAs can and should play in securing natural capital, continued provision of ecosystem services (including productivity of biological resources, carbon storage, coastline protection, support for tourism), spatial management of marine resources, recovery of fisheries resources.

Breakthrough initiatives are necessary over the next two-three years to achieve a turning point on recovery of Mediterranean fisheries. Such breakthroughs can come from: adoption of multi annual ecosystem based management plans for shared resources (for instance small pelagic in the Adriatic); fast implementation and up scaling of the swordfish recovery (adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas - ICCAT in 2016); elimination of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing with port state measures; adoption of fishing vessel monitoring (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean - GFCM regional plan to combat IUU); fast tracking of the establishment of Fisheries Restricted Areas and MPAs in critically vulnerable areas for fisheries ecosystems. Fast implementation of the MedFish4Ever Declaration can turn the tide on fisheries decline. Finally, Countries should commit to urgent plans to eliminate the sources of marine litter and especially plastics.

MSSD Objective 2

MSSD Objective 2 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 2 Target
Promote the “Green list” (IUCN World Parks Congress) in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies created (on-going)	- <i>Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species, and take further action as needed by 2030 (SDG Target 15.5).</i>

The moderator delivered the following report:

The IUCN's Green List of protected and conserved areas aims to encourage, achieve, and promote effective, equitable and successful protected areas. The overarching objective of the Green list is to increase the number of protected and conserved areas that are effectively and equitably managed and deliver conservation outcomes.

The presentation focused on the following aspects:

- Main features of the Green List: (a) global standards for conservation success; (b) easily adaptable to local contexts; (c) voluntary commitment to improve conservation performance; (d) credible and independently assured evaluation procedure; and, (e) global recognition for protected area and its staff.
- Main components of the Green List global standards: (a) good governance; (b) sound design and planning; and, (c) effective management.
- Sites wishing to achieve Green List candidacy must demonstrate and maintain IUCN global criteria, through a process which involves 3 phases: (a) application phase; (b) candidate phase; and, (c) Green List phase
- Establishing Expert Assessment Group (EAGLs), which are jurisdictional expert bodies. The primary tasks of an EAGL are to ensure that the Green List standard is applicable in their jurisdiction and to evaluate protected areas against the indicators of the standard.
- Ms. Barrios shared important facts and figures in this respect including: new Mediterranean countries willing to initiate the Green List process: Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia.

The IUCN representative highlighted the way forward from a Green List perspective:

- An EU project is considering the addition of the IUCN Green List Standards to Natura 2000 (N2000);
- Support in the establishment of EAGL will be given to the new countries that have applied to the Green List: Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia;
- Forming EAGLS to new governance requirements is already in process;
- A reassessment of previous Green listed sites in comparison with new standards is also being undertaken.

The IUCN representative explained the flexible features of the Green List in terms of (i) its adaptability to any country; and, (ii) its voluntary and credible nature.

The need for increasing the number of partner countries, protected area commitments and nominations was highlighted.

The presentation concluded with a call for involvement and shared the many ways to get involved: becoming an EAGL member; becoming an expert reviewer (involvement in the Green List standards and indicators); and, assisting in promoting the Green List.

After the IUCN presentation, the floor was open for discussion. The moderator encouraged the MCSD members to contribute to the worthy cause of conservation through a number of ways:

- Reinforcing their commitment to this flagship initiative by nominating their respective countries to participate in this initiative;
- Contributing their expertise to the implementation of the Green List's standards and indicators;
- Promote the Green List initiative within their local context;
- Contribute as expert reviewers.

MSSD Objective 3

MSSD Objective 3 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 3 Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award” (IEFCA) (on-going); - Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (MedCities’s proposal); - Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries (SDG Target 11.3);</i> - <i>By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse (SDG Target 12.5)</i>

The moderator delivered the following report:

The Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (Istanbul Award) corresponds both to COP 19 Decision IG.22/19 and to one of the MSSD flagship initiatives. The pilot edition is implemented by the Secretariat with a voluntary contribution from the Government of Turkey. To be conferred at COP 20 within a specific side event, the Istanbul Award aims to recognize the efforts of local authorities to improve the environment and the quality of life and promote sustainable development in Mediterranean coastal towns and cities. It also aims to encourage local authorities to move towards a more environment friendly future and enable them to act as a role-model to inspire other towns and cities. 17 relevant applications are now under examination by the technical committee, composed of representatives of each UNEP/MAP component and supported by three eminent experts.

MedCities, in partnership with members of the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI – World Bank, Marseilles, France) Urban Hub, generously proposed to develop the Sustainable Urban Toolbox for the Mediterranean (MSSD flagship initiative 3.2.5). Building on partnerships on urban issues at the regional level, the objective is to bring together the various existing tools within an innovative toolbox that would be used, adapted and updated by local authorities and urban stakeholders. MedCities offered to mobilize its own human resources and network, plus modest financial resources for the development of this toolbox. A concept note and a work plan will be shared with the MCSDD by the end of 2017. Beyond the CMI Urban Hub, MCSDD members and other partners could obviously join the process, taking into account that the added value of the initiative is to mutualise efforts in a knowledge-sharing activity.

MSSD Objective 4

MSSD Objective 4 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 4 Target
Establish a regional science-policy interface mechanism, including the social and behavioural sciences, endorsed by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options (on-going)	NA

The moderator delivered the following report:

The session highlighted the importance of establishing an institutionalized science-policy interface mechanism on climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean governance system. This mechanism will contribute significantly to consolidating and improving the best available scientific knowledge about climate change in the Mediterranean and to enhancing the dialogue and synergies between the scientific community and decision-makers.

Following the presentation of Prof. Wolfgang Cramer on the objectives and work of the Mediterranean Expert Network on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), and the discussion with the

MCSD members, the moderator summarized the main factors promoting the effectiveness of the science-policy interface mechanism:

- The science-policy interface mechanism on climate change should produce integrated and consolidated scientific assessments based on common methodologies and concrete scientific criteria;
- The scientific analysis and reports on climate change risks should be linked with a wide range of issues and SDGs related aspects (i.e. development, health, food, security);
- Scientific knowledge and data should be generated and updated through transparent, independent, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary review processes;
- The input provided by a regional science-policy interface mechanism needs to be relevant and responsive to the needs and concerns of decision-makers in order to be politically credible and approved.

MSSD Objective 5

MSSD Objective 5 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 5 Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create and promote a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation; - Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels. 	<p><i>By 2025, the majority of Mediterranean countries are committed to green or sustainable public procurement programmes.</i></p>

The moderator delivered the following report:

The panel highlighted two successful initiatives on green entrepreneurship and green public procurement. The case studies have managed to create a large network of “switchers” and stakeholders involved in these initiatives. The need to support and expand the knowledge and experiences gained throughout the joint cooperation among MCSD members should be addressed through resources mobilization to extend the role of the initiatives, especially the SWITCH MED Programme which is coming to an end in the coming year.

The green public procurement is a crucial element in achieving sustainability at national and local level. The promotion of a Mediterranean Business Award for environmental innovation is supported by the MCSD members, who welcomed the proposal (in kind) of creating an award to be conferred to entrepreneurs for their efforts in term of greening business. The target is “*by 2025, the majority of Mediterranean countries are committed to green or sustainable public procurement programmes*”, which is a challenge that could be achieved if all stakeholders are engaged in advocating the target, building the conditions of its implementation, ensuring the resources needed to implement the activities, and monitoring the implementation.

MSSD Objective 6

MSSD Objective 6 Flagship initiative	MSSD Objective 6 Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (on-going) - Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments; - Establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions 	<p><i>By 2025, two-thirds of Mediterranean countries have acceded to the Aarhus Convention</i></p>

and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of the environment	
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The moderator delivered the following report:

MIO-ECSDE presented progress on the implementation of the MSES, which was developed through a very inclusive process. This strategy was endorsed in April 2014 by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Meeting of Ministers for the Environment. The aim of the strategy is to incorporate Education on Sustainable Development (ESD) into informal, non-formal and formal education at all levels. MIO-ECSDE informed the meeting that there is an Action Plan accompanying the strategy and that a Mediterranean Steering Committee has been set up, including *inter alia* UNEP/MAP, UNESCO, the League of Arab States, UNECE, Malta, Cyprus and Jordan. National events will also take place with stakeholders through the SWIM project.

The representative from the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat began by observing that the MCSD is not very far from being part of the “Aarhus family” as it is already setting objectives which are similar to the Aarhus Convention principles. He indicated that he would welcome further discussions on ways to cooperate with the MCSD and its members. Continuing, he noted that the Aarhus Convention is relevant to a number of challenges from climate change to disaster risk reduction, since a more educated and informed public can address these risks better. The representative of the Aarhus Convention Secretariat noted that signing the Convention sends a good message about Government’s commitment to good governance. The Convention is particularly relevant to SDG 16. However, given that it is focusing on cross-cutting issues, it is relevant for other SDGs too. He further stated that a number of Mediterranean countries are already Parties to the Convention, but also that some other Mediterranean countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt already collaborate with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat. In closing, he noted that the Convention is open for signature to all UN Member States. Finally, he stated that Non Parties are welcome to attend the Aarhus Convention activities as well as the Meetings of the Parties (funds are available for non-Contracting Party countries).

In the ensuing discussion, INFO/RAC and EEA updated the meeting about the ENI-SEIS project, which is closely related to the Shared Environmental Information System. The aim of the project is making data and indicators more visible. A lot of capacity-building is involved, on statistics, infrastructure and indicators. The project addresses data coordination and focuses on Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries and the Western Balkans.

MEPIELAN Centre then noted that, with regard to governance, in cooperation with UNEP/MAP and the Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resource Governance (C-EENRG, University of Cambridge, UK), it is establishing a pioneering Master’s degree Programme in “Sustainable governance in the Mediterranean region”, also linked to the SDGs and having multifarious supporting effects (educational, interdisciplinary understanding, networking, visibility). It also mentioned the Public Trust Approach Project, developed in cooperation with the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (Cambridge, UK) and the C-EENRG, considering that the public trust approach may be discussed and tested as an innovative law and policy response to sustainability governance contributing to the MSSD 2016-2025 and the Barcelona Convention system.

The Association of Italian Local Agenda 21 noted that it is running a LIFE+ project with local authorities, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and insurers in preventing damage from extreme events such as flooding. The project will establish a tool to evaluate risk of damage from such events and develop a plan for each enterprise involved. *“DERRIS (<http://www.derris.eu/en>) is the first European project that involves the public administration and SMEs to reduce the risks deriving from extreme weather events, through a public-private partnerships between insurers, public authorities and businesses. Derris pilot project was launched in the City of Turin and involved 30 local SMEs. Its very innovative approach is easily replicable in the Mediterranean Basin”*.

Concluding the session, the moderator noted that the governance theme links UNEP/MAP to other key international processes and international networks such as UNESCO and UNECE. She noted also that, in terms of governance, the Mediterranean region already has certain advanced instruments in place, such as the MSSD 2016-2025 and the MSES. In this respect, the progress being made in relation to

the flagship initiatives on capacity building and on governance/compliance through the work of the MEPIELAN Centre, and on the shared information systems by INFO/RAC and EEA is also noteworthy. Finally, she encouraged MCSD members to get in touch with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat.

Annex VI:
**General conclusions from the three volunteer Contracting Parties having participated in the SIMPEER
pilot phase 2016-2017**

Annex VI: General conclusions from the three volunteer Contracting Parties having participated in the SIMPEER pilot phase 2016-2017

Recommendations for next steps of the SIMPEER implementation:

- A very rich exercise to be pursued, for the interest of the Contracting Parties and for strengthening the MAP;
- A method for the way forward that involves the three volunteer countries of the pilot phase 2016-2017 and the new volunteer countries for the next biennium 2018-2019, ensuring a geographical balance among the sub-regions of the Mediterranean;
- Sponsorship and cooperation between all volunteer countries (2016-2017 and 2018-2019);
- Twinning between countries and means of facilitation to continue exchanges in a more operational manner on themes of common interest identified, e.g. integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; synergy between NSSDs and SDGs, or between NSSDs and the Paris Agreement; territorial/local declination in large countries; environmental taxation;
- Increase the number of countries which participate (comparability);
- Operational linkages between SIMPEER and the VNR/HLPF (the countries which are participating in both processes);
- Enhance synergies with the EU processes to integrate 2030 Agenda into EU internal and external policies, in particular with regard to the sustainable development indicators' framework (EUROSTAT);
- Further preparatory work and re-formulation of guidelines to better align the MSSD 2016-2025 objectives with the SDGs (in terms of cross-cutting targets and indicators);
- SIMPEER should not be regarded and carried out as a purely external audit: SIMPEER should lay on the interface between an external audit and a national process involving national representatives who have an in-depth knowledge on positive and negative elements of the national efforts and set up;
- The expert team should also include the representatives of the countries who already participated through the SIMPEER process;
- Improve the capacities of the UNEP/MAP Secretariat for the MSSD implementation and MCSD functioning;
- Increase the interest of countries for financing SIMPEER, as well as of the business and banking sector.