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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

17th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to
the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean
and its Protocols

Paris (France), 8-10 February 2012

REPORT OF THE 17TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE COASTAL REGION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS PROTOCOLS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronyms

100 HS	Secretariat of the Programme for the Protection of Coastal Historic Sites
ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area
AFDC	Association for Forests, Development and Conservation
APNEK	Association for the Protection of Nature and Environment
BP/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for the Blue Plan
BOD ₅	five-day biochemical demand
CEDARE	Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
CIDCE	International Centre of Comparative Environmental Law
CIHEAM	International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
CP/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production
DDT	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
EBSA	ecologically or biologically significant area
ECAT	Environmental Center for Administration and Technology
ELV	emission limit value
ENDA-Maghreb	Environnement, Développement et Action au Maghreb
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FAO/GFCM	FAO/General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
HELMEPA	Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IME	Institut méditerranéen de l'eau
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INARE	Institute for Sustainable Development and Management of Natural Resources
INDEMER	Institut du droit économique de la mer
INFO/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MEA	Mouvement écologique algérien
MEAs	multilateral environmental agreements
MEDMARAVIS	Mediterranean Marine Bird Association
MedPAN	Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean
MED POL	Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean region
MIO-ECSDE	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

MTF	Mediterranean Trust Fund
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	International Association of Oil and Gas Producers
OSPAR (Commission)	Oslo-Paris Commission
PAP/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for the Priority Actions Programme
PERSGA	Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
POP	persistent organic pollutant
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
REMPEC	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
SEPS	Syrian Environment Protection Society
SPA/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas
SPAMI	Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Interest
TUDAV	Turkish Marine Research Foundation
UNADEP	Union of Northern Associations for Development, Patrimony & Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization
WHO/EURO	World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of France, the 17th Ordinary Meeting 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 at the Centre de Conférence Ministériel Convention, Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012.

Attendance

2. The following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were represented at the Meeting: Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain and Tunisia .

3. The following United Nations agencies, programmes, funds and related organizations, and other intergovernmental organizations, were represented: United Nations, UNEP, UNDP-Turkey, FAO, FAO/GFCM, IMO, UNESCO, WHO/EURO, IAEA, ACCOBAMS, CEDARE, Council of Europe/Bern Convention, IUCN, League of Arab States, OSPAR Commission, PERSGA and Union for the Mediterranean.

4. The following non-governmental and other organizations were represented: AFDC, APNEK, CIDCE, CIHEAM, Clean Up Greece, ECAT-Tirana, ENDA MAGHREB, Greenpeace International, IME, INARE, INDEMER, MEA, MEDMARAVIS, MEDPAN, MIO-ECSDE, Oceana, OGP, SEPS, TUDAV, UNADEP and WWF.

5. The MAP Coordinating Unit, including the MED POL Programme, and the following MAP RACs were also represented: REMPEC, BP/RAC, CP/RAC, PAP/RAC, SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC and 100 HS.

6. The complete list of participants is attached as Annex VI.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

7. Mr. Mohamed Benyahia (Morocco), President of the Bureau, declared the meeting open and thanked the host Government. He said that, despite the difficulties encountered by MAP over the previous two years, there had been some notable advances: the Offshore and ICZM Protocols had entered into force and the Compliance Committee had made progress in its work; a number of technical action plans, road maps, reports and strategies had been drafted or finalized to guide future work; the review and adaptation of the MSSD sought to ensure that the strategy would adequately deal with climate change issues; and various initiatives carried out in partnership with other organizations had continued. Furthermore, the declaration made by Morocco in the name of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan, had reaffirmed their collective commitment to conserve marine and coastal diversity. Nevertheless, the financial and administrative difficulties faced by MAP necessitated review of the overall structure and functioning of MAP, its governance, its relation with UNEP and possibilities for resources mobilization. Only by improving its governance could MAP build on the progress made and ensure that it would play a lead role in future efforts to protect the environment as a whole, and the Mediterranean in particular.

8. Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, underscoring France's action at the forefront of international efforts to protect the Mediterranean environment, said that the Barcelona Convention, with the firm support of the Contracting Parties, had successfully addressed issues of pollution and biodiversity protection, but that challenges remained; of particular concern, against a background of financial crisis in Europe, were the

financial difficulties faced by the Convention itself, to which UNEP and the MAP Coordinating Unit had responded by initiating implementation of a recovery plan, with further reductions and rationalization planned. Guidance from the Contracting Parties in that respect would be welcome. Meanwhile, it was important not to lose sight of new opportunities for working together on emerging environmental issues, the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) being one such opportunity. The green economy, as one of the pillars of sustainable development and a focus of Rio+20 discussions, was particularly relevant to the Mediterranean region. A recent UNEP report on the benefits of the transition towards a green economy had focused on five sectors that were particularly relevant to the Mediterranean: fisheries, tourism, shipping, renewable energy and pollution. At the same time, different national contexts had to be acknowledged, with each country pursuing its own unique pathway towards a green economy.

9. H.E. Mr. Jean-Pierre Thébault, Ambassador for Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France, welcomed participants to the Meeting. He underscored the key governance role of MAP, which also acted as a forum for regional dialogue, including on sustainable development issues, a unique standard-setting mechanism, and a driver of projects for implementation of the Barcelona Convention. However, it was time to revisit existing structures in order to adapt MAP to present-day challenges and to add fresh impetus to the efforts of Mediterranean countries to achieve their common goals. That called for ambitious, rapid and coordinated responses, more effective tools to protect species and ecosystems, and renewed and deeper multistakeholder dialogue, which was especially important in the light of the Arab Spring. The spirit of collective action reflected in the SPAMI list would also need to carry through to the work of identifying EBSAs, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the regional level, ties must be strengthened with the Union for the Mediterranean and other regional bodies, and all components and donors, and emphasis must be placed on the full participation of civil society. At the international level, the Rio+20 summit would provide an opportunity to place the preservation and governance of marine environments at the top of the global agenda; and the Paris Declaration should call for real progress in areas such as the blue as well as the green economy, which required the development of new economic models and a shift in focus to specific agreements. France pledged its continuing commitment to MAP and support for a bold decision-making process at the current session, so crucial to the future of the vulnerable territories of the Mediterranean.

10. Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, MAP Coordinator, thanked the Government of France for hosting the Meeting. The current radical process of change in the Mediterranean region was accompanied by growing environmental fragility due to coastal urban sprawl, over-fishing, problems associated with the movement of large vessels and deep-water oil drilling. Recovery would only be possible if economic and social needs were not allowed to take precedence over the preservation of the environment, but the three progressed together in pursuance of sustainable development. The Barcelona Convention process had achieved some notable successes including improvements in water quality, reduced levels of DDT and heavy metals and increased coverage by sewage treatment plants. However, many challenges remained, with a dramatic decline in numbers of certain species of fish and marine mammals, and the effects of desalination projects and aquaculture, which would require careful monitoring. She assured the Contracting Parties of the Secretariat's commitment to effective action in the coming biennium, despite the prevailing financial restrictions.

11. The full text of the above statements is reproduced in Annex IV.to the present report.

Agenda item 2: Organization of work

2.1 Rules of procedure

12. The Meeting noted that the Rules of Procedure adopted for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) would apply to the present Meeting.

2.2 Election of officers

13. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure and with the principles of equitable geographical distribution (Article 19 of the Convention) and continuity (Article III of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties), the Meeting elected the members of the Bureau, as follows, from among the representatives of the Contracting Parties:

President:	Mr. Jean-Pierre Thébault (France)
Vice-President:	Mr. Abdelkader Benhadjoudja (Algeria)
Vice-President:	H.E. Mr. Patrick Van Klaveren (Monaco)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Memia Benna Zayani (Tunisia)
Vice-President:	In absentia (Turkey)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Oliviero Montanaro (Italy)

2.3 Adoption of the agenda

14. The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda, as contained in documents UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/1 and 2.

2.4 Organization of work

15. The Meeting adopted the timetable proposed in the Annex to the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/2 and Corr.1).

16. The Meeting agreed to establish a working group to consider programme of work, budget and governance issues.

2.5 Credentials

17. In accordance with Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure, the credentials of the representatives of the Contracting Parties attending the 17th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties had been found to be in order.

Agenda item 4: Progress report and Paris Declaration

4.1 Progress report

18. The Coordinator introduced the report by the Secretariat for the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/3), outlining developments and progress since the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

19. In the legal field, further ratifications of the Protocols to the Convention had led, inter alia, to the entry into force of the Offshore and ICZM Protocols. She urged Contracting Parties that had not yet ratified all protocols to do so, in the hope that all seven protocols would be in force by the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties. MAP was now entering a new phase in which the focus would be on implementation. The work of the Compliance Committee was key in that respect. Contracting Parties were urged to submit their national reports in the first few months of the biennium to expedite the Committee's work.

20. Significant progress had been made in anchoring the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols within a solid and integrated strategy. A milestone development in that respect would be the adoption at the current meeting of the integrated framework for the implementation of the ecosystem approach. A variety of regional strategies, action plans and legally binding measures, also under consideration, would, once adopted, form the foundations for MAP work in the biennium ahead. The independent assessment of the MSSD had underlined the Strategy's legitimacy and its focus on core priorities, as well as the need to place more emphasis on meeting environmental as opposed to social objectives.

21. Work had progressed on strengthening MAP in accordance with the governance reforms adopted by the Parties in 2008, including proposals to standardize host country agreements regulating the RACs in order to ensure greater transparency and more solid resource mobilization and communications strategies. MAP had also begun to establish synergies with other bodies and organizations. With regard to the serious financial deficit that had accumulated over the years, which should never have occurred, measures had been taken to strengthen fund management and thus the efficient delivery of the programme of work. Over-budgeting of EUR 2.5 million had been corrected, and the MTF deficit had been reduced by some EUR 1.5 million. Controls had been strengthened, the collection of arrears accelerated and additional external resources mobilized. Austerity measures, however, would remain in place until a healthy financial situation had been restored. In the meantime, MAP would focus on the core business within its five-year strategy, broadening partnerships with other key actors, and completing institutional reform.

22. H.E. Mr. Mostafa Hussein Kamel, Minister of State for Environmental Affairs of Egypt, stressed the importance of cooperation among nations in addressing the many issues facing the Mediterranean, including those relating to biodiversity, ICZM, waste and ships' ballast water management, and the protection of particularly vulnerable areas. At a time when many countries were experiencing political, social and economic challenges, he emphasized the need to reaffirm, and work towards, a common goal, especially in view of the upcoming Rio+20 meeting in June 2012. He urged Parties to increase their technological cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries to help them become a more effective part of the MAP system for the good of all the people in the Mediterranean region.

23. H.E. Ms. Mèmia El Banna Zayani, Minister of the Environment of Tunisia, said that the current political, social and economic upheaval in several Mediterranean countries called for greater efforts to be made in terms of cooperation to formulate innovative approaches to development at national and regional level. Actions that aimed to create jobs, equitable access to resources and a better standard of living should not have a negative impact on the environment and natural heritage. Despite the efforts of MAP over the previous 35 years, the Mediterranean environment had continued to deteriorate as development activities had not followed the principles of sustainable development. The negative effects were ongoing and affected all the countries in the region. It was therefore imperative that countries should work together to create win-win scenarios for the management of natural resources and the protection of the environment. MAP had a crucial role to play in that regard. She therefore urged Parties to pursue their efforts to review the MAP system and governance issues and to achieve more efficient and effective resource management, and reaffirmed Tunisia's commitment to that process.

24. Mr. Federico José Ramos de Armas, Secretary of State for the Environment, Spain, welcomed recent positive trends in the development of MAP legal instruments, particularly the entry into force of the unique ICZM Protocol and the Offshore Protocol. Full implementation of the ecosystem approach would require institutional reform to improve coordination between all MAP components, generate the information required for sound management, provide a platform for negotiation and mobilize the necessary funding. As part of good governance, the Contracting Parties had a responsibility to define MAP's work programmes and monitor their implementation, while the Secretariat must provide the necessary institutional framework for them to do so effectively. The various MAP components must be governed by a set of common principles, while maintaining their unique characteristics and flexibility. The Coordinating Unit should be strengthened so that it could allocate resources effectively and ensure the coherent implementation of the work programme, in which greater focus should be on strategic vision and prioritization. Contracting Parties should not be expected to increase their contributions to the MTF; instead, MAP should make optimum use of its resources in addressing core activities while reducing administrative overheads.

25. H.E. Ms. Konstantina Birbili, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Greece to OECD, said that common objectives could be achieved by strengthening the linkages and synergies among the various Mediterranean initiatives in place; engaging all regional stakeholders in the relevant processes; and enhancing the role of the MCS. All MAP and RAC activities should also henceforth be based on the ecosystem approach. Committed as it was to the improvement of marine ecosystems and services, her Government greatly valued MAP's efforts to promote the integration of marine biodiversity values into decision-making, in which context the Aichi Plan of Action adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity served as a useful framework. The provisions of the ICZM Protocol and Plan of Action would also be taken into due consideration during the current revision of Greece's 12 regional spatial plans. As to the Offshore Protocol, she and her Italian counterpart had undertaken a joint initiative aimed at ensuring finalization of the discussions on the subject within the European Commission. Lastly, decisions of the Contracting Parties should be such as to drive forward all pending issues in the interest of fulfilling the mandates of the Barcelona Convention, including through the delivery of actions within the agreed time frames.

26. Mr. Gustaaf Borhardt, DG Environment, European Commission, said that MAP's present financial situation should prompt it to complete long overdue governance reforms and to set priorities. The European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the ecosystem approach of the Barcelona Convention, the implementation of which was fully supported by the European Union, shared the same goals. The effectiveness of the ICZM Action Plan would be enhanced by wider ratification of the ICZM Protocol. The Commission had presented a proposal in 2011 for European Union ratification of the Offshore Protocol and supported the decision concerning the preparation of an action plan during the next biennium. The forthcoming Rio+20 conference should be used to embed marine concerns in the global sustainability agenda. The European Union would continue to address the problem of marine litter as a matter of priority. The Commission would contribute to and monitor further progress in implementing governance and financial management reforms. MAP Secretariat reports, for example on SPAMIs, should be more critical and results-oriented. The use of scarce resources should be optimized and overlaps with other regional initiatives avoided. Examples of the European Union's new approach to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation included the Horizon 2020 initiative and the Shared Environmental Information System, in which MAP could play an effective role. Further important points were the greater focus on civil society and the identification of socio-economic gains from environmental improvements.

27. Mr. Hrvoje Dokoza, Deputy Minister of Environment and Nature Protection, Croatia, said that emerging financial, economic and other threats must be taken into account in the

formulation of policies and strategies for implementation of the Barcelona Convention. Economic growth must also be decoupled from environmental degradation and an equitable and inclusive society fostered through concrete action to address the three interdependent pillars of sustainable development in a holistic and integrated manner. MAP provided a strong and efficient framework for regional cooperation in the interests of the marine environment and sustainable development, counting among its many achievements the introduction of the ecosystem approach and the adoption of the ICZM Protocol. It additionally facilitated the creation and implementation of national policies, as in the case of Croatia's current efforts to develop an action plan for sustainable consumption and production. As the second largest archipelago in the Mediterranean, Croatia was committed to the protection and management of its coastal and marine environment through an integrated ecosystem approach. In that regard, the innovative ICZM Protocol was a vital tool for promoting both sustainable development and the governance needed for addressing the key vulnerabilities in that environment.

28. Mr. Peter Portelli, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment, Malta, said that the unprecedented political changes in the Mediterranean region and the global economic crisis had together given rise to new opportunities and challenges requiring stronger cooperation and fresh policies and strategies. Close cooperation and a coordinated and comprehensive regional approach to protection of the marine environment were ever vital, requiring a commitment to good governance based on coherence, accountability, transparency and the establishment of efficient budgetary monitoring mechanisms, with the Executive Coordination Panel and other MAP structures continuing to play a key role in enhancing collaboration and coordination across the MAP system. MAP must also work with other pan-Mediterranean cooperation initiatives while at the same time avoiding duplication of responsibilities and competencies. In order to ensure satisfactory fulfilment of their functions, MAP and its components, including REMPEC, must be adequately resourced. Lastly, MAP must carry out as a matter of priority activities relating to the ecosystem approach, ICZM and the implementation of legal obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in line with the main orientations of its programme of work.

29. Mr. Abdelkader Benhadjoudja, Principal Private Secretary, Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment, Algeria, said that the global financial situation and the changes under way in the Mediterranean region must be appraised with a view to strengthening the cooperative framework already in place. Algeria's own readiness to engage in cooperation was demonstrated by its early ratification of various protocols and by such activities as its plans for coastal development, ICZM and the establishment of marine museums for education and awareness purposes. It was furthermore well placed to convey the MAP message to international organizations and partners, including at the forthcoming Rio+20 conference, through its chairmanship of various international groups tasked with addressing climate change and environmental issues.

30. Ms. Alona Sheaffer, Director General, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Israel, said that the MAP programme of work should reflect the varying needs of the Contracting Parties and, while future work would focus on the ecosystem approach and the ICZM Protocol, MAP's more traditional areas of expertise should also be reflected in its programme of work. The draft decision on an action plan for the Offshore Protocol was of particular importance given an increased focus on exploration of natural resources in deep water in the region. Ahead of the Rio+20 summit, MAP components were already working, at the regional level, on several topics on the global agenda, including the promotion of a green economy. There was, however, no universal definition of a green economy; rather, each country should choose the policies and mechanisms most appropriate to its economic, social and development priorities. Countries that had enjoyed the benefits of industrialization for many years should lead the way in ensuring better global consumption habits and a more equitable and efficient use of resources. MAP should build upon its work in resource productivity and

sustainable consumption and production, and play a central role in promoting the green economy in the region, inter alia by setting ambitious standards for emissions from land-based sources.

31. Mr. Mitja Bricelj Director, Nature Protection Authority, Institute for Water, Slovenia, reaffirmed Slovenia's commitment to following up on action under the Barcelona Convention, including the implementation of Agenda 21 and the promotion of the ecosystem and subregional approaches to enhance regional efficiency. Slovenia had also increased dialogue with other Adriatic countries with respect to the MSSD and subregional activities. Continued implementation of Barcelona Convention and EU mechanisms would promote a better quality of life along the shared Mediterranean coast and Slovenia hoped to promote synergies at three distinct levels: UNEP, MAP and EU policies; Mediterranean coastal countries; and other relevant sectors or users. Such synergies and the implementation of the ecosystem approach were essential for the improved management of Mediterranean resources. In addition, enhanced governance of the whole Barcelona Convention structure was needed alongside appropriate and transparent bottom-up approaches at the national and local levels and top-down approaches at the regional level.

32. Ms. Sanaa Al Sairawan, Chief, Planning and Programming Service, Ministry of the Environment of Lebanon, said that Lebanon always endeavoured to meet its commitments with regard to international conventions and environmental priorities and had recently adopted legislation on protected areas and waste management, and had introduced measures for better environmental governance and research. However, in trying to meet those commitments, there were often hurdles to be overcome and Lebanon was still affected by the 2006 oil spill and pollution along its coastline. While a number of decisions had been taken within the United Nations stating that the polluting party should pay for the damage caused, Lebanon would have welcomed engagement by MAP and its Contracting Parties on the issue, which it had raised at a number of meetings. If similar situations arose in future, swift action should be taken, under the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, to counter the effects; crucial to that would be good governance mechanisms and adequate financial provisions.

33. Mr. Rafiq Husseini, Deputy Secretary General, Environment and Water, Union for the Mediterranean, welcomed MAP's continued input into capacity-building and enhancing information systems and said that the Union for the Mediterranean would endeavour to support those efforts. However, such efforts would need to be greatly increased if the objectives of MAP were to be achieved and, to that end, discussions on enhancing coordination on common issues had led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations. Among the objectives were the identification of synergies and review of operational plans as to how the two could mutually benefit and support each other. The Union for the Mediterranean urged caution with regard to calls to do more but with less money since investment was often necessary if assets such as the Mediterranean were to be protected and used for the benefit of future generations.

34. Mr. Abdellah Srour, Executive Secretary, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, FAO, said that the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment remained a key concern of the Commission, as it was only with a healthy ecosystem that it could be effective in achieving its objectives. FAO/GFCM therefore sought increased synergies and collaboration with MAP, enabling the partners to develop common regulations and to optimize the impact of their financial and other resources, especially in times of crisis. FAO/GFCM hoped that MAP's Contracting Parties would favour such developments and subsequently approve the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations later in the year.

35. The representative of MIO-ECSDE emphasized the need for action to meet current challenges, particularly in the face of the financial and socio-economic crises affecting the

region. He recalled that Barcelona Convention had been the first international instrument to consider NGOs as partners rather than simply observers. Within the Mediterranean, and among MIO's many members, there was a wealth of expertise and resources that could be tapped to assist in MAP endeavours. While expressing disappointment that some of the Contracting Parties' commitments, such as that relating to MPAs, had not been met, he praised the progress made on ICZM and the ecosystems approach, but noted that there were more references to the role of civil society in the ICZM Protocol than in the related Action Plan and hoped that the omission would be rectified. As there was often a lack of understanding of some of the concepts dealt with by MAP and how to apply them, MIO, within the framework of Horizon 2020, and in close cooperation with MAP components, namely the Coordinating Unit, MED POL, CP/RAC and PAP/RAC, had organized a number of workshops to assist countries in that respect. Such activities should be expanded. Given the number and complexity of the issues being addressed by MAP and the need to avoid duplication, synergy with other bodies working on similar issues, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, was also of the utmost importance.

36. The representative of IUCN recalled that the scientific community was a pillar of efforts to move forward towards sustainable development and that IUCN had been active in that field since 1946. Given the importance of the Mediterranean as a biodiversity conservation area, the economic crisis should not be an excuse for failing to address the threats to the region's environment and development. He reiterated IUCN's commitment to the work in that regard, including through its Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation in Malaga, Spain.

37. The representative of Greenpeace, on behalf of Greenpeace, Oceana, WWF and IUCN, expressed her concern that the MPA target set by the Contracting Parties at their 16th Meeting had not been met. Cautioning against using the economic and financial crisis as an alibi for inaction, she called on the Parties to increase efforts to protect marine biological diversity by submitting specific proposals and management plans for the priority conservation areas in order to ensure the timely establishment of MPAs and marine reserves based on the precautionary approach. She also urged the Contracting Parties through the Coordinating Unit to contact the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to share the results of the scientific EBSA identification, as agreed by the SPA/RAC Focal Points. She also called on the Parties to make a clear link between MAP and the upcoming Rio+20 conference in the Paris Declaration and to declare their support for the launch of negotiations on an implementing agreement to ensure that marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction would be sustainably managed and effectively conserved across all the world's oceans.

38. A representative of Oceana, speaking also on behalf of Greenpeace, Oceana and WWF, recalled that ten species of threatened sharks and rays had been proposed for transfer from Annex III to Annex II of the SPA Protocol. As a decision on the issue had already been delayed on two occasions, she urged the Parties to adopt those proposals immediately in keeping with the precautionary approach.

39. The provided full texts of statements are reproduced in Annex V to the present report.

4.2 Paris Declaration

40. The President introduced a consolidated version of the draft Paris Declaration, contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/4 and incorporating the amendments proposed by delegations prior to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties. In the ensuing discussions, additional amendments were made to the document. Points raised included the need for reference to be made, inter alia, to the contribution of civil society organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders; to climate change; to the objective of ensuring that the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference included technical and financial support for poorer

countries; and to judicial and operational cooperation to respond to pollution caused by shipping. All outstanding issues were settled in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

41. The draft Paris Declaration, as amended, was adopted by the Contracting Parties. The Declaration is contained in Annex I to the present report.

Agenda item 3: Decisions

3.1 Thematic decisions

42. The Meeting of the Contracting Parties considered the draft decisions contained in documents UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG. 20/5 and Corr.1 and Corr.2.

Draft decision IG.20/1: Compliance Committee: Amendment to the Compliance Procedures and Mechanisms, programme of work for the biennium 2012–2013 and partial renewal of membership

43. The President drew attention to the proposed amendment to paragraph 6 of the Compliance Procedures and Mechanisms presented in Annex I to draft decision IG.20/1, and to the Compliance Committee's programme of work for the biennium 2012–2013 contained in Annex III. The list of Committee members and alternate members elected for a term of four years was as follows: from the southern and eastern Mediterranean Contracting Parties – Mr. Hawash Shahin (Syrian Arab Republic – member), Mr. Joseph Edward Zaki (Egypt – alternate member); from the European Union Member States Parties to the Barcelona Convention – Mr. Michel Prieur (France – member), Ms. Daniela Addis (Italy – member), Mr. José Juste Ruiz (Spain – alternate member) and Ms. Katerina Skouria (Greece – alternate member); and from the other Contracting Parties: Ms. Rachel Adam (Israel – member) and Mr. Tarzan Legovic (Croatia – alternate member).

44. Mr Larbi Sbai, Chairperson of the Compliance Committee, introduced the Committee's report (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG. 20/7). The Committee had held two meetings, in July and November 2011, and members and the Secretariat were commended for their work and support, including during the intersessional period. The involvement of MED POL and the RACs in such meetings, with their wealth of experience, would also be most valuable.

45. In the absence of referrals by the Contracting Parties or the Secretariat, the Committee had followed the work programme adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties. The two information brochures had been reviewed and revised, and the Committee had also worked on the revision of the French version of its Procedures and Mechanisms in order to align it with the original English version. The Chairperson had suggested some changes that members had preferred to consider in depth during their next mandate. The Committee had, however, dealt with a proposal by one of its members to amend paragraph 6 of Decision IG.17/2 of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in order to allow members and alternates to serve for a second consecutive term. Given that there were no more than two Committee meetings per year, such a change would lead to greater continuity in the Committee's work. A draft decision to that effect was before the Contracting Parties for consideration at the present meeting.

46. After examining national reporting patterns, the Committee had concluded that there was much room for improvement. Reporting was crucial for tracking progress at national level, for identifying difficulties and common challenges, and for the medium- and long-term programming of MAP activities. For such reports to be of optimum use, they should be submitted in a timely manner. Consideration might be given to specifying a strict deadline for submission. Although some Parties had never submitted their reports, the Committee considered it more constructive to seek reasons for their omission than to lay blame. The

Committee had never been intended as a sanction mechanism and it was important to foster trust in the triangular relationship between the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the Compliance Committee.

47. The Compliance Committee had submitted to the Contracting Parties a proposed programme of work for 2012–2013. The Parties were requested to reflect on the possibility of introducing a third mode of referral to the Committee, namely self-referral, on which they might wish to adopt a draft decision at their next Meeting. Rather than increasing the number of Committee meetings, the Chairperson proposed extending them, which would have lesser financial implications, to enable the body to fulfil its mission adequately.

48. In the ensuing discussion it was highlighted that, in future, Contracting Parties should be provided with information on which countries had not presented reports. The President concluded the discussion by encouraging Parties to submit reports more promptly and by welcoming the proposal regarding self-referral as suggested by the Chairperson of the Compliance Committee.

49. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/2: Adoption of the Action Plan for the implementation of the ICZM Protocol for the Mediterranean (2012–2019)

50. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/2.

51. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/3: Reporting on measures taken to implement the Convention and its Protocols

52. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/3. In the light of the issues raised in the Report of the Compliance Committee to the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (see draft decision IG.20/1 above), a brief discussion took place on the need to adjust reporting obligations so that Parties were required to submit only new information available for the biennium, rather than repeating information already submitted, and to set a realistic deadline for the submission of national reports in order to give Parties sufficient time to collect and analyse the requisite information.

53. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/4: Implementing MAP ecosystem approach road map: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach road map

54. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/4.

55. The representative of Greece, noting that the 11 ecological objectives listed in Annex II of the draft decision were, elsewhere, often referred to as priority actions, said that only one of those terms should be used in all contexts. Further, an explicit reference to those 11 objectives/priority actions should be made in the body of the draft decision text.

56. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/5: Amendments to Annexes II and III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean

57. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/5.

58. The representative of the European Union explained that the Union intended to make use of the procedure laid down in article 23, paragraph 2 (iv) of the Barcelona Convention and notify its final position in writing. He formally requested a period of 180 days for the submission of any objections.

59. The representative of Tunisia stated that the decision should contain no reference to the lifting of all reservations on the annexes following the SPA/RAC Focal Points meeting in May 2011, as his Government did not approve of moving two species of cartilaginous fish, *Rhinobatos cemiculus* and *Rhinobatos rhinobatos*, from Annex III to Annex II. After a discussion, Tunisia also requested a period of 180 days to lodge an objection in accordance with the procedure provided for in article 23, paragraph 2 (iv) of the Barcelona Convention.

60. A representative speaking on behalf of three environmental NGOs expressed disappointment at the continued delay in including the species in question in the endangered species list, as their numbers had declined dramatically.

61. Following an appeal by the representative of FAO/GFCM for his organization to be involved in the preparation of all decisions with a potential impact on fishing matters, representatives agreed on the desirability of a detailed, two-way exchange of information between MAP and FAO/GFCM and other relevant stakeholders.

62. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/6: Adoption of the Work Programme and Implementation Timetable of the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea for the period 2012–2017

63. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/6.

64. The representative of Spain expressed support for the draft decision but pointed out that three species of algae listed as *Heterokontophyta* should instead be listed as *Rhodophyta*.

65. The representative of the European Union expressed similar support for the draft decision but requested clarification, to be provided in due course, as to which items in the programme of work would relate to its implementation.

66. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/7: Conservation of sites of particular ecological interest in the Mediterranean

67. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/7.

68. In the ensuing discussion, additional amendments were made to the document, including the deletion of the list of potential proposed EBSAs in the Mediterranean contained in Annex II, and the insertion into the operative part of a reference to the work of the experts segment at the MAP Focal Points meeting in Athens in 2011.

69. The representative of ACCOBAMS expressed support for the decision and stated its willingness to cooperate with MAP and specifically SPA/RAC in its follow-up.

70. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/8: Regional Plans in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol of the Barcelona Convention

71. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/8, which contained three parts.

72. The representative of Spain presented the outcomes of informal discussions and proposed a number of amendments, mostly editorial. Of particular note were those proposed to table A, contained in Article IV of Annex I of the first part of the draft decision, whereby a mercury ELV of 50 mcg/l would be included for all Contracting Parties by 2015 and, as a compromise, the ELV of 5 mcg/l, set for 2019, would be designated as a target value, but would be revised by 2015.

73. The representative of the European Union requested that, for the purposes of clarity, the three parts of the draft decision should be presented as separate decisions on mercury, BOD₅ and POPs. The representative of Spain, agreeing with the European Union, suggested that the draft decision be discussed as it stood and editorial changes should be made afterwards to separate it into three distinct decisions.

74. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted on the understanding that the final text would comprise three separate decisions.

Draft decision IG.20/9: Criteria and standards for bathing waters quality in the framework of the implementation of Article 7 of the LBS Protocol

75. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/9.

76. The representative of the European Union requested that, as in other decisions, a paragraph should be added stating that adoption of the decision would not prevent Contracting Parties from adopting stricter standards.

77. The representative of Spain proposed that the table contained in the draft decision should be supplemented by a footnote that read: "These criteria should be revised in the light of the experience of the Contracting Parties on its application and possible progress in other specific forums in 2015".

78. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/10: Adoption of the Strategic Framework for Marine Litter Management

79. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/10 and invited the Meeting to adopt the Strategic Framework for Marine Litter Management laid out in Annexes I and II of the draft.

80. The representative of ACCOBAMS stressed the negative impact of marine litter on cetaceans in the Mediterranean, and offered to work with MED POL on the activities specified in Objective five of the Strategic Framework.

81. The representative of Spain said that the policy document set out in Annex I was a work in progress: in particular, the future regional plan on marine litter management should place emphasis on ways of preventing litter.

82. The representative of the OSPAR Commission said that his organization was working on a regional plan similar to the Strategic Framework. Marine litter had been a major topic of discussion at the Third Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, which had taken place in Manila, Philippines, in January 2012.

83. The President suggested the addition of a new operative paragraph to the decision inviting the MAP Secretariat to liaise closely with the OSPAR Commission Secretariat in

order to explore a possible common approach to the subject, expressing shared concerns while taking into consideration the specific nature of each convention, thus making for greater efficiency.

84. The representative of Clean Up Greece noted that her organization and MIO-ECSDE, as well as HELMEPA, had been involved in the assessment of the marine litter problem referred to in Annex I of the draft decision. The three organizations were likewise joint authors of the document "Public Awareness for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean".

85. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/11: Regional strategy addressing ship's ballast water management and invasive species

86. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/11.

87. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/12: Action Plan to implement the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention concerning the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil

88. The Coordinator drew attention to draft decision IG.20/12.

89. The representatives of ACCOBAMS and of WWF confirmed the willingness of their organizations to contribute to the activities of the working group to be coordinated by REMPEC.

90. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision IG.20/13: Governance

91. The Meeting considered a revised version of the draft decision on governance, as proposed by the working group tasked with discussing programme of work, budget and governance issues.

92. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

3.2 Adoption of the MAP programme of work and budget for the 2012–2013 biennium

93. The Meeting of the Contracting Parties had before it document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/6, containing draft decision IG.20/14 on the MAP programme of work and budget for the 2012–2013 biennium.

94. The Meeting considered a revised version of the draft decision, as proposed by the working group tasked with discussing programme of work, budget and governance issues.

95. Following discussions among the Contracting Parties, additional amendments were negotiated and agreed.

96. After a debate, the Contracting Parties, being aware of the difficult financial situation, agreed in a spirit of solidarity to take action to recover the deficit and to ensure the continued regular functioning of MAP.

97. The representative of Greece requested a smooth implementation of the Functional Review with special emphasis to be placed on its consequences for human resources, the budget and the implementation of the work programme. After listening to the concerns of the President of the Meeting and acknowledging the importance of reform, the Meeting of the Contracting Parties agreed to implement the technical results of the Functional Review and asked the Coordinating Unit to implement its results and in the process smoothen its implications.

98. The representative of the European Union reported that her authorities had agreed to the transfer of nearly EUR 1 million of expenditure from the MTF to the account containing the voluntary contributions of the European Union, thereby helping to reduce the MTF deficit.

99. After a lengthy debate, the Contracting Parties agreed that, as an exceptional measure for the biennium, the European Union should be invited to meetings of the Bureau when reallocation of the budget was discussed.

100. The Meeting stressed the importance of continued reform in decision-making on the budget. The MAP Coordinating Unit, UNEP and UNON were requested to work together to develop a proposal for consideration by the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties based on best practice in other UNEP-administered MEAs. That request was included in the budget decision adopted.

101. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

Agenda item 5: Date and place of the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2013

102. The meeting accepted with gratitude the offer by Turkey to host the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 6: Other business

103. There was no discussion under this agenda item.

Agenda item 7: Adoption of the report

104. The meeting adopted its report, on the basis of the draft report contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/L.1, including the Paris Declaration, contained in Annex I to the present report, the thematic decisions contained in Annex II to the present report, and the programme of work and budget for the 2012–2013 biennium, contained in Annex III to the present report.

Agenda Item 8: Closure of the Meeting

105. Four closing statements were made.

106. Mr. Brice Lalonde, Executive Coordinator of the Rio+20 summit, said that the Meeting had reflected the exemplary contribution of the Barcelona Convention process to standard-setting, efforts to improve governance, and civil society participation. He invited MAP to contribute its experience and expertise in the coastal and marine environment to the preparations for the Rio+20 summit.

107. Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of UNEP/Division of Policy Implementation, thanked the Contracting Parties for reaffirming their confidence in UNEP and welcomed the spirit of cooperation and compromise that had enabled them to meet the challenge of adopting a budget for 2012–2013.

108. The Coordinator said that the frank discussion of complex issues at the Meeting had paved the way for the significant work ahead, and that the experience of the Barcelona Convention including the just adopted set of 11 ecological objectives would be provided for the Rio+20 summit.

109. The representative of France said that his country had been honoured to host the Meeting, and stressed the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to environmental problems in the Mediterranean.

110. The Meeting expressed its gratitude and appreciation to the French authorities for their hospitality and their contribution to the successful conclusion of the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

111. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the Meeting closed at 6 p.m. on Friday, 10 February 2012.