



UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.477/2



UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

14 October 2019
Original: English

Regional Stakeholders Consultation Meeting
to Contribute to the Preparation of the
Ministerial Declaration of COP 21

Athens, Greece, 24-25 October 2019

Concept Note and Main Elements of the Naples Ministerial Declaration

Note by the Secretariat

This document contains section 2 and Annex 1 of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.468/19 “*Background Note on Themes of the Ministerial Session and Concept Note for the Ministerial Declaration of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties*” submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019).

The MAP Focal Points Meeting agreed that the theme of the Interactive Ministerial Policy Review Session will be: *Strategic guidance for the preparation of the next UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy, considering the global context of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change process and the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Strategic Framework 2018-2030 aimed to the Land Degradation Neutrality, relevant UNEA resolutions and other relevant global processes.*

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

Concept Note for the Ministerial Declaration of the 21st Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

A. Background and Process

The initial guidance for the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) was provided by the Bureau at its 87th Meeting (Athens, Greece, 6-7 November 2018) which suggested *“to focus on the strategic guidance for the preparation of the next UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy, considering the global context of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the CBD post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the relevant UNEA resolutions. This theme will also be the basis for the Ministerial Declaration”*.

Consequently, a Concept Note was prepared by the Secretariat and was discussed by the Bureau at its 88th Meeting (Rome, Italy, 21-22 May 2019). The Bureau *“welcome[ed] the work of the Secretariat and the Host Country for the preparation of COP 21 and the proposal regarding the theme/s of the Ministerial Session and the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, and ask[ed] the Secretariat, in consultation with the Host Country, to prepare the final Concept Note on the proposed theme/s and the first main elements of the Ministerial Declaration for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points, where the theme/s will be agreed and the main elements of the Ministerial declaration subsequently discussed.”*

The present Concept Note considers the global context of relevance and focuses on the four identified themes, namely Marine Litter, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Blue Economy (with a focus on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Sustainable Tourism).

The Ministerial Declaration is expected to provide political guidance for the future work of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)–Barcelona Convention system in view of the new Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), to reaffirm its central role for the protection of the environment and the sustainable development in the Mediterranean, and highlight its privileged role as a platform for regional cooperation to implement the global environmental agenda.

B. The structure of the main elements of the Ministerial Declaration

The draft elements of the Ministerial Declaration are proposed in three main sections to rationalize its preparation and to efficiently collect inputs from the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system and Partners, including through an inclusive participatory process, open to stakeholders and civil society. These sections are:

An introductory section, aiming to guide the preambular part of the Declaration, which intends to offer the global and regional background for the future actions to provide a useful and focused insight. This section contains, therefore, references to:

- the global context identified by the Bureau as highly relevant to the theme of the COP 21 (the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the relevant UNEA resolutions);
- other relevant ongoing global and regional processes, including other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
- the crucial role of the regional dimension and of the Regional Seas Programme, and the internal context of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system, such as main achievements, ongoing processes and components, key information; and
- 2017 MED QSR and 2019 SOED.

A central section (“calls for actions and commitments”) structured around the four priority areas presented at the 88th Bureau meeting. Each subsection is preceded, by some key data and brief remarks about the current situation for each theme/area, followed by several points containing a list of proposed actions/commitments in relation to the calls for action on:

- preventing, reducing and monitoring Marine Litter and its impact;
- strengthening the Marine Protected Areas system in the Mediterranean, and protecting Biodiversity, and implementing the relevant international agreements through cooperation;
- effectively responding to the challenges arising from Climate Change in the Mediterranean Region;
- promoting Blue Economy, with a focus on ICZM/Marine Spatial Planning and Sustainable Tourism.

A *conclusive section* intends to provide the strategic guidance for the years ahead, considering the four priority areas in an integral way and beyond, to create opportunities and boost the commitment to ensure a sustainable future for the Mediterranean and for the quality of life of future generations. This may include new approaches, and flagship and pilot initiatives. The strategic guidance may refer, therefore, to implementing the following:

- the call for actions and commitments as per the previous section and the proposed approach of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system (i.e. inclusive approach, participation of scientific community and youth, scientific oriented decisions);
- key thematic decisions of COP 21;
- crosscutting flagship and pilot initiatives for the protection of the Mediterranean, e.g.: the creation of new international MPAs on a bilateral/multilateral basis, the “*plastic free*” initiative, maximizing the cooperation of UNEP/MAP with UN agencies, and programs or initiatives to achieve common targets and goals.

C. The inclusive participatory process to the Ministerial Declaration

The draft of the Naples Ministerial Declaration will be prepared through a wide participatory process to ensure an inclusive approach and the effective contribution by the stakeholders with a focus on MAP Partners, civil society and the youth. As follow up to the key governance meetings of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system, a series of events and initiatives are being organized to collect inputs with a bottom-up approach, culminating at the Ministerial Session of COP 21.

June-July 2019

An online consultation on the potential content and focus of the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 was launched at the 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019), to collect inputs on three key questions (priorities for the future of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention; strategic message/s to be included/addressed in the COP 21 Ministerial Declaration; elements of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development to be further strengthened and mainstreamed into the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027).

September 2019

At the MAP Focal Points’ meeting 2019 (10-13 September 2019), a dedicated session/discussion will take place to exchange views among the Contacting Parties, partners and stakeholder, also to agree on the formal process for the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration under the leadership of the Host Country. This process may include the establishment of an open-ended group to develop the draft text of the Declaration. The consultations may continue online to collect further inputs in the preparation of the Declaration.

October-November 2019

Following the MAP Focal Points’ Meeting 2019, a “*Regional Stakeholders Consultation Meeting*” is planned to be held in Athens, Greece with financial support from the Host Country to contribute to the

development of the Ministerial Declaration as an enlarged platform of debate for the UNEP/MAP Partners and relevant stakeholders.

At the national level, the Host Country is planning to organize consultations with stakeholders with the aim to collect inputs on COP 21 and in particular on the themes and priorities of the Ministerial Declaration: National Italian Conference with representatives from the relevant authorities, stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Meeting of the Italian Biosphere Reserves under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program; Youth event.

The results of these consultations will feed into the work of the Working Group in order to finalize the draft text of the Declaration by mid-November for submission to COP 21.

December 2019

The outcomes of this consultation process will be presented at the High-Level Segment of COP 21, with a debate involving not only the Ministers/Heads of Delegations but also stakeholders/MAP Partners and representatives from youth.

Annex 1

Main elements for the Naples Ministerial Declaration

Main Elements for the Naples Ministerial Declaration
Prepared in Consultation with Italy, as Host Country of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 21)

The main elements have been organized in three main sections:

- *An introductory section*, working as preamble to the Ministerial Declaration;
- *A central section*, with the “*calls for actions and commitments*” as per the four priority areas;
- *A conclusive section*, with the “*strategic guidance*” for the years ahead.

INTRODUCTORY SECTION

This section is proposed, initially, to recall:

- the importance of the Mediterranean for the implementation of global strategies and agendas, noting its richness in terms of environmental and cultural diversity;
- the major role of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, in promoting and facilitating the implementation of the global processes/agenda in the Mediterranean, at the regional, national and local level.

The global processes referred to may include:

- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals;
- the global post-2020 Biodiversity Framework under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity;
- the Paris Agreement, under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, also considering the 2019 IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere;
- the United Nations Environment Assembly, with particular relevance to its Fourth Session held in Nairobi on 11-15 March 2019 (Resolution 4/7 on “*Marine plastic litter and microplastics*” and Resolution 4/10 on “*Addressing single-use plastic products pollution*”, and the commitment to restore and protect marine and coastal ecosystems by significantly reducing single-use plastic products by 2030)
- the Workshop on the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter in Synergy with the Regional Seas Conventions, held in Metz, France, 5-6 May 2019;
- the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, adopted on 16 June 2019 in Karuizawa, Japan;
- Pollution-related MEAs and process beyond the 2020 framework of Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

Furthermore, the preamble could refer to:

- the need to develop a new path together, to establish a New Deal for Nature and People, with a wide inclusive consultation process – as the one related to the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 – and with the active participation of the scientific community, NGOs, private sector and youth;
- the main achievements and the ongoing processes of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, and the demand for further reinforcing its governance;
- the need to take concrete action to enhance the level of safeguard of the Mediterranean, as a bridge between civilizations and as a model for environmental protection and cooperation.

The preamble will introduce the two other main sections:

SECTION ON CALL FOR ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

This central section will aim to convert the four priority areas (Marine Litter, Marine Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Climate Change, Blue Economy) into actions and commitments, structured in four corresponding subsections.

(Subsection 1/4: Marine litter)

The first subsection may consider the following:

- The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most marine litter-affected areas in the world, where plastics account up to 95-100% of total floating marine litter and more than 50% of seabed marine litter, mostly originating from single-use plastic products, while analyses show that 5 types of debris, mostly single-use plastics, represent more than 60% of the marine litter composition;
- The global ongoing initiatives for reducing and preventing marine litter, plastic pollution and microplastic generation and mitigating its impacts, including the Goal 14 and target 14.1 of the Agenda 2030, are implemented in the Mediterranean through the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, adopted at the 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 18) in 2013, as the main framework, complemented by the Regional Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

The call for action and commitment to tackle the marine litter, especially marine plastic litter and single-use plastic products, to reduce and prevent plastic and microplastic pollution, and mitigate its impacts, also with a view to incorporate microplastics into national marine litter agenda, can include references to:

- a) *Reducing the plastic consumption*, by supporting eco-design/innovation, resource efficiency and a better management of waste and water, a greater use of policy instruments and enhanced control measures to eliminate all sources of plastic leakage in the Mediterranean Sea by 2030;
- b) *Upgrading the regulatory framework for reducing single-use plastic products*, progressing in adopting SCP and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and setting quantitative targets (e.g. reduce beach marine litter by 20% by 2024);
- c) *Promoting prevention measures and circular economy approaches* in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean by supporting long-term efficient and viable recycling targets, the adoption of national plans to progressively achieve a 100% plastic waste collection and recycling, and addressing the private sector to minimize plastic packaging;
- d) *Making the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme-based marine litter monitoring in the Mediterranean fully operational*, and providing an assessment of the economic impacts of marine litter in the Mediterranean Sea;
- e) *Further enhancing and coordinating the actions of civil society*, through the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter, on awareness raising, advocacy and promotion of concrete solutions to significantly reduce marine litter, also through a region-wide campaign.

(Subsection 2/4: MPAs and Biodiversity)

The second subsection, related to the Marine Protected Areas and Biodiversity, may consider the following elements:

- Currently, 8.97% of the surface of the Mediterranean is under a legal designation status, 1.6% and 0.04 % is covered by nationally designated sites and by Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) no-go, no-take or no-fishing zones; however, efforts are still required to reach a homogeneous spatial distribution of MPAs in the Mediterranean Basin for a more comprehensive conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity;
- The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and, namely, Target 11 and its call to effectively conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020, requiring critical actions to be taken the evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap to achieve it adopted by COP 19 in 2016.

Therefore, by reaffirming the commitment toward the sustainable use of natural resources and the need to implement a scientifically based management, the call is proposed to focus on:

- a) *Clearly sharing responsibilities and targets* among actors and stakeholders at global, regional, national and local level, to reach long-term structural solutions, with a view at adopting additional protection measures and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the actions of existing sectoral strategies and programmes;
- b) *Supporting the development of a Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme* for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources in the Mediterranean, and fostering synergies with biodiversity-related Conventions, GEF projects, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and especially the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, and EU programmes and projects, with a view to strengthen capacity building;
- c) *Accelerating the declaration and effective management of MPAs to achieve the Aichi Target 11*, enlarging coverage, representativity, connectivity and management effectiveness of the existing Mediterranean MPAs network, and enhancing a science-policy interface to increase works on habitats and ecosystem components;
- d) *Developing mechanisms for exchanging relevant information and promoting cooperation* in relevant thematic issues and interdisciplinary approaches in the sites listed either as SPAMIs, MPAs including UNESCO Biosphere Reserves;
- e) *Promoting a participatory planning and management of MPAs* where all the local socio-economic stakeholders, including the fishermen and the tourism actors, are to be involved in the management.

(Subsection 3/4: Climate Change)

The third subsection, related to the climate change, may consider that:

- The Mediterranean is recognized as a climate change hot spot, with average annual temperatures already above the current global warming trends (+1.1°C), with frequent and extreme rainfall, with sea level rising at an accelerating rate and where the adverse effects of climate change – including warming, more severe droughts, changing extreme events, sea-level rise and ocean acidification – exacerbated the existing environmental and social problems;
- Climate change, alone or combined with other significant human induced pressures, triggers important risks for ecosystems, human security and well-being, threatening our coastal and marine ecosystems, the richness of biodiversity, the fresh water availability of the region, the food security and our coastal infrastructures and cities, as well as historic and cultural heritage.
- Reference to the upcoming IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere.

These processes require a successful Mediterranean governance, and policy responses to climate change based on scientific evidence; therefore, the call for action and commitment may include:

- a) *Strengthening Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)* and its role, in relation both to the UNEP/MAP major processes, namely the Ecosystem Approach and the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework and to the ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures adopted in national policies and plans on climate change;
- b) *Building this process upon governance mechanisms already developed in previous or on-going activities*, including the Coastal Area Management Programmes and “*MedPartnership*”;
- c) *Collecting scientific findings in a form easily accessible to regional, national and local decision-makers*, including findings on the consequences of environmental change for natural systems, the economy, and human well-being, *and developing transdisciplinary research and inter-sectoral policies* to tackle interconnected issues, particularly in the water-food-energy nexus;
- d) *Evaluating environmental, economic and social impacts of sea level rise and coastal hazards, associated with climate change* in coastal areas, with a view to ensure that land use planning and infrastructure take full account of relevant climate change scenarios and uncertainties;
- e) *Involving a range of actors in designing and implementing adaptation strategies*, including the scientific community, private sector and civil society, and mobilizing funding also with national and sub-national resources through subsidies’ reforms and efficient green tax collection.

(Subsection 4/4: Blue economy)

The fourth subsection, related to blue economy with a focus on ICZM and sustainable tourism, may consider that:

- The increasing competition for the use of marine space and resources in the Mediterranean calls for an increasing effort to control and minimize the impacts associated with the expansion and diversification of maritime sectors, to maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems and its services, in the existing regional tools for sea and coastal planning and management;
- The Mediterranean can represent a development space that may trigger economic prosperity and contribute to the stability of the Region through the creation of jobs and innovative business opportunities consistent with the circular economy approach, in traditional sectors (such as aquaculture, fisheries, coastal and maritime tourism, shipping, ports) and in emerging maritime economy sectors (such as blue biotechnologies, ocean energy and other marine renewable sources).

By recalling the role of effective ICZM and MSP, and its equivalent mechanisms in the Mediterranean, in conjunction with sustainable consumption and production approaches, the call for action and commitment may focus on:

- a) *Promoting sustainable and synergic uses of marine and coastal areas and resources*, together with the sharing of experiences and information at all levels to increase coordination and synergies between “blue” institutions and projects, and to improve research and innovation;
- b) *Implementing the ICZM Protocol*, increasing its ratifications and the overall initiatives promoted by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the MSP Conceptual Framework and the ICZM Common Regional Framework and Action Plan;
- c) *Ensuring an efficient implementation of the ICZM provisions*, also by mainstreaming the coastal management practices and projects, through research, experience sharing and trainings on multi-level governance, management of multi-stakeholder processes, and dialogue with civil society;
- d) *Developing a specific indicators framework*, e.g. for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting the creation of an enabling environment for ecotourism;
- e) *Promoting circular economy and innovative tourism products and services*, including attractions out of season, routes to link sea and inland attractions.

SECTION ON GUIDANCE

Within the strategic and political guidance, this conclusive section is proposed to remark:

- the unique role of the UNEP/MAP - Barcelona Convention system, as the regional privileged platform for cooperation for international funding and donors, multilateral projects, and capacity building;
- the need to use and share environmental data, also with tools of dissemination and communication targeted according to the different contexts;
- the need to engage civil society, citizens, indigenous peoples and local communities, private sector, scientific institutions and academia, and all the relevant stakeholders, through an overall inclusive approach, also enabling the younger generation to directly participate in decisions affecting our common future.

Concerning the key Draft Decisions to be adopted at COP 21, the strategical directions may refer to the implementation of:

- a) the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD);
- b) the ICZM Protocol, through the Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management and the Conceptual Framework for Marine Spatial Planning;
- c) The mandate to develop Regional Plans to reduce and prevent marine pollution from land-based sources and to update and revise SAP BIO;

- d) the setting of new Marine Litter Guidelines, with a view of, *inter alia*, phasing out single-use plastic bags and products;
- e) the Roadmap for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Area as Emission Control Area for Sulphur dioxide (ECA), with adequate supporting measures for the maritime companies of the Contracting Parties and a comprehensive proposal to submit to the International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- f) Biodiversity-related draft decisions addressing IMAP implementation and promoting Marine Protected Areas and SPAMI.

Crosscutting flagship and pilot initiatives considered as strategical trends for the protection of the environment of the Mediterranean region may include:

- a) the creation of new international MPAs also on a bilateral/multilateral basis;
- b) the strengthening of the cooperation of UNEP/MAP in common area with other UN programs or initiatives, such as the UNESCO/MAB Programme, the UN Regional Commissions (UN-ECA, UN-ECE, UN-ESCWA, as recommended by the MCSD) and the GFCM.