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89th Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Teleconference, 22-23 April 2020

Report: Conclusions and Recommendations

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

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Introduction

1. In consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 89th Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols was held on 22-23 April 2020. The meeting was held through teleconference, due to the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic (instead of Rome, Italy, as originally planned).

Participation

2. The meeting was attended by the Presidency: Mr. Oliviero Montanaro, accompanied by Mr. Roberto Giangreco, Ms. Silvia Sartori and Ms. Valentina Mauriello (Italy); the Vice-Presidents: Amb. Yann Wehring, accompanied by Mr. Benoit Rodrigues and Mr. Clément Payeur (France); Ms. Ayelet Rosen (Israel); Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro); Ms. Asli Topalak (Turkey); and the Rapporteur, Ms. Nassira Rheyati (Morocco). Ms. Marijana Mance (European Union) attended the meeting as an observer. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, Programme Officer). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The Bureau meeting was opened at 09:30 on 22 April 2020 by Mr. Oliviero Montanaro, Chairperson of the meeting. He welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their first meeting of the 2020-2021 biennium.

4. The Coordinator also made a short statement of welcome to the participants.

II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

5. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.89/1. No additional issues were added to agenda item 7 “*Any Other Matters*”. The Agenda is presented in Annex II of the present document.

III. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for January-March 2020

6. The Coordinator introduced the documents “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period January-March 2020*” (UNEP/MED BUR.89/3) and “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP 21 Decisions*” (UNEP/MED BUR.89/4) and made reference to the “*Reports of the 39th and 40th Meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel*” and the “*Compilation of Project Fiches*”, presented in documents UNEP/MED BUR.89/Inf.4 and Inf.5 respectively, for the information of the Bureau.

7. In his presentation, the Coordinator highlighted that, despite the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it, there is already much progress during the first months of the biennium in putting into action the implementation of COP 21 Decisions, including the Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) for 2020-2021. Special reference was made to the meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel in January 2020, which provided the opportunity for a strategic, in-depth, discussion on the priorities of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system for the biennium, including the preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy. It also provided for an early discussion on other strategic processes, such as the preparation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAP BIO), the proposal for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides pursuant to MARPOL

Annex VI, the Mid-Term Evaluation of the MSSD and of the Sustainable Consumption Production Action Plan (SCP Action Plan), etc.

8. Further highlights focused in the progress on resource mobilization, including the conclusion of the development process of the GEF-funded MedProgramme – an ambitious programme that has mobilized approximately 37 million USD for the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, its partners and the GEF eligible countries in the Mediterranean. The concept notes for two new projects, namely EcAp-MED III and Marine Litter MED II following-up to successfully completed previous projects, have been submitted and approved by the 8th Programme Steering Committee Meeting of the GPGC funding instrument under the EC-UNEP framework agreement in February 2020; the full proposals were under finalization. Furthermore, the meeting was informed that a proposal for a joint project with FAO/GFCM was under submission to GEF, while proposals for new projects have been prepared and submitted by MAP Components to different donors and funding sources, supporting the implementation of the PoW for 2020-2021. Reference was also made to existing projects that are successfully implemented, such as the GEF Adriatic project and the EC-funded IMAP-MPA project, as well as to projects that were successfully finalized, such as the EC-funded MED MPA Network and SEIS Support Mechanism projects, as well as the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea Protection.

9. Highlights included the update of technical features of the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) to launch the submission of national implementation reports for the 2018-2019 biennium. Synergies and complementarities were enhanced with global and regional institutions and organizations, such as the European Union, the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the IMO and the Basel Convention (and especially its Plastic Waste Partnership). The meeting was also informed on progress regarding science-policy interface and assessment reports, including the co-organization by MAP of the Regional Workshop for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (Venice, Italy, 21-23 January 2020), the progress on the publication and communication of the SoED 2019 report, the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR roadmap, and the finalization of the report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean.

10. Finally, the Coordinator informed the meeting on specific progress in relation to the core and cross-cutting themes of the 2016-2022 Medium-Term Strategy. He noted, inter alia, that Nature-Based Solutions are having an increasingly central place in the work of UNEP and this is closely related to the implementation of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems core theme of the MTS, and beyond.

11. The Chairman and other Bureau members congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent work done during this short period and under the COVID-19 special circumstances. They also provided some specific comments on the text of the Progress Report.

12. Regarding paragraph 110, it was clarified that the preparation of the CAMP Agreement between Albania and Italy does not depend on the possible signature of a new bilateral agreement between Italy and UNEP/MAP and that the preparation of the CAMP Agreement will proceed as provided for in the PoW; allocation of external resources will be needed at a later stage, for the implementation of the CAMP Agreement. Furthermore, discussion took place regarding a possible development of a project proposal to the Green Climate Fund. The Coordinator clarified that this is still at a very early stage, and that consultations will take place with the Bureau and Contracting Parties later in the year. The Bureau members expressed appreciation for this matter as well as on the progress on bilateral CAMPs and noted that these issues are also relevant to the preparation of the next MTS.

13. The Bureau members expressed appreciation also for the discussions that took place during and after the 40th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel on the preparation of the new MTS. They also asked the Secretariat if there are contingency plans regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the activities of UNEP/MAP, noting that there is always a risk that after the COVID-19 crisis the international agenda focuses on economic/financial issues and sideline the environment. The importance of biodiversity issues as well as of climate change were touched upon.

14. The meeting expressed appreciation for the support of Italy in a number of activities through the bilateral Agreement between IMELS and UNEP/MAP and highlighted the usefulness of some other projects such as the MEDREGION project. A member of the Bureau highlighted the necessity of exploring new instruments and sub-regional implementation mechanisms that would be used to support group of countries that do not benefit from present and future projects financed by the GPGC funding instrument of the European Commission. Regarding paragraph 107 of the Progress Report, the Bureau members asked that the PAP/RAC Focal Points are associated with the preparation of the toolbox for the analytical phase of the MSP process.

15. The Coordinator acknowledged the concerns of the Bureau members regarding the possible implications of the COVID-19 situation and informed the participants that relevant discussions and actions have been initiated at all levels: within UNEP/MAP, UNEP Headquarters and the UN in general. On the possible effects of COVID-19 on the global environmental priorities, Mr. Leone shared with the meeting the relevant priorities highlighted by the UNEP Headquarters, namely “*focus on nature*”, “*waste management*” (and especially medical waste) and “*greening the responses*”.

16. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the work done in the period January-March 2020 as presented by the Secretariat, and its satisfaction for the efforts and results achieved so far.

IV. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

17. The Coordinator informed the meeting on the progress made as presented in document UNEP/MED BUR.89/5 “*Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues*”, addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, and administrative matters. He noted that the current situation is unpredictable due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the Working Capital Reserve (WCR) and Net Cash Balance are very important since they provide added security to the system.

18. Noting the healthy status of the Mediterranean Trust Fund, the Bureau expressed appreciation for the information provided. The members of the Bureau asked for further update on the possible impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on the financial situation, once such analysis is completed, and to be alerted if any complications arise.

19. The Secretariat pointed out that the level of financial contributions received for 2019 is very high and contributes to the healthy financial situation of the system. Contributions are being received also for 2020, although at a slower rate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was added that the Secretariat is in contact with several Contracting Parties, which have confirmed that contributions will be paid in full, although with a short delay.

20. Regarding long standing arrears, it was highlighted that two out of the countries in arrears, namely the State of Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, face specific critical situation. It was added that this fact differentiates them from the other countries in arrears and should be taken into consideration. It was noted that there may also be a need to address the issue of the arrears of these two Contracting Parties at the COP.

21. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to liaise with UNEP Headquarters to explore if there are relevant considerations at the global level on possible impacts of the COVID-19 situation on the preparation of the new UN scale of assessments.

22. In relation to personnel issues, it was noted by the Secretariat that openings of posts for both staff and consultants are advertised in Inspira, in line with the relevant UN rules, adding that the MAP Focal Points are informed on the new openings through email.

23. The Coordinator informed the Bureau members on the efforts, in coordination with the authorities of the Hellenic Republic, to identify new, adequate and representative premises for MAP headquarters or, if this is not attainable, to refurbish the existing premises. The Bureau members

registered their availability to support the efforts of the Secretariat and noted that if no progress has been made in this direction until the next Bureau meeting, the issue must be discussed again at that meeting with a view to take additional action, possibly involving the Bureau itself.

24. Conclusions:

- (a) The Bureau takes note of the Fund balances and the Working Capital Reserve and requests the Secretariat to continue maintaining the Working Capital Reserve at the recommended level and keeping the Bureau updated on the Fund balances. The Bureau also asks the Secretariat to update the Bureau on the possible impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on the financial situation once such analysis is completed and in line with the projections and scenarios of UNEP;**
- (b) The Bureau welcomes the information provided on the interim financial statements as at 31 December 2019 and notes that the audited financial statements will be shared as soon as they are available;**
- (c) The Bureau notes with appreciation the high level of contributions received for the years 2018 and 2019;**
- (d) The Bureau strongly urges the Contracting Parties to pay the 2020 contributions as soon as possible and to adhere to Procedure 4.2.b of the Financial Rules and Procedures for the funds of the Barcelona Convention, which states that contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full. This is particularly important due to the impact and unpredictability of the current COVID-19 global crisis. The Bureau requests the Secretariat, in addition to the current practice of posting the contributions on the UNEP/MAP website, to disseminate the updated status of contributions to the MAP focal Points, every three months;**
- (e) The Bureau strongly urges the seven Contracting Parties whose contributions for prior year(s) are still pending to pay them as soon as possible, in particular those countries in arrears for over 24 months, while noting the specific circumstances of the State of Libya and of the Syrian Arab Republic;**
- (f) The Bureau takes note of the actions taken by the Secretariat regarding the four Contracting Parties in arrears for over 24 months and requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts to collect the arrears in line with the respective Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures and to report to the Bureau and to the Contracting Parties at their next meetings on the progress under any proposed and discussed payment schedule;**
- (g) The Bureau takes note of the application of the new adjusted scale of assessments for the years 2020-2021;**
- (h) The Bureau welcomes the progress made on the administrative procedures taken this biennium by the Secretariat to ensure the rapid and streamlined start of the PoW activities and notes that further updates on the financial implementation of the PoW and Budget 2020-2021 will be provided at its next regular Meeting;**
- (i) The Bureau takes note of the programme support allocation for 2019 and advance programme support allotment for 2020, and urges the Secretariat to take appropriate action for the most efficient use of these resources to further strengthen the operations of UNEP/MAP;**
- (j) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitments at the Coordinating Unit and welcomes the efforts made by the Secretariat in ensuring adequate human resources for the smooth implementation of the Programme of Work and keep the Bureau informed about any potential delays on recruitment processes;**
- (k) The Bureau takes note with appreciation of all efforts made by the Hellenic Republic and the Secretariat and urges the Host Government to rapidly progress, in line with its commitment, towards the provision in 2020 to the Secretariat of adequate premises to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of UN operations.**

V. Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues

25. The Coordinator presented the “*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.89/6).

26. The meeting discussed the matters summarized in the following paragraphs.

- A. Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

27. The Coordinator reported that no new instruments of ratification have been received since April 2019 and informed the Bureau on the initiatives supporting ratification that could be carried out by the Secretariat in cooperation with MAP components, taking into account adequate resources and the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

28. The Bureau members took note of the current status of ratification and noted that they will liaise with the relevant authorities of their Contracting Parties on possible progress towards ratification of the Protocols for which ratification is pending.

29. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to liaise with the Secretariat to facilitate coordination towards ratification of the relevant legal instruments;

(b) The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to achieve the full ratification of the revised Barcelona Convention and the ratification of its Protocols, and welcomes the proposals by the Secretariat for possible initiatives to support ratifications.

- B. Compliance and Reporting

30. The Secretariat provided an update on the status of implementation of Decision IG.24/1 on “*Compliance Committee*”. Regarding reporting, the Secretariat provided updated information on submission of national implementation reports: as of 14 April 2020, 15 new national implementation reports for the biennium 2016-2017 have been submitted using the new online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS). This translates into a total of 19 Contracting Parties having submitted their 2016-2017 national implementation reports, 12 out of which have concluded the process of submission. In parallel, the Secretariat is finalizing with INFO/RAC the technical part on the submission of national implementation reports for the biennium 2018-2019, and an official invitation will be sent to MAP Focal Points in May 2019, to submit their 2018-2019 national implementation reports.

31. The Bureau noted the progress made in the submission of national implementation reports and suggested that a working meeting is organized with INFO/RAC, so that the Focal Points of Contracting Parties who have not yet reported can be supported in working on the implementation reports.

32. The Bureau also discussed the way that the information provided in the national implementation reports can most effectively and timely contribute to the preparation of the new MTS. It was proposed that the letter to be sent to Contracting Parties inviting them to submit their 2018-2019 national implementation reports, will stress that doing so will be necessary also for feeding the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the new MTS.

33. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the reporting periods 2012–2013, 2014–2015 and/or 2016-2017 without further delay;

(b) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to finalize the ongoing streamlining work on the BCRS so as to facilitate the timely submission by the Contracting Parties of their national implementation reports for the biennium 2018-2019;

(c) The Bureau elects Ms. Xenia Loizidou, a national of Cyprus, as an Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee for a term of four years, until COP 23¹.

- C. Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and Preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy

34. The Secretariat presented the progress regarding the evaluation of the 2016-2021 MTS and preparation of the 2022-2027 MTS, as described in the Report of Specific Issues and its Annex I. Special emphasis was given to the consultations that took place during and after the 40th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP, Rome, Italy, 30-31 January 2020), as also presented in the report of the 40th ECP Meeting (document UNEP/MED BUR.89/Inf.4).

35. The Bureau welcomed the discussions held at the ECP and their outcome and provided advice in relation to the process as well as to the structure and priorities of the MTS. On the process, it was noted that the ECP should participate in the meetings of the Steering Committee, as observers, and of the Open-Ended Working Group and that the nature of different bodies (Bureau, Steering Committee, Open-Ended Working Group, MAP Focal Points) needs to be further clarified. To this end, the Bureau asked that a short document is prepared by the Secretariat, based on Annex I of the Report of Specific Issues, explaining the process, timeline and role of the relevant bodies and submitted to its members for comments. The Bureau members supported the involvement of stakeholders/MAP partners in the process, noting that this could be better done at the level of the Open-Ended Working Group and the relevant online consultations. The importance of the discussions to take place during the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the new MTS in Spring 2021 was highlighted and it was noted that relevant documentation should be timely delivered for that meeting.

36. In relation to the structure and priorities of the new MTS, it was highlighted that the priorities of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement should be shared by the new MTS. It was noted that climate change should be central to the new MTS, while the issue of biodiversity was also stressed as important, especially in relation to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. It was also noted that, considering the prevention and reduction of marine litter and plastics, land-based pollution priority should be given to waste management, directly or indirectly linked to the SDGs, with a zero-waste approach, by benefiting from the countries' experiences on this issue. A member of the Bureau referred also to issues related to environmental health as relevant, especially taking into account the current COVID-19 situation. Another member of the Bureau noted that the issue of integration of science-policy interface mechanisms in all MAP policies, in order to ensure their real impact on the ground, should represent one of the priorities in the preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy. On the structure, a member of the Bureau noted that the MTS should be at the level of Strategic Outcomes, to allow enough flexibility in implementation, and, that technical, financial and operational means to achieve the MTS objectives should be also included. Due to the limited time for discussion during the meeting and the importance of the matter, the Bureau members agreed to send written comments to the Secretariat following the meeting.

37. Conclusions:

(a) The Bureau takes note of the timeline for the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the new MTS, as presented in Annex I to the Report on Specific Issues, and of the progress achieved and requests the Secretariat to continue implementing Decision IG.24/2 in an inclusive manner;

¹ Turkey did not participate during the election of the Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee at the meeting.

(b) The Bureau welcomes the discussion held at the ECP on the preparation of the new MTS, and agrees with the participation of the members of the ECP in the meetings of the Steering Committee and of the Open-Ended Working Group for the preparation of the new MTS. The Bureau invites its Members to submit to the Secretariat initial indications on the substantive priorities to be reflected in the new MTS within three weeks after the Bureau meeting;

(c) The Bureau takes note of the three additional members² of the Steering Committee nominated by the sub-groups, and requests the Secretariat to prepare the first meeting of the Steering Committee as per the timeline of actions of Annex I to the Report on Specific Issues³. It also requests the Secretariat to prepare an explanation of the expected roles and relations of the different structures involved in the preparation of the MTS (i.e. Bureau, Steering Committee, OEWG, and MAP Focal Points) and a revised timeline of actions (to the one presented in Annex I to the Report on Specific Issues) for the evaluation of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 and the preparation of the new MTS within three weeks after the Bureau meeting.

- **D. Major Processes and Strategic Documents:**
 - **Data Management Policy**
 - **Mid-Term Evaluation of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan**
 - **SAP BIO**
 - **MED SO_x ECA**
 - **2023 MED QSR**
 - **MED 2050 Foresight Study**
 - **MedECC Assessment Report (MAR1)**
 - **Update of Annexes to Pollution Protocols**
 - **Regional Pollution Plans**

38. The Secretariat introduced the progress regarding the major processes and strategic documents that are being prepared in the current biennium. Following this introduction, the Bureau members discussed the progress and provided guidance on the way forward.

39. The Bureau members highlighted the importance of the MED SO_x ECA and asked that a reference is included on this issue in the conclusions of the meeting. They expressed their support in the process and noted that this is a complicated issue for some Contracting Parties as shown during the discussions of the last biennium. The Secretariat informed the meeting that three national workshops on ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI were organized for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Libya (November/December 2019), a bilateral meeting was organized in Tunisia (March 2020), while the three national workshops for Algeria, Lebanon and Egypt were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

40. Regarding the MedECC assessment report, it was noted that the full report and summary for policymakers will be submitted to the UfM Ministerial meeting and then to COP 22. Following a discussion on paragraph 40 of the Report on Specific Issues, the Bureau stressed that it is premature to

² Mr. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou, Tunisia; Ms. Selma Cengic, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr. Charalambos Hajipakkos, Cyprus.

³ Turkey did not participate during the discussion on the Members of the Steering Committee for the preparation of the new MTS.

articulate the possible impact of the MedECC assessment report on COP 22 decisions, and in particular on their potentially legally binding measures.

41. On the 2023 MED QSR it was noted that its preparation follows the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and Needs Assessment and is supported both by the activities in the Programme of Work and Budget, as well as by specific projects, ongoing or expected to start soon. The technical issues are first discussed at the CORMONs (biodiversity, pollution and coast and hydrography) in accordance with the EcAp governance structure. The EU observer welcomed the work that the Secretariat is doing in view of implementing Ecosystem Approach and highlighted the importance of presenting concrete proposals for output delivery as a part of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap at the level of common indicators, including an analysis of related gaps, concrete requirements and deadlines for consideration by the Contracting Parties to be submitted at the 90th meeting of the Bureau for its review and guidance (as per Para 35. of Specific Issues document: *In line with Decision IG.24/4, during the first semester of 2020, the Secretariat, working with the support of the MAP components, is developing further concrete proposals for output delivery as part of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap at the level of common indicators, including an analysis of related gaps, concrete requirements and deadlines for consideration by the Contracting Parties, which will be subsequently submitted to the Bureau at its next, 90th meeting for its review and guidance*). This analysis with deadlines, together with the information on the UNEP/MAP system's technical teams supporting the development of data-based QSR 2023, is very important to address the Contracting Parties' decision at COP 20 in Tirana related to the delivery of data-based Mediterranean Quality Status Report 2023. The Bureau welcomed this proposal and suggested to have a specific recommendation to that effect. More detailed information will be provided by the Secretariat at the next Bureau meeting.

42. On the Regional Pollution Plans, it was clarified by the Secretariat that two working groups of experts will be formed, one on the regional plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and on Sewage Sludge Management (due to their linked content) and one on the regional plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. The Bureau members asked the secretariat to prepare a note with more detailed information on the terms of references and timelines of the working groups that will be established for developing the Regional Pollution Plans and for Updating the Annexes to the Pollution Protocols and include the terms of reference as annexes to this report. The note was shared with the Bureau members for comments together with the final version of the Bureau meeting conclusions and recommendations. There were no comments received and the note is presented in Annex III of this report.

43. During the discussion on the pollution related protocols and regional plans, the Coordinator highlighted that MED POL has a very important and extended mandate and that more human resources are needed to effectively deliver this mandate.

44. The Bureau underlined that the specific guidance provided by the Bureau in relation to some processes responds to the need for enhancing their level of implementation, considering related complexities and difficulties faced, based on the information provided by the Secretariat in the Report on Specific Issues, and does not indicate a different level of importance in relation to the implementation of other COP 21 decisions and PoW activities.

45. **Conclusions:**

(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation of the efforts made so far regarding the major processes and strategic documents implementing the relevant COP 21 Decisions, requests the Secretariat to further progress in this direction, and calls upon the Contracting Parties to fully commit to and support these important processes;

(b) The Bureau endorses the terms of reference and timeline prepared by the Secretariat as presented in the Annex to these conclusions and recommendations in relation to (i) the process for updating the annexes of the LBS and Dumping Protocols, and (ii) the process for the development of the Regional Plans to reduce/prevent marine pollution from land-based sources, respectively. The Bureau urges the Contracting Parties to effectively contribute to these processes to ensure their successful completion;

(c) The Bureau welcomes the ongoing work on the possible designation of a MED SO_x ECA in the Mediterranean and encourages the Secretariat, REMPEC and the Contracting Parties to continue collaborating to guarantee the success of the process;

(d) The Bureau welcomes the ongoing work of the Secretariat on identifying gaps, concrete requirements and deadlines for the development of the 2023 MED QSR and invites the Secretariat to present a report on the progress of the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap at the 90th Bureau meeting including information on the technical teams established for this purpose;

(e) The Bureau welcomes the ongoing consultation process on the MedECC report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean.

- E. Cooperation and Partners

46. Following an update by the Coordinator on the progress in relation to cooperation and partners, the Bureau welcomed the progress made on mobilizing financial resources as well as on the cooperation and partnerships, including on synergies with other Secretariats in spatial-based protection and management measures for marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean Area.

47. The meeting also discussed the possible update of existing MoUs with UfMS and FAO/GFCM; it was noted that the Bureau and Contracting Parties will be timely informed on the update of the Annexes/areas of collaboration of the MoUs. On the signature of MoUs between RACs and partners, it was noted that the process developed and formally communicated to RACs, following the conclusions of the 87th Bureau meeting, is being followed.

48. Conclusions:

(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat on mobilizing financial resources under the GEF MedProgramme and encourages the Secretariat to kickstart the innovative and ambitious activities of the MedProgramme as soon as the legal framework for the use of funds is set;

(b) The Bureau welcomes the ongoing work to strengthen the collaboration with partners and requests the Secretariat to ensure the full involvement of the MAP Focal Points in the process of reviewing the MoUs and to keep the Bureau informed on the progress;

(c) In relation to synergies with other Secretariats in spatial-based protection and management measures for marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean Area, the Bureau takes note of the initial work of the Secretariat and encourages the Secretariat to further explore and discuss with the partners informal forms of participation of competent organizations and bodies for multilateral dialogue and collaborative work;

(d) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new applications submitted by “Association Sawa for Development” and “Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation” (BWI) for accreditation as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 22 for consideration and endorsement. Regarding “Fédération des Coopératives des Pays de Mayoko” (FECOPAM), the Bureau agrees that not all conditions and criteria are fulfilled for its accreditation as MAP Partner.

- F) Outreach, Information and Communication, including MAP visibility in major global events

49. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the information and communication activities and plans for the biennium in this area. He expressed his satisfaction with the progress, noting that there are now more structured efforts due to the increased stable capacity at the Coordinating Unit and an effective functioning of the Information and Communication Task Force, while there is progress regarding MAP presence in social media, in coordination with Headquarters.

50. The Bureau welcomed the relevant progress and provided feedback, especially in relation to the dissemination and communication of the 2019 SoED report. It was noted that since some final editing was being made to the full SoED report, when this editing is completed the report should be sent to the MAP Focal Points for a final check of possible errors of a purely technical nature, with a short deadline so that the publication progress is not delayed.

51. Conclusion:

(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation for the efforts and results of the work on information, communication and outreach, and requests the Secretariat to further progress in this direction;

(b) The Bureau encourages the Secretariat to pursue its communication efforts on the assessment reports according to a system-wide approach, and to this end ensure the dissemination of the 2019 SoED at all levels, as a major product of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The Bureau encourages Contracting Parties to identify media and non-media multipliers to disseminate the 2019 SoED findings and conclusions at Contracting Party level;

(c) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to disseminate to MAP Focal Points the final version of the SoED Report, along with this conclusion, for checking any possible errors of a purely technical nature within a strict deadline of 10 days. The final decision and accountability on the technical accuracy of the SoED Report will continue to remain with Plan Bleu/RAC and the Secretariat.

VI. Agenda Item 6: Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 90th Meeting of the Bureau

52. The Bureau agreed that its 90th Meeting will be held on 12-13 November 2020, in Athens, Greece (as in document UNEP/MED BUR.89/Inf.3). The meeting of the Steering Committee on the MTS is planned to take place on 10-11 November, back to back with the Bureau meeting.

53. One Bureau member noted that, according to document UNEP/MED BUR.89/Inf.3, the 91st Bureau meeting is planned to take place on the same dates with the INFO/RAC Focal Points Meeting in May 2021, and that this will create some difficulties; he therefore proposed to change the date of one of the two meetings.

VII. Agenda Item 7: Any Other Matters

54. No other matters were raised by the Bureau members.

VIII. Agenda Item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

55. The Bureau adopted the set of conclusions as set in this report.

IX. Agenda Item 9: Closure of the Meeting

56. The meeting was closed by the chairperson at 16:30 on Thursday, 23 April 2020.

Annex I
List of participants

MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

ITALY / ITALIE

(PRESIDENT)

Mr. Oliviero Montanaro

Director General
Directorate for Sustainable Development,
Environmental Damage and European Union
Affairs
Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea Protection

Mr. Roberto Giangreco

Directorate General for Nature and Sea Protection
Ministry of Environment Land and Sea Protection

Ms. Silvia Sartori

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Annex II

Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1** **Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2** **Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3** **Progress Report for January – March 2020**
- Agenda item 4** **Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**
- Agenda item 5** **Specific Issues:**
- a) Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
 - b) Compliance and Reporting
 - c) Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and Preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy
 - d) Major Processes and Strategic Documents:
 - Data Management Policy
 - Mid-Term Evaluation of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan
 - SAP BIO
 - MED SOx ECA
 - 2023 MED QSR
 - MED 2050 Foresight Study
 - MedECC Assessment Report (MAR1)
 - Update of Annexes to Pollution Protocols
 - Regional Pollution Plans
 - e) Cooperation and Partners
 - f) Outreach, Information and Communication, including MAP visibility in major global events
- Agenda item 6** **Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 90th Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 7** **Any Other Matters**
- Agenda item 8** **Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 9** **Closure of the Meeting**

Annex III

Terms of References including timelines for the Working Groups of Experts for updating the Annexes to the Pollution Protocols and for the development of the Regional Pollution Plans

Terms of Reference for the Working Group of Experts for updating the Annexes to the LBS Protocol of the Barcelona Convention

1. Background

In accordance with PoW and budget 2018-2019, the Secretariat prepared Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 “Proposals for updating the Annexes of the Land Based Sources, Hazardous Waste and Dumping Protocols,” which was submitted and considered by the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (Istanbul, Turkey, 29-31 May 2019).

The Programme of Work 2020/2021 and COP Decision IG.24/10 mandated the establishment of Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to review the annexes and make proposals for consideration of the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) on the basis of “Terms of Reference” and timeline prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Bureau at its first meeting of the biennium 2020-2021.

The work is ongoing for updating Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 as a working document for review by the Meetings of the Working Group.

2. Objective

The objective of the work of the Working Group of Experts for updating the Annexes to the LBS Protocol is to deliver the updated version of the Annexes for consideration of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in 2021.

3. Composition

The Working Group will be composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties. Designated experts should have technical knowledge of different aspects of management of pollution from land based sources and activities including those addressed by the current annexes of the LBS Protocol, namely: on programmes and measures for the elimination of pollution from land-based sources and activities; priority sectors and pollutants; authorizations for discharges of wastes; conditions of application to pollution transported through the atmosphere; and criteria for the definition of Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP).

4. Tasks

The Working Group will review the updated version of Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 and adjust it as necessary taking into account the need for full consideration of necessary updates in line with relevant COP decisions; application of ecosystem approach; consideration of up to date techniques and BAT and BEP; the work for the development of the Regional Plans as well as the need for harmonization with relevant global and regional processes and commitments as appropriate.

5. Proposed Timeline

- ✓ Establishment of the Working Group, June 2020.
- ✓ Online consultation of updated working document, July to December 2020.
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review first draft of annexes, February 2021.
- ✓ Submission of the draft of the annexes to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, May 2021.
- ✓ Review of the respective draft decision by the MAP Focal Points Meeting, September 2021.
- ✓ Submission of the draft decision to COP 22, December 2021.

Every effort will be made to have the meetings of the Working Group combined with other meetings in the Programme of Work so that expertise is used effectively, and costs of meetings are minimized.

Terms of Reference for the Working Group of Experts for updating the Annexes to the Dumping Protocol of the Barcelona Convention

1. Background

In accordance with PoW and budget 2018-2019, the Secretariat prepared Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 “Proposals for updating the Annexes of the Land Based Sources, Hazardous Waste and Dumping Protocols,” which was submitted and considered by the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (Istanbul, Turkey, 29-31 May 2019).

The Programme of Work 2020/2021 and COP Decision IG.24/10 mandated the establishment of Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to review the annexes and make proposals for consideration of the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) on the basis of “Terms of Reference” and timeline prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Bureau at its first meeting of the biennium 2020-2021.

The work is ongoing for updating Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 as a working document for review by the Meetings of the Working Group.

2. Objective

The objective of the work of the Working Group of Experts for updating the Annex to the Dumping Protocol is to deliver the updated version of the Annex for consideration of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in 2021.

3. Composition

The Working Group will be composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties. Designated experts should have technical knowledge of different aspects of management of dumping activities including those addressed by the current annex of the Dumping Protocol, namely: the factors to be considered in establishing criteria governing the issue of permits for the dumping of matter at sea and expertise in the scope of application of the Dumping Guidelines adopted by COP decisions.

4. Tasks

The Working Group will review the updated version of Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1 and adjust it as necessary taking into account the need for full consideration of necessary updates in line with relevant COP decisions; application of ecosystem approach; consideration of up to date techniques and BAT and BEP; the work for the development of the Regional Plans as well as the need for harmonization with relevant global and regional processes and commitments as appropriate.

5. Proposed Timeline

- ✓ Establishment of the Working Group, June 2020.
- ✓ Online consultation of updated working document, July to November 2020.
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review first draft of annex, December 2020.
- ✓ Submission of the draft of the annex to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, May 2021.
- ✓ Review of the respective draft decision by MAP Focal Points Meeting, September 2021.
- ✓ Submission of the draft decision to COP 22, December 2021.

Every effort will be made to have the meetings of the Working Group combined with other meetings in the Programme of Work so that expertise is used effectively, and costs of meetings are minimized.

Terms of Reference for the Working Group of Experts to upgrade/develop the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management

1. Background

The Programme of Work 2020/2021 and COP Decision IG.24/10 mandated the establishment of Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to upgrade the Regional Plan on the reduction of BOD5 from urban wastewater; develop a new Regional Plan for Sewage Sludge Management; and report to the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) on the basis of “Terms of Reference” and timeline prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Bureau at its first meeting of the biennium 2020-2021.

2. Objective

The objective of the work of the Working Group of Experts is to deliver the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment and the Regional Plan for Sewage Sludge Management for consideration of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in 2021.

3. Composition

The Working Group will be composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties. A single Working Group is recommended for upgrading the Regional Plan on the reduction of BOD5 from Urban Wastewater and developing a new Regional Plan for Sewage Sludge Management. This is justified by the fact that wastewater treatment processes constitute a comprehensive environmental management system which includes also sludge management processes as a byproduct of wastewater treatment; hence, the processes for wastewater and sludge treatment cannot be segregated as they are inherently linked and interact in a manner that they influence each other.

The designated experts to this Working Group should have technical knowledge of different aspects of wastewater and sludge treatment systems, including inter alia knowledge of pollution control technologies pertaining to urban wastewater and sewage sludge, as well as available techniques for wastewater reuse and land-based applications for sewage sludge.

4. Tasks

The Working Group will review the annex to Decision IG.24/10 and adjust the proposed measures with required technical specifications and annexes, as necessary, taking into account the need to elaborate the Regional Plans with feasible measures and appropriate timetables for implementation. The Working Group will also review the report prepared by the Secretariat on the cost of implementation of Regional Plans, including monitoring and reporting measures.

5. Proposed Timeline

- ✓ Establishment of the Working Group, June 2020.
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review sections of the Regional Plans related to the technical measures, timetable for implementation and monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as the technical annexes, October/November 2020
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review final drafts of the two Regional Plans, May 2021, before the MED POL Focal Points Meeting.
- ✓ Review of the last versions of the Regional Plans by the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, May 2021.
- ✓ Review of the draft decisions of the two Regional Plans by the MAP Focal Points Meeting, September 2021.
- ✓ Submission of the draft COP decisions of the two Regional Plans to COP 22, December 2021.

Every effort will be made to have the meetings of the Working Group combined with other meetings in the Programme of Work so that expertise is used effectively, and costs of meetings are minimized.

Terms of Reference for the Working Group of Experts to upgrade the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean

1. Background

The Programme of Work 2020/2021 and COP Decision IG.24/10 mandated the establishment of Working Groups composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties to upgrade the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, and report to the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) on the basis of “Terms of Reference” and timeline prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Bureau at its first meeting of the biennium 2020-2021.

2. Objective

The objective of the work of the Working Group of Experts is to deliver the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management for consideration of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in 2021.

3. Composition

The Working Group will be composed of experts designated by the Contracting Parties. Designated experts should have technical knowledge of different aspects of marine litter management and/or plastic waste management including i.e. microplastic reduction, monitoring of marine litter, circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, etc.

4. Tasks

The Working Group will review the annex to Decision IG.24/10 and adjust the proposed measures as necessary taking into account the need to upgrade the Regional Plan with feasible measures and an appropriate timetable for implementation. The Working Group will also review the report prepared by the Secretariat on the cost of implementation of Regional Plans, including monitoring and reporting measures.

5. Proposed Timeline

- ✓ Establishment of the Working Group, July/August 2020.
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review updated measures of the Regional Plan, timetable for implementation, as well as newly proposed technical annexes, March 2021.
- ✓ Meeting of the Working Group to review final draft of the upgraded Regional Plan, May 2021, before the MED POL Focal Points Meeting.
- ✓ Review of the last version of the Regional Plan by the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, May 2021.
- ✓ Review of the draft decision of the Regional Plan by the MAP Focal Points Meeting, September 2021.
- ✓ Submission of the draft COP decision of the Regional Plan to COP 22, December 2021.

Every effort will be made to have the meetings of the Working Group combined with other meetings in the Programme of Work so that expertise is used effectively, and costs of meetings are minimized. All MAP components will be invited to contribute to the process.