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21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019

Note by the Secretariat:

The Annex to the present note sets out the text of the Naples Ministerial Declaration, as adopted at the Ministerial Session of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, on 04 December 2019.

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

NAPLES MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols, meeting in Naples, Italy, on 4 December 2019,

Being aware of the undisputed importance of the Mediterranean region, our common home to safeguard and protect, where our communities have lived and prospered for millennia, and whose perspectives of sustainable development, well-being and peace rely upon the health of the *Mare Nostrum*, connecting and unifying us since the beginning of the human civilization;

Being aware as well of the key role of our region, complex and yet unmatched for its richness of biodiversity, natural resources, and historic and cultural bonds, and of the importance of Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes to implement global strategies and agendas;

Recalling that the global context includes important elements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Environment Assembly resolutions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted, the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Strategic Framework 2018-2030, and its land degradation neutrality approach to tackle climate crisis and enhance water supply and other relevant developments and fora;

Welcoming the action plans and decisions of the pollution-related MEAs (Multilateral Environmental Agreements), and of the G7 and G20 to combat marine litter in synergy with the Regional Seas Conventions, as a global momentum towards the long-term elimination of discharges of litter and microplastics to the oceans;

Recognizing the year 2020 as a critical turning point for the conservation and sustainable management of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, on the basis of the knowledge and science based reports delivered in 2019 by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the forthcoming international fora like the UN 2020 Ocean Conference and the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the 2020 ministerial meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean, the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

Recognizing the need to build on our long-standing cooperation and commitments for a green New Deal with the participation of all stakeholders and especially the younger generations, to strengthen our environmental conscience and a mature sense of responsibility;

Noting that legal, technical and financial support is needed to Contracting Parties in order to reinforce the implementation of commitments of the Barcelona Convention and Protocols;

Welcoming the wide and inclusive participatory process leading to COP 21 of the Barcelona Convention promoted by the Host Country Italy and the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, with Contracting Parties, Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (18th Meeting, Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019), Mediterranean Youth (Youth Event, Naples, Italy, 23 October 2019), and Stakeholders (Regional Stakeholder Consultation Meeting, Athens, Greece, 24-25 October 2019);

Reaffirming our commitment to the major role of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the Barcelona Convention system, and its unique institutional, regulatory and implementation framework for the protection of marine and coastal environment, and sustainable development, to scale up the enforcement of global and regional commitments in our region, to advance together through common legal instruments, strategies and policies, as well as scientific and technical programs, projects and initiatives;

Recalling and welcoming the main achievements and the ongoing work of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system and the need for further reinforcing and supporting its governance and capacity;

Deeply concerned for the increasing pressures that human activities are exerting on the natural resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas, their impact as also identified in the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and 2019 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report, and *aware* of the need for a systemic change supported by forward-looking and innovative strategies, policies, and behaviors;

1. *We welcome* the approval of the Summary for Decision Makers and the key messages of the 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean, as important for the definition of the 2022-2027 Medium Term Strategy and other relevant regional policy and strategy developments of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system;
2. *We commit* to take concrete action to enhance the level of safeguard of the Mediterranean Sea including its coastal region, and its good environmental status, as a place of peace, dialogue and solidarity, as a bridge between civilizations and as a model for environmental protection in the context of sustainable development and multilateral cooperation, for the benefit of present and future generations;
3. *We are determined* to further address our efforts in particular on four priority areas for action and commitments – by effectively tackling marine litter, strengthening and expanding the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) network, responding to the challenges arising from climate change, and supporting sustainable blue economy and an ecological transition for our region – and to identify the strategic directions to embrace together for the years ahead;

Concerned that the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions face significant pollution challenges and is one of the most marine litter-affected areas in the world, with plastics accounting for up to 95% of total floating marine litter and more than 50% of seabed marine litter, mostly originating from single-use plastic products representing more than 60% of the marine litter composition;

Reaffirming our commitment to the full implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol, adopted at COP 18 in 2013, complemented by the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the Mediterranean;

4. *We recognize* the urgency to prevent and significantly reduce plastic leakage in the Mediterranean Sea by 2025 with clear commitments to reduce plastic consumption, support eco-design and innovation, resource efficiency and effectively improved waste management, as well as enhanced control and prevention measures such as bans, incentives, taxes and extended producer responsibility schemes;
5. *We decide* to scale-up our efforts to address the issue of marine litter by empowering the regulatory framework for reducing single-use plastic products, setting ambitious quantitative targets, and incorporating reduction measures including on microplastics in our national marine litter agenda, and to undertake the following actions:
 - a) Promoting prevention measures and circular approaches also to open green economy opportunities; supporting long-term viable recycling targets; adopting national plans to progressively achieve 100% plastic waste collection and recycling by 2025; and addressing the private sector to minimize plastic packaging;
 - b) Making the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme-based marine litter monitoring in the Mediterranean fully operational, providing an assessment of the impacts of marine litter in the Mediterranean Sea and coastal areas and;
 - c) Further enhancing the coordinated actions of stakeholders, through the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter;

- d) Launching awareness raising campaigns on the impacts of litter, and in particular plastic litter and microplastics, on the marine environment ;

Acknowledging with concern that only 8.9% of the surface of the Mediterranean Sea is under a legal designation or protection status and that our region has to play a primary role also for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;

Concerned that our region did not yet achieve the SDG Target 14.5 to conserve at least 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020; that efforts are still required for a more homogeneous spatial distribution of MPAs in the Mediterranean basin; and that only 10% of our MPAs are duly implementing management plans;

6. *We re-commit* to the sustainable use of natural resources and to implement science-based management for the benefits of the local communities, to mainstream biodiversity conservation into sectoral strategies and programs, to achieve at least the 10% of coverage of the Mediterranean region with MPAs by the end of 2020 and to support their sustainable financing, including through the Med Fund initiative;
7. *We are engaged* to clearly share responsibilities and targets among actors and stakeholders at global, regional, national and local level, to reach long-term structural solutions, with a view to adopting additional protection measures and, therefore, to:
- a) Support a new ambitious plan for biodiversity and ecosystems through the development of the revised Strategic Action Programme (SAP BIO) for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources, fostering capacity building and synergies with biodiversity-related Conventions;
- b) Encourage the designation of MPAs in the Med, based on relevant scientific and technical information including the information available from the EBSA (Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas) process, in accordance with international law, accelerate the effective management of the current MPAs network, and enhance the science-policy interface to increase efforts for key species, habitats and ecosystem conservation;
- c) Develop mechanisms for exchanging information and promoting cooperation on thematic areas and interdisciplinary approaches in MPAs, as twinning agreements, and for their participatory planning and management to actively involve local socio-economic stakeholders, including fishermen and tourism actors;

Concerned that the Mediterranean is recognized as a climate change hot spot, with average annual temperatures above the current global warming trends (+1.1°C), marine acidification and sea level rising at an accelerating rate, frequent and extreme events like droughts and rainfall, exacerbating the existing environmental and social problems;

Recognizing that, as evidenced by the 2019 IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere and by other relevant regional climate change reports, climate change triggers important risks for our coastal and marine ecosystems – and, therefore, for the human well-being and security – affecting biodiversity and fresh water, food security, coastal infrastructures and cities, historic and cultural heritage, *and* that to address these challenges we must enforce the governance of our sea and coastal region;

8. *We are conscious* that these processes require an ambitious strategy of adaptation to climate change, as per the specificities of our sea and coasts, with a focus on water management, to be built upon the mechanisms developed in Barcelona Convention decisions, projects and initiatives, such as the 2017 Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas and the Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP);
9. *We reaffirm* our commitment toward governance and policy responses based on scientific evidence, to strengthen the application of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and its role, and *we commit*, therefore, our support to:

- a) Collect scientific findings in an easily accessible form on behalf of decision-makers at any level and develop transdisciplinary research and inter-sectoral policies to address climate change through a cross-cutting approach, particularly in the water-food-energy nexus;
- b) Evaluate the 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;
- c) Boost capacity building and involvement of a range of actors – particularly the scientific community, private sector and civil society – in designing and implementing adaptation strategies, and mobilizing funding resources, *inter alia*, through subsidies' reforms and efficient green tax collection;

Recognizing the increasing competition for the use of marine and coastal space and resources in the Mediterranean, the need for increased effort to control and minimize the impacts associated with the expansion of the maritime sectors, and that, for example, in 2015, the Mediterranean and Black Sea region had the lowest percentage of sustainable fish stocks worldwide (37.8%), with 78% of their fish stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels;

Recognizing the need to reduce the growing impacts of pressures related to land-based sources of pollution in particular discharges from petrochemicals and chemicals industries, as well as the touristic sectors;

Considering that the resources of the Mediterranean should trigger economic prosperity and contribute to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities for the maritime economy sectors (aquaculture, fisheries, tourism, shipping, ports) and in emerging ones (blue biotechnologies, marine renewable sources, services digitalization), in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern, supported by the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025;

10. *We reaffirm* that effective Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Mediterranean, in conjunction with sustainable consumption and production approaches, are crucial to promote sustainable and synergic uses of marine and coastal areas and resources, together with research and innovation;
11. *We reaffirm* our commitment to the implementation of the ICZM Protocol by increasing its ratification level, to foster the green transition, and the linked initiatives promoted by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the Common Regional Framework (CRF) for ICZM, and regarding MSP as a tool for implementation of the CRF, and *we commit to*:
 - a) Ensuring sustainable and integrated uses of marine and coastal areas and resources, as well as circular economy and innovative tourism products and services, sharing experiences and information at all levels between institutions and projects including marine renewable energies;
 - b) Ensuring the efficient implementation of the ICZM provisions, also by mainstreaming the coastal management practices and projects, through research and trainings on multi-level governance and stakeholder management and dialogue;
 - c) Developing a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism;

Acknowledging the importance of protecting the environment as well as the health of people living in the Mediterranean coastal region, and *considering* that the designation of the whole Mediterranean Sea as Med SOx ECA (Emission Control Area) will lead to substantial benefits for human health, environment and especially air quality;

12. *We agree* to finalize, based on the outcome of the further studies and the preparatory work, and in line with the agreed Roadmap, the development of a mutually agreed joint and coordinated proposal for the possible designation by the IMO of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI;

Recalling the need to use and share environmental knowledge, such as the 2019 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report and the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report, through development, dissemination and communication targeted to the different contexts, *and* the urgency to engage all relevant stakeholders, and in particular the younger generations to directly participate in decisions affecting our common future;

13. *We recognize* that “thinking green”, in terms of the environmental impact of our everyday life, requires to act accordingly as responsible citizens and institutions, and implies a call for action for all actors, locally and globally, on which the quality of life of our children depends;
14. *We urge* the implementation of cross-cutting flagship and pilot initiatives promoted by Contracting Parties and partners as strategic generational and transformational trends for the protection of the environment of the Mediterranean, contributing to its sustainable development, e.g.:
 - a) the creation of special protected areas or MPAs in line with the Barcelona Convention;
 - b) the strengthening of the cooperation of UNEP/MAP in common areas with other UN programs or initiatives, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) (/), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), the UN Regional Commissions for Africa, Europe and Western Asia (UN-ECA, UN-ECE, UN-ESCWA) and Global Environment Facility (GEF);
 - c) the implementation of a strategy for environmental communication and dissemination for the promotion of sustainable development, and of high quality and innovative education and training plans targeted according to the different contexts for reaching a diversified audience and the young;
 - d) The enhancement of a regional science-policy interface to base policies on scientific expertise, to have a strategic decision-making process with a sound scientific basis;
15. *We agree* on the four priority areas for actions and commitments identified at COP 21 to be part of the 2022-2027 Medium Term Strategy of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, and to foster its governance and enforcement mechanisms;
16. We ultimately engage ourselves and our countries to renew the decades-long obligation toward a responsible path for the protection and the sustainable development of the *Mare Nostrum*, a common heritage we are today only trustees of and therefore we are called to preserve, enhance, clean up and pass on to future Mediterranean generations.