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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019

Agenda Items 3 and 4: Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2018–2019 Biennium and Financial Report for 2016–2017 and 2018–2019

Agenda Item 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including Draft Decisions

Report of the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

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18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019

Agenda item 10: Conclusions and Recommendations

Report of the 18th Meeting of the MCSD

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

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Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Montenegro, the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) was held in Budva from 11 to 13 June 2019.

Participation

2. 28 out of the 40 MCSD Members (14 members representing Contracting Parties and 14 members from Stakeholder groups) and seven Observers, including four invited speakers, were represented, for a gender-balanced total of 54 participants (27 women-27 men). The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro, H.E. Mr. Pavle Radulović, recalled in his welcome speech that back in 2002, at the Second Summit on Sustainable Development, the MCSD was recognized as a relevant body for supporting the delivery of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Considering the 18th Meeting of the MCSD as a significant step towards connecting Mediterranean initiatives with the global framework for sustainable development, H.E. Radulović underlined the important contribution of the Commission to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the necessity to increase its visibility at the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Summit, which will discuss the progress of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but also the importance of its contribution to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional and national level.

4. The UN Resident Coordinator in Montenegro, Ms. Fiona McCluney, delivered a welcome message to the meeting participants, expressing her support to UN Environment as sister agency that brings environmental expertise. She highlighted the strategic importance Montenegro places in accession to the European Union (EU). She noted the importance of Montenegro implementing its National Strategy for Sustainable Development and the potential of joint work on the strong links between the EU accession process and 2030 Agenda (Chapter 27 Environment obligations, which could help achieve as many as 25% or 40 SDG targets).

5. The outgoing President of the MCSD Steering Committee, Ms. Maria Papaioannou (Greece) – who was elected at the 17th Meeting of the MCSD (Athens, Greece, 4-6 July 2017) – conveyed her thanks to the Government of Montenegro for hosting the meeting. *“The level of participation and attendance (...) demonstrates the interest and the importance of the work of the MCSD”*, said Ms. Papaioannou, insisting on the role of the Commission as a multi-stakeholder advisory body and a forum for experience sharing that integrates environment and development to promote structural changes on economies, environment and society. She encouraged synergies with UN bodies and agencies, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and UN Regional Commissions, to make the work of the MCSD more visible to the rest of the world. Mentioning the activities undertaken in the intersessional period under her presidency, she paid tribute to the outgoing MCSD and Steering Committee Members.

6. The MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, welcomed the participants and expressed deep gratitude to the Government of Montenegro for its hospitality. He stated that, as a UN international treaty, a regional Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA), and the first regional seas convention under the auspices of UN Environment, the Barcelona Convention unites the 21 Mediterranean countries and the European Union within one of the most advanced legal regimes worldwide, going beyond its initial mandate on marine pollution. *“The unique mechanism that the MCSD represents in*

the panorama of Regional Seas allows to look at sustainable development in its entirety”, said Mr. Leone. Referring to the global and regional agendas on sustainable development, he encouraged MCSD Members and Observers to pursue their partnerships for rendering fully compatible socio-economic development and sustainable use of the resources of the Mediterranean Sea and coast.

7. The texts of welcome addresses and opening statements are reproduced in Annex II.

Agenda item 2: Organizational Matters

a) Election of the Steering Committee

b) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

c) Organization of Work

8. In compliance with its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected its Steering Committee, as indicated in the conclusions below.

9. The Commission reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.469/1 and annotated in document UNEP/MED WG.469/2. The agenda of meeting is included in Annex III.

Conclusions:

10. The Commission expressed gratitude to the outgoing President, Ms. Maria Papaioannou (Greece), and to the other Members of the MCSD Steering Committee (Albania, Ms. Ilda Shahu; COMPSUD, Mr. Moh Rejdali; Israel, Ms. Rotem Shamay; SDSN-Med, Mr. Simone Cresti; RAED, Mr. Emad Adly; Tunisia, Mr. Lotfi Ben Said), acknowledging with appreciation the work done under their guidance in 2018-2019.

11. The MCSD elected its Steering Committee in accordance with Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure, as follows:

- **President: Montenegro, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic;**
- **Vice-President: Italy (pending nomination);**
- **Vice-President: Morocco, Mr. Mohammed Maktit;**
- **Vice President: Turkey (pending nomination);**
- **Vice-President: UCLG (Local Authorities Group), Mr. Mohamed Boussraoui;**
- **Vice-President: UfM (Intergovernmental Organizations Group), Ms. Alessandra Sensi;**
- **Rapporteur: MEPIELAN (Scientific Community Group), Mr. Evangelos Raftopoulos.**

Agenda item 3: Progress Report on the Work Done after the 17th Meeting of the MCSD

12. The MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone, presented the progress report, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.469/3, focusing on activities deriving from Decision IG.23/4 “Implementation and Monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025 and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean” and Decision IG.23/14 “UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2018-2019” adopted at COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017). The progress report focused on the following topics: second edition of the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER), Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard,

MSSD Flagship Initiatives, and Assessment Studies (2019 State of the Environment and Development Report and MED2050 Foresight Study).

13. MAP Components completed this presentation by introducing their achievements in 2018-2019 and priorities for the forthcoming period. PAP/RAC underlined the introduction of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the draft Common Regional Framework (CRF) for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), as well as the feasibility studies for the Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the transboundary CAMP in Albania and Italy. On behalf of REMPEC, the Coordinating Unit reported on the support provided to the development of national preparedness and response systems to oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) spills, including National Contingency Plans in 18 Mediterranean countries. SCP/RAC mentioned the identification of innovative solutions to prevent marine litter, plastic pollution and toxic chemicals, as well as capacity building and technical assistance provided to policymakers, businesses and NGOs to move towards circular economy. SPA/RAC emphasized the evaluations of a) the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SAP BIO) and b) the implementation of the “Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean”, including recommendations for post-2020.

14. Members of the MCSD provided positive feedback on the progress report, in particular on activities related to partnerships/cooperation and outreach/communication. They also reported on their own efforts to support the MSSD implementation and the work of the Commission, in particular:

- Med Cities invited the MCSD Members to endorse the declaration on ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management in the Mediterranean, which has been prepared by the Biodiversity Protection Community of the EU funded Interreg Med Programme¹;
- Greece reported on its Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented at the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July 2018, as well as on the national Environmental Performance Review (EPR) conducted by OECD. Greece also reported on partnerships established with Cyprus, Israel and Egypt in the context of two trilateral cooperation agreements;
- Slovenia pointed out synergies between the MAP – Barcelona Convention system and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR), referring to projects for implementing ICZM and MSP, for promoting eco-connectivity among marine and coastal protected areas, and for developing an oil spill contingency plan in the sub-region;
- MIO-ECSDE indicated two areas of collaboration with other MCSD Members and the Secretariat, namely a) marine litter and plastic pollution, with action-oriented projects; and, b) education for sustainable development, with trainings of trainers organized in eight non-EU countries;
- France shared its work on sustainable development indicators and on the roadmap for transposing the Sustainable Development Goal on Ocean (SDG 14) at the national level, encouraging peer learning approaches on both topics; and,
- WWF Med mentioned its work on circular economy in the Mediterranean region, including on small scale fisheries (MEDFISH4EVER project), consultative and participatory approaches in the framework of MSP at the national level, and sustainable blue finance criteria.

¹ Declaration [Ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management in the Mediterranean](#).

Conclusions:

15. The Commission welcomed with appreciation the progress presented by the MAP Coordinator on the work carried since the 17th Meeting of the MCSD.

16. The Commission acknowledged the increased efforts and the contribution of its Members and the Secretariat to global and regional processes that contribute to raise the profile and to promote the work of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system in relevant fora that address sustainability issues.

17. The Commission encouraged its Members and the Secretariat to maintain their commitment and pursue their efforts to support the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD, as well as to communicate more on their projects and initiatives that address sustainable development issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the MSSD.

Agenda item 4: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, and the MSSD

a) Reflecting Most Recent Global and Regional Processes

18. The high-level session organized under Agenda sub-item 4.a) gathered one member of the UN Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) that drafted the first quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report (2019 GSDR) to be presented at the SDG Summit in September 2019, Dr. Muhammad Saidam (Senior Researcher – Executive Director, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan), the Director of the Office for North Africa of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), Ms. Lilia Naas Hachem, the Principal Advisor of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE) and Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit, Ms. Monika Linn, and the Director of the Sustainable Development Policies Division of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), Ms. Roula Majdalani. The session was moderated by Ms. Olivera Komar, University of Montenegro. Concept note of the session is included in Annex IV.

19. Based on the outcome of their respective Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, the three UN Regional Commissions that cover the Mediterranean basin presented the progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, introducing main achievements, challenges, and perspectives towards achievement of the SDGs in Africa, Europe and Western Asia.

20. Dr. Saidam delivered an overview of 2019 GSDR (process and work-in-progress), as a crucial component for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, putting the emphasis on the potential of science-policy interfaces to support decision-makers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development, and reflecting the universal, indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

21. Those presentations were followed by a meaningful discussion with the audience, which acknowledged with appreciation the fact that, for the first time, the MCSD interacted directly with the three UN Regional Commissions covering the Mediterranean basin. Comments pointed out in particular the need for a complete match between national and regional specific thematic/substantive institutional arrangements and the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda with interlinked SDGs.

22. UN Regional Commissions spoke about the limited time that the current format of the HLPF allows to adequately present regional processes and perspectives and opportunities for peer learning at the regional level and among countries to exchange experiences on structures, mechanisms and processes for implementing the SDGs.

23. The discussions also raised the following points and recommendations:

- Regional cooperation is a bridge between global and national processes for sustainable development. The local level is also of paramount importance to achieve sustainable development on the field.
- Beyond a range of sustainability issues that are transboundary and need to be addressed at the regional level (e.g. climate change, shared natural resources, trade, migrations), the regions such as Africa, Europe, Mediterranean and Western Asia should not be seen as compact or homogeneous areas; regions have their specificities and differ within subregions. Different sustainability considerations and paces of development should be considered as an opportunity for cooperation and transfer of know-how, notably through South-South cooperation.
- Transboundary cooperation for implementing SDGs and, more precisely, for setting priorities and building capacities, should be at the core of future discussions between the MCSD and UN Regional Commissions. The MCSD was recognized as a valuable partnership platform to mediate regional cooperation and therefore to implement SDG 17 “Partnerships for the goals”.
- The UN Independent Group of Scientists is a worthy example of how science and policymaking can work together; this kind of Science-Policy Interface could be replicated at the regional level.

Conclusions:

24. The MCSD recommended to the Secretariat to develop the relationship established with the three UN Regional Commissions that cover the Mediterranean basin (UN-ECA, UN-ECE, UN-ESCWA) and to provide relevant inputs to their respective Regional Forum for Sustainable Development so as to enrich their contribution to the HLPF and increase the role and visibility of the Mediterranean and of the work of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system in that global forum.

25. The Commission invited the three UN Regional Commissions to maintain cooperation with the MCSD, its Steering Committee and the Secretariat, and to promote the MAP – Barcelona Convention system among their Member States. Joint actions and items of communication should be mobilized in that direction.

26. The Commission appreciated the fruitful exchanges under the roundtable “Reflecting Most Recent Global and Regional Processes”, highlighting the need for concrete actions to integrate sustainability considerations at the local level, for increasing transboundary cooperation, as well as for synergies between environmental and socio-economic targets.

27. The meeting, taking note of the work in progress on the 2019 GSDR by the UN Independent Group of Scientists (IGS), recommended the participation of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system, and in particular the MCSD, in its follow-up and dissemination.

b) Implementing SDGs and the MSSD at the National Level

28. This agenda sub-item focusing on national experiences was devised in two times:

1. Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER); 2. VNRs presented at the HLPF.

29. The President, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic, reminded that the Contracting Parties decided at COP 19 in 2016 to launch SIMPEER, as an innovative incentive for promoting dialogue between volunteer Mediterranean countries on national structures, processes and policies for sustainable development. She said that SIMPEER has the potential to support Contracting Parties in streamlining their work for implementing in synergy sustainable development policies and environmental obligations. SIMPEER can support the preparation and/or follow-up of the VNRs, which aim at facilitating the exchange of

national experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to mobilizing multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for accelerating the 2030 Agenda implementation.

30. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) introduced the work done under the SIMPEER activity and the President invited the Contracting Parties that went through the SIMPEER pilot and second editions (i.e. Albania, Egypt, France, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia) to report on their experiences.

31. SIMPEER experiences were complemented by testimonies from Contracting Parties that have contributed or will contribute to the HLPF through VNRs in 2016 (France), 2017 (Italy), 2018 (Albania, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Malta, Spain) and 2019 (Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Israel, Tunisia, Turkey). They reported on transformational initiatives undertaken to transpose, implement and/or monitor SDGs at the national level, as well as on challenges encountered and lessons learned.

32. Besides the fact that the 2030 Agenda and SDGs benefit from unprecedented commitment, Contracting Parties shared the following common concerns and challenges: the need to strengthen inclusive and institutional set-up towards efficient multi-stakeholder governance frameworks to break the “silo effect” created by thematic/sectoral approaches; Ministries or departments in charge of the environment are often the most aware and active national bodies to promote and implement SDGs at national level, but they are not in a coordinating position; lack of capacities and resources in national administrations to address the SDGs adequately, in particular for monitoring programmes to follow the SDG Indicators.

Conclusions:

33. The MCSD welcomed the sharing of experience among Contracting Parties participating in the SIMPEER and/or the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process at the HLPF. The Commission recognized the value of the SIMPEER process and noted that the peer learning experiences should be capitalized and communicated as crucial in facilitating the transposition, implementation and monitoring of SDGs at the regional and national level.

34. The Commission took note of common challenges experienced by the Contracting Parties in implementing SDGs at the national level, in particular those related to coordination and effective mobilization of all governmental actors, and the enhanced engagement of stakeholders and civil society to address these challenges, as well as the need for capacity building. The Commission recommended to take concrete action to address these gaps.

35. The Commission strongly encouraged Contracting Parties, in particular the Members of its Steering Committee and those that have already gone through the VNR process at the HLPF, to participate in the SIMPEER third edition in 2020-2021.

Agenda item 5: MSSD Follow-up – Good Practices, Exchange of Experiences and Challenges

a) MSSD Flagship Initiatives, Major Regional and National Programmes

36. The President opened this agenda sub-item by indicating that the 17th Meeting of the MCSD welcomed the efforts done by MCSD Members, MAP partners, the Secretariat and other stakeholders for implementing MSSD Flagship Initiatives and regional programmes/actions. She also mentioned that, as included in document UNEP/MED WG.469/7, four concept notes were drafted in 2018-2019 by MCSD Members (COMPSUD, MIO-ECSDE, MEPIELAN) and the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) to put in motion four MSSD Flagship Initiatives, stating that those achievements represent a positive signal and demonstrate that the MSSD implementation is a collective process.

37. Each draft concept note was introduced by one of its authors, i.e.: COMPSUD about regional assessments and knowledge exchanges to achieve waste reduction; SCP/RAC about the Mediterranean Business Award for Environmental Innovation; MIO-ECSDE about support to the accession to and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention); and, MEPIELAN about its contribution on legal aspects to the MSSD Flagship Initiative related to the Aarhus Convention, as well as about developing innovative areas of capacity building on implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements.

38. After those presentations, the President invited implementers of other MSSD Flagship Initiatives to report on their progress and achievements, noting that the Secretariat published factsheets dedicated to these initiatives, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.469/Inf.7. SPA/RAC updated the meeting about the Trust Fund for Mediterranean MPAs; IUCN Med reported on the Green List of Protected Areas in Mediterranean countries; Med Cities presented the Sustainable Urban Toolbox for the Mediterranean; Plan Bleu introduced recent developments of the network of Mediterranean experts on climate and environmental change (MedECC); and the Secretariat provided an update about the second edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award.

39. The President mentioned that further efforts are in need to launch two MSSD Flagship Initiatives that are still “orphan”, namely:

- Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels; and,
- Establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and display information on the state of the environment.

Conclusions:

40. The MCSD acknowledged with appreciation the concept notes drafted by COMPSUD, MIO-ECSDE, MEPIELAN and the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) to put in motion four MSSD Flagship Initiatives addressing challenges and gaps indicated by the MSSD and strengthening cooperation opportunities.

41. The Commission welcomed the progress done in implementing on-going MSSD Flagship Initiatives.

b) Green, Blue and Circular Economy, including Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

42. The President introduced Agenda sub-item 5.b), explaining that WWF Med and the Secretariat (Coordinating Unit, Plan Bleu, and SCP/RAC), in close cooperation with IUCN Med and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), had prepared a specific, interactive session focusing on the sustainable tourism component of the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean. The concept note of this session is included in Annex V.

43. SCP/RAC, as moderator of the session, proposed to brainstorm by using the *Mentimeter* online interactive software that produced the following word cloud, based on participants' inputs:

Conclusions:

46. Given the importance of the tourism sector for the Mediterranean, the Commission invited the Contracting Parties to develop and strengthen measures towards the achievement of sustainable tourism in the region.

47. This sector, interacting with many other economic sectors of the blue economy, should be further addressed in the work of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system, in accordance with its objectives, with explicit targeted outputs, to explore further cooperation with other stakeholders involved in the MSSD implementation process.

48. The Commission highlighted that a stronger engagement of the private sector is necessary to achieve a real change of the tourism sector towards sustainability, and that ecosystem-based integrated marine and coastal planning processes (ICZM, MSP) need to address mass tourism management and planning, including in particular nautical tourism and cruise.

49. The Commission stressed the need to address the gap in holistic destination management policies that clearly value impact and cost of resources/ecosystem services vis-a-vis economic, social and other benefits. Specific blue economy indicators should be considered within the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard.

c) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard

50. The President provided background information on the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard. In particular, following the 19th and 20th Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee (June 2018 and January 2019), the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) finalized the update of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, with a revised list of 28 indicators (as included in Annex I of document UNEP/MED IG.469/4), prepared a revised version of the analytical factsheets (document UNEP/MED WG.469/Inf.4), and drafted proposals and recommendations for improving the process, based on challenges and lessons learned, including a proposal for populating regularly the dashboard. The updated Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and related deliverables are expected to be submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019) and to COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019).

51. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) introduced document UNEP/MED WG.469/4 and provided technical details on the work done and perspectives for the dashboard.

52. The Commission confirmed that the list of indicators of the dashboard is a living document; MSSD indicators could get even closer to the SDG ones in the future, as methodological aspects and data availability progress internationally, keeping in mind Mediterranean specificities and the need to remain focused on the specific objectives of the MAP – Barcelona Convention.

53. The Commission suggested to Plan Bleu to define and develop a regional process for the effective monitoring of the MSSD implementation with the involvement of relevant regional and national stakeholders and partners. This process, to be based on data and information-sharing principles, should be in line with the forthcoming MAP Data Management Strategy and developed in synergy with existing programmes and processes, such as SEIS².

² Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the European neighbourhood regions: <https://eni-seis.eionet.europa.eu/>

54. The Commission encouraged the Secretariat (Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC) to further integrate SCP indicators in the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, in relation with the work undertaken by SCP/RAC under SwitchMed II (<https://www.switchmed.eu/en>).

Conclusions:

55. The Commission recognized the value of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and welcomed with appreciation its update, in particular the work done under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee to align the dashboard with SDG Indicators and the MSSD Objectives.

56. The MCSD Steering Committee and the Secretariat were encouraged to continue working towards the optimal alignment and consistency of the dashboard with the ongoing global process on SDGs Indicators and to ensure that all indicators are fully measurable or effectively implementable.

d) MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation (2020-2021)

57. The President explained that, as recommended by the MSSD, the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy is expected to be undertaken in 2020-2021 towards submission of the results to COP 22.

58. The Secretariat introduced the draft Roadmap of the MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation (2020-2021), as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.469/8.

59. The Secretariat was advised to adjust the draft roadmap for conducting in parallel the internal review process (mobilizing MAP bodies and other stakeholders) and the external evaluation that should be carried out by independent experts (consultants).

Conclusions:

60. The Commission recommended to the Secretariat to define a crosscutting approach, taking advantage of common methodologies/tools and joint events/workshops, to address in parallel the evaluation of the MAP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (SCP AP).

61. The Commission welcomed the Draft Roadmap for the participatory MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation as a good opportunity to enhance the Strategy implementation and make it more efficient by focusing on gaps, challenges, and opportunities during its second phase. The Commission recommended the submission of the Draft Roadmap of the MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation to COP 21.

Agenda item 6: Preparation of MAP Assessment Studies on the Interactions between the Environment and Development

62. The President introduced Agenda item 6 by recalling that the MAP assessment work was ambitious during the biennium 2018-2019. The MTS Strategic Outcome 1.4 and Indicative Key Output 1.4.1 translated in the preparation of assessment studies on the interactions between environment and development, as reflected in Decisions IG.23/4 and IG.23/14 adopted at COP 20.

a) 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED 2019)

63. The President explained that, through an integrated and systemic approach, the SoED 2019 aims at presenting a comprehensive assessment of the interactions between environment and development in the Mediterranean, at increasing awareness and understanding of environmental and

development status and trends in the region, their driving forces and impacts, at facilitating the measurement of progress towards sustainable development, at providing an up-to-date foundation for improved decision-making at all levels, and at enhancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, SDGs and the MSSD.

64. The President also mentioned that, since draft SoED 2019 Executive Summary and Chapter 9 have been reviewed by the Meeting of Plan Bleu Focal Points (Marseille, France, 27-29 May 2019), preliminary conclusions and key messages were submitted to the MCSD for general feedback and guidance to the Secretariat on the way forward from a strategic (vs. technical) point of view. Therefore, the Commission was expected to provide comments on the proposed key messages, as well as on key findings to be further emphasized and gaps to be addressed towards submission of the SoED 2019 to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points and then to COP 21.

65. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) presented the draft SoED 2019 Executive Summary (document UNEP/MED WG.469/5), raising the attention of the MCSD Members on its conclusive section that introduces key messages from draft Chapter 9 “Synthesis and Conclusions” (work in progress).

66. The discussion that followed this presentation raised the following points:

- MCSD Members underlined the high relevance of the SoED 2019, the large body of evidence and knowledge collected, and the urgency to provide updated information to decision-makers and stakeholders due to the intensity of pressures and impacts of human activities on the Mediterranean coastal and marine environment.
- MCSD Members also expressed diverging views on the scope and structure of the draft report. Expressing reservations, one MCSD Member stated that the report should not expand its thematic focus beyond marine and coastal environment, which is at the core of the MAP mandate. Other participants considered that socio-economic realities should be emphasized in a balanced way with environmental considerations, insisting on the interactions between environmental concerns and development issues such as job creation, health, justice, food security, etc.
- The readiness of the draft SoED 2019 Executive Summary and Chapter 9 for review was also discussed: one MCSD Member considered as premature to discuss key messages without having finalized the thematic chapters, stating that most of which were still at an early stage of development, while other Members and Observers stated that the draft key messages were not only sufficiently advanced but also very valid for being submitted for review and comments to the MAP Focal Points.
- The Commission stressed the importance of developing targeted communication products and a dissemination plan of the SoED 2019 results and recommendations to reach a wide audience, including with communication products adapted to non-specialists, the youth, and the private sector. SDSN-Med suggested to consider its regional and national networks as a useful platform for the dissemination and outreach of this report and to reach out all identified targets. EEA insisted on the tremendous potential of the SoED 2019 to communicate on today and tomorrow challenges when it comes to addressing the SDGs’ implementation, underlining the importance to communicate both on progresses and achievements but also on the remaining and forthcoming societal challenges that are pregnant, putting also the emphasis on promising solutions and innovations.
- The Commission stressed the importance of data quality and referencing in accordance with international best practices; one MCSD Member expressed the need to clearly distinguish official and non-official sources of data in order to ensure the robustness of the conclusions. Regarding the structure of the SoED 2019 and the sources of data, it has been clarified that the 6th edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) report recently published by UN Environment was considered as a model. Thus, beyond the fact that references and sources of data of the SoED 2019 were selected on

the basis of their reliability and thoroughly checked, this report is much more than a simple compendium of statistical reports or data provided by UN organizations.

- MCSD Members recommended to frame Mediterranean findings in the global context and in the context of large regions (e.g. Europe, Africa...), including on transboundary flows and networks (foreign investment, offshore activities...).
- MIO-ECSDE recommended to include a key message on education for sustainable development, awareness raising and perception of environmental sustainability.
- MEPIELAN recommended to refer in a key message to the principles of resilience and non-regression, new relational legal concepts, such as the “public trust approach”, interlinkages and creative participatory processes for more effective implementation of environmental sustainability and multilateral governance.
- The MAP Coordinator recalled that the draft SoED 2019 is the result of two years of intensive work and debate, in particular within the SoED Steering Committee. He explained that there is still room for adjustment to reflect the very valuable advice from the Commission towards submission of the report to COP 21, as initially planned. He insisted on the fact that the scope of the report is “*the state of the marine and coastal environment in the context of sustainable development*” and that the balance between Environment and Development components is guiding the structure of the report. He also clarified the scope of the various assessment studies undertaken by MAP, making a clear distinction between the SoED 2019 and the next Quality Status Report (QSR) to be realized by 2023; the QSR will be based on the robust monitoring programmes that are currently established at the regional and national level in the context of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and related assessment criteria (IMAP).

Conclusions:

67. The Commission provided the above comments on the SoED 2019 to be considered in preparing the submission of the report to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points and to COP 21, including on the balance of environmental and socio-economic content and on thematic areas to be addressed, innovative relational legal concepts, participatory processes and environmental law principles implementing sustainability, sources of data in accordance with international best practices, dissemination and use of the report and broader and targeted communication of its findings.

a) Foresight Study on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (MED2050)

68. The President introduced Agenda sub-item 6.b) and clarified that the updated roadmap is expected to be submitted for approval at COP 21. The MED2050 Roadmap covers two biennia, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021.

69. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu) presented the work done in Phase I that focused on a) mobilizing existing resources and building network of interested partners; and, b) assessing trends and scenarios. Plan Bleu also introduced the Revised Draft Roadmap for the MED2050 Foresight Study, as contained in document UNEP/MED WG.469/6.

70. The discussion that followed this presentation underlined the crucial relevance of MED2050 for future development of strategies and activities, as well as for the visibility of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system in the Mediterranean countries and worldwide.

71. The Commission welcomed the proposed revised roadmap for MED2050 and progress made in the implementation of Phase I, recommending keeping between brackets in the proposed revised roadmap any mention of documents that are still under preparation (e.g. SoED 2019 Report).

72. The Commission encouraged its Members and the Contracting Parties to actively participate in the MED2050 participatory foresight exercise, acknowledging the effort to make MED2050 as inclusive as possible by creating a network that is representative of the diversity of the Mediterranean region. The involvement of the youth was particularly encouraged. Meeting participants recommended to the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) to develop MED2050 targeted communication products mindful of the different contexts for reaching a large, diversified audience and for mobilizing a broader participation.

73. The Commission also welcomed the effort to consider existing initiatives and to create synergies with recent and ongoing programmes and projects.

Conclusions:

74. The Commission welcomed the Draft Revised Roadmap for the MED2050 Foresight Study and provided comments for consideration in preparing its submission to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points and to COP 21.

Agenda item 7: Integrating Sustainability Considerations into the MAP – Barcelona Convention System

75. Introducing Agenda item 7, the President stated that the preparation of COP 21 (including the UNEP/MAP draft Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and COP 21 Ministerial Declaration) and the forthcoming evaluation of MAP Regional Strategies opened an excellent opportunity to the Commission for providing opinions to the Contracting Parties for addressing specific issues that should be more covered by the MAP – Barcelona Convention system in the future. She mentioned that document UNEP/MED WG.469/10 aimed at facilitating discussions within the MCSD on integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP – Barcelona Convention system and that the meeting was expected to provide inputs on key priorities and messages that could be integrated in the COP 21 Ministerial Declaration and/or on the new MTS and other MAP regional processes.

a) Review of the draft MAP Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and Recommendations by the MCSD

76. The MAP Coordinator presented an overview of the draft Programme of Work, focusing on a) the most important proposed activities; b) the activities that clearly integrate socio-economic sustainability considerations; and, c) the activities that are at the core of the MCSD mandate.

77. The President opened a discussion to collect MCSD Members' opinions on the integration of sustainability considerations into the draft Programme of Work.

Conclusions:

78. The Commission welcomed the presentation on the Draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and considered that the overall draft Programme of Work adequately integrates sustainability considerations.

79. MCSD Members highlighted some aspects that they consider of importance in the delivery of the Programme of Work, including the contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the importance of developing national monitoring and assessment capacity, the need for further harmonization among information platforms at national and

regional level, the role of private sector and Parliamentarians, and the urgent need to strengthen the information and communication capacity of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system.

b) Contribution to the Preparation of the COP 21 Ministerial Declaration

80. The President introduced Agenda sub-item 7.b), explaining that the Commission was expected to facilitate the identification of issues of relevance to the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21.

81. The Secretariat introduced a short Power Point presentation to launch the consultation of the MCSD Members and stimulate the discussion. The Secretariat explained that the preparation of the Ministerial Session and Declaration of COP 21 towards strategic guidance for the preparation of the MTS 2022-2027 should take into account global processes, such as the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, the CBD post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and relevant resolutions of the fourth UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA-4). More specifically, it was expected that the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 focuses on the following priority areas and key issues: Marine Litter; MPAs and Biodiversity; Climate Change; Blue Economy, with a possible focus on ICZM, MSP, and sustainable tourism. The draft Ministerial Declaration being prepared through an inclusive, transparent and participatory process in which the involvement of MCSD Members and MAP Partners shall be sought, participants to the 18th Meeting of the MCSD were expected to facilitate the identification of issues of relevance to the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21. Italy, as the host country of COP 21, referred about stakeholders' consultations that are planned in the preparation of the Ministerial Session.

82. As reflected in the conclusions below, the Commission expressed preliminary views on priorities for the future of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system and agreed to provide written inputs in due time for preparing the COP 21 Ministerial Session and Declaration.

Conclusions:

83. The Commission welcomed the inclusive process for the preparation of the Napoli Ministerial Declaration and provided initial inputs, stressing the need to focus on mechanisms, actions and tools to achieve sustainable development such as the development of adequate institutional set-up, technologies and transferable knowledge, and cultural aspects including education and awareness raising.

84. The Commission recognized that the Regional Sea Programmes are the appropriate bodies to promote the implementation of SDG 14 and encouraged further work on it.

85. It was agreed that MCSD Members will provide further suggestions to the Secretariat on the Ministerial Declaration until 25 June 2019.

Agenda item 8: MCSD Membership

86. The President recalled that COP 20 confirmed through Decision IG.23/3 "Governance" the composition of the Commission for the biennium 2018-2019, as set out in Decision IG.22/17. The Contracting Parties called upon the MCSD Members, MAP Partners and the Secretariat to mobilize expressions of interest in membership of the Commission for the next biennium.

87. The Secretariat explained that, as per paragraph 9. II. of the Composition of the MCSD (Annex I of Decision IG.22/17), nine MCSD Members³ were considered for replacement after having

³ Association of Italian Local Agenda 21; Med Cities; Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED); Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE); World Wide Fund for Nature –

completed three consecutive mandates. The Secretariat presented document UNEP/MED WG.469/9, which includes the proposal for MCSD Membership from 2020, to be agreed by COP 21.

88. The President invited MCSD Members to review the proposal for agreement towards submission to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21 for decision by the Contracting Parties.

89. As very active members are about to leave the Commission and are implementers of MSSD Flagship Initiatives, several MCSD Members expressed the need for modalities to maintain links with the organizations with whom the MAP – Barcelona Convention system has long and productive relationships. It was suggested to offer to former MCSD Members the possibility to be invited as observers to the meetings of the MCSD. Outgoing MCSD Members expressed their commitment and willingness to be involved in the work of the Commission, notably through projects' implementation. The Secretariat was invited to explore the best opportunities to facilitate continuity and interactions with outgoing members, in particular with those that have an official status of MAP Partners.

Conclusions:

90. The Commission congratulated and thanked its outgoing Members that have completed three consecutive mandates, acknowledging with appreciation the contribution from those longstanding and active partners.

91. The Commission expressed its wish to identify possible ways to keep the outgoing Members involved in its work.

92. The Commission welcomed the proposal of the MCSD Membership, as contained in Document UNEP/MED WG.469/9 and recommended to the Secretariat to submit it for adoption by the Contracting Parties at COP 21.

93. The Commission invited the Secretariat, with support from the MCSD Steering Committee, to identify and mobilize the remaining MCSD Member to complete in due time the MCSD Membership.

Agenda item 9: Any Other Matters, Including Date and Venue of the Next Meeting of the MCSD

94. IUCN informed the meeting participants about the World Conservation Congress to be held in Marseille, France, on 11-19 June 2020: <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

95. The MAP Coordinator explained that discussions are on-going with several Contracting Parties about the possible hosting of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD.

Conclusions:

96. The Commission discussed the time and venue of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD, to be set for June or July 2021. The Secretariat will communicate exact venue and dates in due course.

Agenda item 10: Conclusions and Recommendations

97. The Commission agreed on the draft Conclusions and Recommendations, which are presented in their final form in the present report of meeting.

98. The Commission invited the Secretariat to share online the presentations delivered during the 18th Meeting of the MCSD.

Agenda item 11: Closure of the Meeting

99. The President closed the meeting at 12:30 on 13 June 2019.

Conclusions:

100. The Commission paid tribute to the Government of Montenegro for its generous hosting of the 18th Meeting of the MCSD.

101. The Commission requested the President and the Secretariat to inform the forthcoming Meeting of MAP Focal Points and COP 21 of the conclusions and recommendations of the 18th Meeting of the MCSD.

Annex I
List of Participants

Annex I: List of Participants

18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019	
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Annex II
Welcome Addresses and Opening Statements

**Welcome Address – Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro,
H.E. Mr. Pavle Radulović**

Esteemed Mr. Leone,

Esteemed Madam McCluney,

Dear Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development,

Dear representatives of the United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe, Africa and Western Asia,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to greet you and welcome you to the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development. Montenegro is particularly honoured, after the successful completion of its presidency of the Mediterranean Commission in the period from 2012 to 2013, to have the opportunity to contribute to the functioning of this important regional body in the forthcoming two-year period, in cooperation with the Mediterranean Action Plan, under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme.

I would like to recall that back in 2002, at the Second Summit on Sustainable Development, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development was recognised as a body relevant to supporting the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. During that period, cooperation between Montenegro and the Mediterranean Commission resulted in the creation and adoption of the first National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2007-2012. In that way, we have established a strategic framework for supporting sustainable national development in accordance with the constitutional commitment to develop Montenegro as an ecological state.

By adopting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, four years ago, leaders committed themselves to make efforts to build a world of universal respect for ecological sustainability, human rights, rule of law, justice and equality, without any form of discrimination. Building on these achievements, the most significant step towards the sustainability of Montenegrin society was made by the adoption of a new 2030 National Sustainable Development Strategy, which aims to build a society based on continuous, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, natural resources protection, improving the state of human resources, strengthening social inclusion, and supporting these values, norms and patterns of behaviour.

Under the new 2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development, Montenegro ranked itself among the first countries in the world to fully accept and integrate into the national system the requirements of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. That set the basis to introduce the priorities of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development into our national framework. With the new strategy, we have placed resolution of concrete issues at the centre of our society's sustainable development and we are determined to examine them objectively and critically. We intend to achieve a vision of sustainable development of Montenegro by 2030, accompanied by continuous, inclusive, regionally balanced and sustainable economic development, full employment and dignified work for all. In doing so, we need to reduce the demographic deficit and enable population growth by achieving strategic goals and implementing measures of sustainable development, primarily those that are relevant for the introduction of green economy, improving the state of human resources and strengthening social inclusion.

Without forgetting the contribution of the Mediterranean Commission to building an institutional framework for sustainable development both in Montenegro and throughout the Mediterranean, we are aware of the importance of its role in the implementation of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional and national level. Additionally, uniqueness of this regional body based on the commitment to the sustainable development of coastal areas of the Mediterranean in accordance with the Barcelona Convention and the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean provides a unique institutional and programme context for the implementation of the 14th sustainable development goal, as well as goals 6, 11, 12, 13 and 15. Such uniqueness opens up new opportunities for Mediterranean countries to implement, within the frameworks of their national sustainable development policies, integrated coastal zone management instruments to limit the rising pressures on natural resources of the sea and coastal areas, while maintaining the trend of positive economic effects.

In this regard, I believe that based on positive effects and lessons learned in the implementation of national sustainable development policies and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, in the forthcoming period we need to establish mechanisms that will put our Mediterranean context of action into service of overall efforts in achieving the objectives and tasks defined by the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this respect, the participation of representatives of the United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe, Africa and Western Asia opens the possibility to establish functional mechanisms for connecting the Mediterranean region with the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, that is, to integrate the progress made in the Mediterranean region into global reports on sustainable development.

During the Montenegrin presidency of the Mediterranean Commission, we will strive to provide an adequate contribution to the achievement of this ambition. Therefore, it is important to continue implementing mechanisms for analysing the compatibility of national strategies and the institutional framework for sustainable development with the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) of National Strategies for Sustainable Development. Stemming from the experience of Montenegro gained in this process during 2016 and 2017, I underline the need for stronger connections of this process with reporting within the scope of preparation of global reports on the implementation of the UN Agenda on Sustainable Development, including sustainable development indicators.

Monitoring measurable effects towards achieving sustainable development goals is demanding, as it implies a reorganisation of the existing system of expert methodological and statistical monitoring of the state-of-play, processes and outcome indicators in all segments of society's development. Although Montenegro has made significant progress in this respect, a complicated process of introducing sustainable development indicators in line with the National Strategy's Action Plan is ahead of us, in order to be able to round out the reporting system in accordance with the requirements of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, we express our support for the activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan aimed at updating and applying the Mediterranean set of sustainable development indicators, with an expectation that this segment will be fully connected to the activities undertaken by UN agencies in this regard, primarily by the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme. The use of various information platforms, as well as their testing and application should be coordinated, in order to facilitate the generation of data from national and regional levels aimed at reaching measurable effects towards achieving sustainable goals.

In addition to the previous elements, which should, in my opinion, be predominantly shaping the activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Mediterranean Commission in the upcoming period, I would like to specifically emphasise the importance of launching initiatives that should give concrete form to practical approaches to the implementation of priority actions and sustainable development measures. In this respect, we support the initial step of presenting the first set of flagship

initiatives at this meeting. I believe that in the period ahead, we need to strengthen that part of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, while encouraging science-policy interface as an asset for the implementation of a sustainable development policy, and evidence-based decision making. We suggest that this approach be strengthened by ensuring that all groups of members of the Mediterranean Commission play an active role in this process, while promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among numerous entities, which is one of the basic tasks of Mediterranean Commission's work.

In terms of implementation of the priority measures from the Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, I consider especially important the development of optimal practical models for the application of integrated coastal zones management principles, in synergy with the application of an ecosystem approach in the planning of intended use of marine areas. In this context, we expect that this session of the Mediterranean Commission will produce clear guidelines as to the priorities to be integrated into the Mediterranean Action Plan's programme of activities and the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy.

It is very important that we make the outcome of this meeting of the Mediterranean Commission visible at the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Summit, which will discuss in September the progress of implementation of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, I express readiness of Montenegro to contribute to the presentation of Mediterranean Commission's work priorities within its participation in that important event, and to use that opportunity to stress the need for its stronger integration into the existing UN sustainable development institutional mechanisms. At the same time, I would like to express my satisfaction with the participation of Dr Muhammad Saidam in his capacity of member of an independent expert team tasked with developing the first four-year Global Sustainable Development Report that will be presented at the upcoming Summit. This is another significant step towards connecting our regional activities with the global institutional framework for sustainable development.

We remain convinced that in the future the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development will improve the implementation of initiatives and decisions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) in the region of the Mediterranean, and additionally contribute to the successful outcome of relevant regional and global processes. We emphasise Montenegro's readiness to provide the greatest possible support to these efforts, within the limits of its capabilities.

I wish you successful work and a pleasant stay in the Montenegrin part of the Mediterranean.

Welcome Message – UN Resident Coordinator in Montenegro, Ms. Fiona McCluney

Excellency,

Dear MAP Coordinator,

Dear representatives of the UN Regional Commissions,

Dear participants to the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development,

Dear colleagues,

Let me welcome you all on behalf of the United Nations Family in Montenegro. For over 10 years, our UN Team has been working as One – in so called Delivering as One modality – and it is my great pleasure as the UN Resident Coordinator to support this initiative driven by our sister agency – United Nations Environment. Ongoing UN reform at the country level, encompassed by reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator system, provides even greater support and guidance to agencies bringing their specific expertise to the field.

As reflected in the Environmental Sustainability Result Area of our UN strategic work in the country, the value which the United Nations Environment brings to the team is critical for environmental initiatives such as Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. Prevention of degradation of biodiversity of the Mediterranean is, no doubt, an extremely important issue for number of reasons including economic, social and environmental. For this cause, Barcelona Convention gathers 22 parties surrounding this unique eco-system in an exemplary case of how the multilateralism works around critical issues.

Like any other climate action, the Barcelona Convention is in its heart a transformative action. It provides an institutional framework for Mediterranean Governments to assess and control pollution, as well as to formulate their national marine environmental policies. On the other side, the governments are expected to improve their capacities to prevent marine environmental degradation.

Montenegro has done a lot in this area, especially through embedding key environmental principles into the National Strategy for Sustainable Development by 2030. By doing so, Montenegro has set the ground and direction for country's development along the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a vision of better, more prosperous future for all adopted by all the UN member countries in 2015. Still, more can be done in this regard, especially when it comes to strengthening the institutional setup for the implementation of the National Strategy or for Sustainable Development. Active role of Montenegro in Barcelona Convention is an important step forward in this direction.

I hope you will enjoy your stay in this beautiful piece of Mediterranean and I wish you productive work next two days.

Thank you.

**Opening Address – President of the MCSD Steering Committee (July 2017 – June 2019),
Ms. Maria Papaioannou (Greece)**

Minister,

Mr Coordinator,

Esteemed participants,

Colleagues from the UNEP/MAP Secretariat,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to be opening the works of the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development.

On behalf of the Commission, let me welcome you all, and most of all, let me convey our sincere thanks to the Government of Montenegro for hosting this Meeting in the beautiful town of Budva.

My sincere thanks also go to the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention for its hard work and efforts in technically and logistically organising this Meeting.

Let me also welcome, beyond the Members of the Commission, all the observers and the invited speakers that will be holding presentations over the next 2,5 days. The level of participation and attendance we have, demonstrates the interest and the importance of the work of the MCSD, first of all for the regional level, but also for the national and the global levels.

The role of MCSD, established already in 1995, is crucial as it serves as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties and other regional actors to assist their efforts to integrate environmental considerations in socioeconomic programmes and, in so doing, promoting sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean. This forum for experience sharing is also unique in its composition, with Contracting Parties and stakeholders participating on an equal footing.

This work is of tremendous value to translate the vague idea of promoting a new 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, into concrete and practical actions.

In particular now, as we are already 4 years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the global Sustainable Development Goals, 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.

Our region is a pioneer globally. Over the years we have developed concrete tools and mechanisms that constitute direct analogues of the global structures and processes for Sustainable Development down at the regional Mediterranean level.

As a reminder, let me stress out the following:

- The revised Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (the MSSD) (2016-2025) corresponds directly to the global 2030 Agenda as it had been very cleverly crafted to embed the SDGs;
- The MCSD itself corresponds to the global High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (the HLPF) that convenes at ECOSOC level and every four years at Heads of State level;

- The Voluntary National reviews (VNRs) that countries voluntarily present each year at the July HLPF have their analogue in the Mediterranean: the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (or as you know it SIMPEER) with a strong peer-learning character;

- And finally, the Global Sustainable Development Indicators Framework have their Mediterranean analogue: the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard with its 28 indicators, now fully aligned with SDG indicators to capture the progress in implementing the MSSD in quantitative terms.

The MCSD unfortunately cannot be accredited as an official Regional UN Commission at the HLPF, due to the fact that the Mediterranean stretches over 3 different continents. Therefore, we are in close collaboration with the respective UN Regional Commissions, the UNECA, the UNECE and the UN-ESCWA, to establish close links and synergies between our respective activities so as to make the work of the MCSD and the MSSD more visible to the rest of the world, in particular during their annual Regional Forum for Sustainable Development.

This has been one of our key priorities since 2017. Through exchanges and live meetings also with UN-DESA in New York, with an active presence and with the organization of side events, we have managed to develop close cooperation channels, to raise the visibility of the MSSD at the global level and show its relevance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, globally, regionally and nationally.

Now, with the first SDG Summit, the first HLPF at Heads of State / UN General Assembly level, to take place on 24 and 25 September this year, in New York, the eminent publication of the first Quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report, and in view of the probable reform of the HLPF modalities for the next four year cycle, we need to take advantage of the events and developments ahead this year, to influence the work of the MCSD, including the mid-term evaluation of the MSSD that will have to be carried out next year and be concluded by the COP in 2021.

These past two years, since July 2017, have been very rich for the work of the MCSD and its Steering Committee in promoting actual implementation of the MSSD.

One of the main mandates that the MCSD Steering Committee received by COP 20 in December 2017 in Tirana, was to coordinate work on ensuring full consistency and synergy between the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the global SDG indicators framework.

We have invested a lot of effort and technical work to this end. With the support of the Secretariat and the Blue Plan in particular, we have assessed all original Dashboard indicators and we have resulted in an updated proposed list (of 28 indicators) aligned to the SDG ones, adequately capturing Mediterranean needs and circumstances and, of course, the existence of a clear methodology and availability of data. The Dashboard should be considered as a living list that will receive more updates in the future, as work on the global SDG indicators, especially Tier III indicators, progresses. The work done already sets out a very good basis for the future. It has also been a very helpful exercise for related work at the national level, as countries still strive with setting up national monitoring mechanisms for the SDGs implementation.

In the core of the work of the MCSD in 2018-2019 has also been the launching of the 2nd edition of SIMPEER with three more countries participating now, Albania, Egypt and Tunisia.

Moreover, a lot of effort has been invested in mobilizing the 6 Flagship Initiatives that had not been launched. Thanks to the commitment of the MCSD Steering Committee Members and collective outreach efforts, we have now leaders for 4 additional Flagship Initiatives, that will be presented this afternoon.

Based on the COP 20 mandate, considerable work has also been done on the preparation of the Assessment Studies, in particular for the MED 2050 Foresight Study that will be delivered in two biennia, the first phase of which feeds into the State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED) Report to be endorsed at the COP in Naples, later this year.

Finally, we have achieved considerable progress in the reporting mechanism for the MSSD implementation, which is a collective endeavor that goes far beyond the responsibilities of the Secretariat. We have further strengthened synergies with Mediterranean stakeholders around collective work. However, we need to continue efforts in further mobilizing partners, as we can all learn a lot from each other, by reporting on respective activities.

At this stage, I would like to take the opportunity to warmly thank personally the members of the MCSD Steering Committee 2017-2019, namely RAED, COMPSUD, SDSN Med, Albania, Israel and Tunisia. We were very lucky and honored to have some of the most dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced members in the Steering Committee that made our collaboration very fruitful, pleasant and output oriented.

This gives me also the opportunity to acknowledge with appreciation the work done by some of the historic and most active Members of the Commission that will, unfortunately, have to be replaced after this MCSD Meeting, after fulfilling three consecutive terms: MIO-ECSDE, RAED, WWF Med, IUCN, CEDARE, Med Cities, the Association of Italian Cities for Local Agenda 21, UMCE (Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises) and ENDA Maghreb (*Environnement et Développement au Maghreb*). We warmly thank you for your exemplary work that sets high standards for next members. And let me stress that we need to seek ways so that these entities are kept on board as observers, as MAP partners and in specific projects.

Colleagues,

The Agenda of this MCSD is very rich and dense. Over the coming 2,5 days, we will be participating in two kind of sessions: interactive and informative ones during which we will be sharing our experiences, as well as sessions on issues on which we need to reach to an agreement and provide concrete advice and recommendations, for example as a contribution to the COP 21 Ministerial Declaration.

So here I would like to conclude this opening statement and without any further delay, let me give the floor back to the Coordinator.

Thank you very much.

Welcome Statement – MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone

Minister Radulovic,

Ms. Maria Papaioannou, President of the MCSD,

Ms. Fiona McCluney, UN Resident Coordinator,

Members and Observers,

Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues,

On behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme, its Acting Executive Director Assistant Secretary General, Ms. Joyce Msuya, and all of us in the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention, I want to thank you for being with us this week.

Again, a warm thank to our friends, to you Minister and through you to the Government, and all the friends that we have here in Montenegro. It is the second time in this decade that Montenegro hosts a meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD): it is in itself testament of the commitment and of the big efforts, including through the definition and implementation of a National Strategy on Sustainable Development, that happen in this country; a small country by size but certainly big in terms of supporting us, in terms of making sure that cooperation and achievements are real.

The MAP – Barcelona Convention system is a UN international treaty and a regional Multilateral Environmental Agreement that, for four and a half decades, has brought around the table the 21 riparian countries of the Mediterranean and the European Union, as Contracting Parties, as well as a quite large number of partners – a few of them are here today as Members of the MCSD.

Our mandate focuses on the protection of the marine environment and coastal areas, but in the text of the Barcelona Convention itself it is clearly stated that this is also a contribution to sustainable development. The vision that guides us is one of peace, prosperity, and healthy ecosystems in a region which is too often characterized by inequalities, tensions and conflicts, and very high pressure on natural resources. But let's not forget that it is also a region of high levels of education, economic and industrial development, vibrant civil society, leading research institutions, and great opportunities for partnerships.

The sustainable management of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast has always been our fundamental priority to render compatible socio-economic development and protection of the environment in this region.

However, the predominant paradigm for jobs and wealth creation, urbanization and economic growth is coming at a very high cost to the environment, especially in a fragile ecosystem such as the Mediterranean Sea. Different economic sectors are often in competition to use the limited resources that are available. The region's heritage and natural resources have experienced a progressive degradation over the last decades. In terms of adequate responses to those societal challenges, our role is to make sure that decision-makers, the private sector and the people realized that the protection of our marine and coastal environment can be good for socio-economic development. The long-term socio-economic development must rely upon conservation and sustainable use of the Mediterranean Sea and coast resources.

In brief, pressures continue to grow on the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. There are huge pressures on invaluable ecosystems on which our own lives and livelihoods of so many people depend. We are facing increasing challenges that require serious attention and immediate action. Let's be frank, more challenges lie ahead of us and there are many reasons to be concerned. But on the positive side, we feel that progress has happened; we have a lot of achievements to show in our little structure of the MAP – Barcelona Convention. All this reminds us that change is possible with the proper commitment.

In four decades, through the MAP – Barcelona Convention system, Mediterranean countries have been working in unison, rising above political, cultural, developmental and religious differences to address the environmental and other issues of this extraordinary basin that gathers three continents. This must be maintained and even strengthened.

This is why we are here in this beautiful country of Montenegro; the role of the MCSD continues to be very relevant and we have been working on strengthening that role, with the achievement of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), as a reference framework for all stakeholders and partners to translate the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. The regional dimension has an important role to play, as clearly stated by the 2030 Agenda; this where the integration happens, this is the relevant scale to translate the global ambitions in reality at the regional and national levels. The MCSD is a very innovative regional multi-stakeholder advisory body, a platform for cooperation and shared leadership that we need to continue to carry forward.

The 18th Meeting of the MCSD is timely in the global and regional agendas on sustainable development:

- At the global level, the SDG Summit will be held in September 2019, at the Heads of State and Government level, to assess the progress achieved since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015. We are very honored by the presence of Dr. Muhamad Saidam (Jordan), who is a Member of the International Group of Scientists nominated by the UN Secretary General to prepare the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report.

At the global level, attention on Ocean is increasing; the pick was the UN Ocean Conference on SDG 14 in 2017 in New York. This attention continues with specific processes, such as the Climate Change UNFCCC COP in December 2019 that is called the Blue COP because it is going to focus on the impacts of climate change on oceans, following the release of the IPCC special report on Ocean and cryosphere. It is a huge opportunity for us and we want to show the work that we are doing at the regional level is so relevant and important for the achievement of the global objectives.

- At the regional level, as far as the MAP – Barcelona Convention system is concerned, the MSSD is already at half-way and we will launch the mid-term evaluation next year. We will also launch, at the Conference of the Parties in Naples in December 2019, the definition of the MAP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027. It is a very important strategic moment for us to define where we are going in the medium and long terms. We will look at the MCSD as a fundamental part in the definition of this strategic framework.

Already four SDG 14 targets are coming to their deadlines next year, which makes our meeting as well more important: SDG Target 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems (...); SDG Target 14.4: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, (...); SDG Target 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas (...); SDG Target 14.6: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies (...).

Those four SDG 14 Targets are obviously relevant to our work and we are looking at ways to contribute, with our analysis, to the follow-up of these targets in the Mediterranean region.

Increasing attention to oceans in the global environmental agenda is also the objective of the forthcoming UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (Lisbon, Portugal, June 2020) that will be co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya. That will happen three years after the very successful Ocean Conference held in New York, where thousands of Voluntary Commitments were registered, including from Mediterranean countries, the Secretariat and our partners.

The MCSD's contribution to sustainable development is important and deserves strengthening. This 18th Meeting of the MCSD represents a unique occasion for meaningful exchange of experiences, with our colleagues from UN Regional Economic Commissions, Members of the Commission and Partners, on the way towards the 21st Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 21) to be held in Naples, Italy, from 2 to 5 December 2019.

I count on your active participation and extend my best wishes for a very productive meeting.

Annex III
Agenda of Meeting

Annex III: Agenda of Meeting

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 Progress Report on the Work Done after the 17th Meeting of the MCSD

Agenda item 4 Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, and the MSSD

- a) Reflecting most Recent Global and Regional Processes
- b) Implementing SDGs and the MSSD at the National Level

Agenda item 5 MSSD Follow-up – Good Practices, Exchange of Experiences and Challenges

- a) MSSD Flagship Initiatives, Major Regional and National Programmes
- b) Green, Blue and Circular Economy, including Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)
- c) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard
- d) MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation (2020-2021)

Agenda item 6 Preparation of MAP Assessment Studies on the Interactions between the Environment and Development

- a) 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED 2019)
- b) Foresight Study on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (MED2050)

Agenda item 7 Integrating Sustainability Considerations into the MAP – Barcelona Convention System

- a) Review of the draft MAP Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and Recommendations by the MCSD
- b) Contribution to the Preparation of the COP 21 Ministerial Declaration

Agenda item 8 MCSD Membership

Agenda item 9 Any Other Matters, Including Date and Venue of the Next Meeting of the MCSD

Agenda item 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

Agenda item 11 Closure of the Meeting

Annex IV

Reflecting Most Recent Global and Regional Processes.

Concept Note for Agenda item 4.a)

Annex IV: Reflecting Most Recent Global and Regional Processes.

Concept Note for Agenda item 4.a)

The session organized under Agenda item 4.a) aims first at informing the meeting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the regional level, from a policy and institutional point of view, addressing the following key question: What are the main achievements, challenges, and perspectives towards delivery of the SDGs in Africa (or North Africa), Europe (or South Europe) and Western Asia (or Middle East)?

The regional dimension will then be completed by an overview, from a scientific perspective, of the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (process of elaboration and key findings).

Beyond the presentations from key note speakers, the conducting line of the session and discussion is captured in the following key question: How can the MCSA and widely the MAP – Barcelona Convention system team up with the invited organizations, identifying priorities for cooperation in the future?

Key note speakers will be invited to provide a PowerPoint presentation – of 15 minutes maximum each (6-8 slides) – and to reply to questions that will be addressed by the Moderator during the discussion. Interactions with the audience is also expected.

Introduction

The session will gather:

- One member of the UN Independent Group of Scientists that drafted the Global Sustainable Development Report (2019 GSDR) to be presented at the SDG Summit in September 2019, Dr. Muhammad Saidam (Senior Researcher – Executive Director, formerly at the Royal Scientific Society, Jordan);
- The Director of the Office for North Africa of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Ms. Lilia Naas Hachem;
- The Principal Advisor of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit, Ms. Monika Linn;
- The Director of the Sustainable Development Policies Division of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), Ms. Roula Majdalani.

Moderator: Dr. Olivera Komar, University of Montenegro.

Regional Dimension – Institutional and Policy-based Approach

Background: The UN Regional Commissions have a significant role to play in promoting sustainable development in their respective regions by promoting peer learning and cooperation, including effective linkage among global, regional, sub-regional and national processes to advance sustainable development. Regional Commissions convene annually Regional Fora for Sustainable Development, including follow-up and review process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regional Fora create a space to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in SDG implementation and helps identify major regional and sub-regional trends. They also provide regional inputs to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

The Moderator will invite the three UN Regional Commissions that cover the Mediterranean basin (UNECA, UNECE, UN-ESCWA) to introduce the outcome of their respective 2019 Regional Forum for Sustainable Development. Presentations could also report on the outcome of the 2017 and 2018 Regional Fora (see below), as well as on inputs delivered to the HLPF, putting the emphasis as far as possible on:

- Transboundary issues and modalities of cooperation for sustainable development at the regional level in the context of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs;
- Synergies between Environmental and Socio-economic SDGs/Targets, with emphasis on marine and coastal issues;
- Regional reporting efforts (and/or support to national reporting mechanisms, if relevant) through data sharing and improvement of monitoring system (data for reporting on SDGs; needs and expectations created by the SDGs; capacity building activities).

2019 – Theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. SDGs under review:



[Presentations from speakers can focus on key messages for SDG 13 (SDG 4 can also be considered)]

2018 – Theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. SDGs under review:



[Presentations from speakers can focus on key messages for SDG 12 (SDGs 6 and 11 can also be considered)]

2017 – Theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”. SDGs under review:



[Presentations from speakers can focus on key messages for SDG 14]

Possible key questions to be addressed by the Moderator (proposal):

- On which themes/issues the regional cooperation has an important potential to achieve significant results? As the regional dimension is considered as a bridge between Global and National, what are the interactions with these two other levels of governance?
- In view of the review of the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF, how could the regional dimension be more adequately presented and reflected into the discussions at the global HLPF? Taking into account the HLPF’s mandate for the review of the SDGs implementation, how could the role and input of the Regional Preparatory Forums be more adequately defined so as to provide a more substantive input to the HLPF?
- What are the challenges related to SDG implementation that need to be further addressed in your region (e.g. transposition of SDGs at the national level; monitoring system to measure progress, including harmonization between global and national frameworks)? How can this be done – through enhanced cooperation with the MCSD and MAP – Barcelona Convention system?

The Global Dimension – Science-based Approach (Science-Policy Interface)



Background: The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) was initiated in 2012 following the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). With the introduction of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the GSDR was necessitated to enhance the science-policy interface of the HLPF. As per the Ministerial Declaration by the HLPF (July 2016), the quadrennial GSDR is being prepared by an Independent Group of Scientists (IGS), that is interdisciplinary and geographically representative at the global level. The 2019 GSDR will be launched in September 2019 at the Heads of State and Heads of Government Summit that will review the 2030 Agenda.




Dr. Muhammad Saidam will deliver an overview of the process and work-in-progress of the 2019 GSDR, as a crucial component for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, putting the emphasis on the potential of science-policy interfaces to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development, and reflecting the universal, indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Possible key questions to be addressed by the Moderator (proposal):

- Could you please report on the IGS experience in terms of collaboration among eminent scientists, as well as on the interactions with the Policy sphere? How did it work? What are the lessons learned? What could be improved? Do you think that such a process is worth to be undertaken at the regional level?
- Regarding key findings of the 2019 GSDR, where we stand regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the global level? Achievements and challenges?
- Considering the integrated, indivisible and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, how cross-cutting issues and interlinkages between SDGs are addressed in the 2019 GSDR?

Biographies of Invited Speakers and the Moderator

	<p>Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas (Tunisia) has been appointed Director of the ECA Office for North Africa in Morocco since October 2017.</p> <p>A Tunisian national, Lilia has been working for the United Nations for over 20 years. Before joining UNECA, Lilia was Chief Office for Arab States at the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Geneva, from 2013 to 2017. Lilia joined ITC in September 1998 where she held various managerial positions working in the Office for Africa, Office for Asia Pacific, Enterprise Competitiveness Section and Sector Competitiveness Section.</p> <p>In 2009-2010, Lilia held the position of Manager, Local Development Programme at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) strengthening the capacity of local authorities to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).</p> <p>Prior to joining the UN, Lilia worked with Hewlett Packard Company in the USA and the Export Promotion Centre (CEPEX) in Tunisia. She holds an MBA in International Business Management and a Master of Science in Management Information Systems from University of Maryland College Park in the USA. She is fluent in English, French and Arabic.</p>
	<p>Ms. Monika Linn (Switzerland) is the Principal Adviser to the Executive Secretary and Chief of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Her Unit leads and coordinates UNECE's contributions to the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the organisation of the annual Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, as well as for other cross-sectoral themes in the development field, like Financing for Development and Gender.</p> <p>Ms. Linn has 25 years of experience in multilateral work on environment and sustainable development. Before joining the United Nations in 2001, she worked for 10 years in the International Affairs Division of the Swiss Environment Agency and was involved in a wide range of multilateral meetings, conferences and negotiation processes at global and regional levels.</p> <p>Previous assignments in the UN include work in the Division for Sustainable Development in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), inter-agency cooperation as the first Director of the Environmental Management Group in UNEP, and Deputy Director of the Environment Division in UNECE.</p>

	<p>Ms. Roula Majdalani (Lebanon), Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).</p> <p>Majdalani was ESCWA’s Acting Deputy Executive Secretary for Programme Support (DES-PS) between October 2018 and February 2019, and has previously served as Human Settlements Officer, First Economic Affairs Officer on water resources, and Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section.</p> <p>Majdalani holds a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning (Syracuse University) and worked with Dar Al-Handasah Consultants (London). She has publications on green economy, integrated management of water resources, housing development and sustainable cities, and has led multi-stakeholders programme and initiatives on climate change, governance of natural resources and water-energy-food security.</p>
	<p>Dr. Muhammad Saidam (Jordan) holds a PhD in Environment and Water Resources Engineering from the Imperial College of Science Technology & Medicine – London (1995), formerly Chief Scientist at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), and a Senior Researcher since 2006. He was the Chief Science Officer for Applied Science (Energy, Water, Environment, Sustainable Buildings and ICT) (2014-2016) in RSS. Prior to that, held the position of an Executive Director of RSS Knowledge Sector, (2012 - 2014). Director of the Environment Monitoring and Research Central Unit (2002-2010). As a Programme Manager at UNDP, he supervised the management of projects in Climate Change & Environment, Poverty and MDGs, Democratic Governance and Disaster Risk Management in Jordan (2010–2011). He served in the International Council for Science (ICSU) as a member of the Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR) (2015-2018). He also served as a working group member for an InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) project (2016-2019) on improving scientific input to the Sustainable Development Goals. In December 2016, the United Nations appointed Muhammad as a member of the 15 “Independent Group of Scientists and Experts” tasked with the preparation of the first quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). Due for publication in 2019, the GSDR is intended to inform the first High-Level Global Review of the 2030 Agenda & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2109.</p>
	<p>Ms. Olivera Komar (Montenegro) is associate professor of political science at University of Montenegro. She is the national coordinator of European Social Survey (http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org) in Montenegro, Advisory board member of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office RYCO (http://www.rycowb.org). Also, she is the principal investigator for Montenegrin National Election Study (mnes.defacto.me) and the member of Committee for Ethics in Research in UNICEF Montenegro.</p> <p>She was one of the authors of National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro, primarily in charge of social resources chapter. She was co-author of the 2016 Final Report on Implementation of Millennium Development Goals in Montenegro and co-author of the Local Action Plan for Sustainable Development of the Capital Podgorica. With her agency, De Facto Consultancy, she worked on preparing Montenegrin administrative and statistical system for reporting in accordance with SDG indicators in 2018.</p>

Annex V

*The Mediterranean Transition towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy:
Current Initiatives, Needs, and Gaps.*
Concept Note for Agenda item 5.b)

Annex V: The Mediterranean Transition towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy: Current Initiatives, Needs, and Gaps. Concept Note for Agenda item 5.b)

Background

In the framework of the international Sustainable Blue Economy Conference (Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2018), the Secretariat and its Plan Bleu/Regional Activity Centre joined hands with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative to organize a side-event entitled “The Regional Dimension of a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy: The Model of the Mediterranean” (see report in document UNEP/MED WG.469/Inf.9). The side event aimed to foster improved models of regional cooperation to promote the achievement of a truly sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region.

All partners of the Side Event agreed on the need to further collaborate to foster the achievement of a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy in the Mediterranean. Various activities have been proposed, including:

- Organization of further regional joint events to address Blue Economy developments in the region, to be held during relevant regional meetings and conferences leading to COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019).
- Organization of joint thematic workshops and initiatives aiming to address specific priority issues related to the Blue Economy and promote exchange of best practices.

The session proposed under Agenda item 5.b) of the 18th Meeting of the MCSD represents a follow-up opportunity for the Nairobi Conference, allowing interested MCSD Members, Partners, and MAP Components to further explore opportunities to foster the development of a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy in the region.

Objectives

The session will have three main objectives:

- To provide an overview of current Partners’ initiatives aiming to promote the achievement of a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region;
- To promote synergies among MCSD Members and regional actors around Blue Economy related activities; and,
- To discuss regional strategic needs and gaps towards the development of a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region.

This interactive session will gather MCSD Members and regional stakeholders interested/involved in Blue Economy initiatives in the Mediterranean.

Session organizer: WWF Mediterranean

Moderator: A Member of the MCSD (tbc), supported by the Secretariat

Partners:

- Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- IUCN Mediterranean
- Plan Bleu
- PAP/RAC

Tentative agenda

- Brief introduction from the moderator
- Ongoing regional initiatives: short roundtable presentations from the partners
- Roundtable discussion: Strategic needs and gaps to address in the future. Focus on maritime and coastal tourism. The tourism sector will be taken as an example to focus the discussion on: Identification and replication of sustainable and inclusive tourism business models in the Mediterranean (existing case studies); Identification of policy needs and gaps; Implementation of sustainable finance tools in Mediterranean maritime and coastal tourism.

Expected outcome

Discuss a potential side event focusing on Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy – Focus on Marine and Coastal Tourism at the COP 21.