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87<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 6-7 November 2018

**Report: Conclusions and Recommendations**

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UNEP/MAP  
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## Table of contents

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>Report</b>	1-11
<b>ANNEXES</b>	
<b>Annex I</b> List of Participants	
<b>Annex II</b> Agenda	

## **Introduction**

1. In accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 87<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols was held in Athens, Greece, on 6-7 November 2018.

## **Participation**

2. The President of the Bureau, Ms. Klodiana Marika (Albania), the Vice-Presidents: Mr. Charalambos Hajipakkos (Cyprus); Mr. Ahmed Kassem Sheta (Egypt); Mr. Oliviero Montanaro (Italy), accompanied by Ms. Silvia Sartori; Mr. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou (Tunisia) and the Rapporteur, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro) attended the Bureau meeting. Ms. Marijana Mance (European Union) attended the meeting as an observer. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Programme Officer, Administration and Finance Officer, Legal Officer). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### **I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. The meeting was opened at 09:30 on 6 November 2018 by Ms. Klodiana Marika, President of the Bureau. She welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their third meeting of the 2018-2019 biennium.

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

### **II. Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**

5. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.87/1. No additional issues were added to agenda item 7 “*Any Other Matters*”. The Agenda is presented in Annex II of the present document.

### **III. Agenda item 3: Progress Report for April - September 2018**

6. The Coordinator introduced the document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period April - September 2018*” (UNEP/MED BUR.87/3). He presented highlights from the document, noting that efforts were made to produce a focused and concise report. He also introduced the “*Progress report by the Secretariat on the implementation of COP 20 Decisions*” (UNEP/MED BUR.87/4) and made reference to the “*Reports of the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel*” and the “*Compilation of Project Fiches*”, presented in documents UNEP/MED BUR.87/Inf.4 and Inf.5 respectively, for the information of the Bureau.

7. In his presentation, the Coordinator highlighted that work on the implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW) and other COP 20 decisions has been very intense during the past six months, and that this work is ongoing. Special reference was made to the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel (Paris, France, 6 June 2018, and Split, Croatia, 27-28 September 2018) noting their importance in coordinating the work of the Secretariat. He mentioned that these meetings showed once again the good team spirit and coordination prevailing.

8. Further highlights included the progress in relation to resource mobilization, including the preparations of the GEF MedProgramme Child Projects, the conclusion of the negotiations with the European Commission to support the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Marine Protected Areas project under the GreenMedIII Strategy, the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the SwitchMed Project, and the

implementation of the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS). Furthermore, the Coordinator informed the Bureau of the work of the Secretariat towards strengthening partnerships and synergies in the global and regional levels, including the contributions by UNEP/MAP to UN processes and the cooperation with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS), the Benguela Current Convention, the European Environment Agency (EEA), and Plastics Europe.

9. The Coordinator informed the Bureau on the ongoing work on information and communication and on assessment reports, in relation mainly to the preparation of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report (2019 SoED) and the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR). On pollution, he noted the work under MED POL on the Six Pollution Reduction Regional Plans. He presented the progress related to biodiversity and ecosystems, highlighting the creation by Spain of a new 46,385 km<sup>2</sup> Marine Protected Area (the Cetaceans Migration Corridor) as a very positive development. In relation to land and sea interactions and processes and integrated coastal zone management, he stressed the progress made with regards to the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina Agreement, and highlighted the work of the open-ended Working Group on the Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. Finally, he presented several activities on Sustainable Consumption and Production that took place to enhance cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels, as well as progress in relation to climate change adaptation.

10. The Bureau members expressed appreciation for the progress achieved in the implementation of the activities carried out and for the early start of implementation and the efforts provided. Furthermore, they welcomed the structure of the report, noting with appreciation that it is a shorter and focused document. They also expressed their appreciation for the compilation of project fiches, since it enables an overall understanding of how projects are implemented. Projects have become a structural element for the implementation of the POW, and specific mention was made of the fact that the project fiches include the link between each specific project and the relevant activities of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work. One member of the Bureau noted that it would be very useful to publish the project fiches on the UNEP/MAP web site and to update their content periodically in order to reflect progresses in their implementation.

11. In reviewing the document, Bureau members referred to the need to ensure complementarity and synergies among databases within the MAP system, with the support of INFO/RAC. They reiterated the need to enhance coordination between projects related to specific issues, such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)/Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), and the relevant activities funded by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) and voluntary contributions.

12. One member of the Bureau, referring to the preparation of the Common Regional Framework on ICZM, noted that this document provides an opportunity to create a common operational guide, with clear added value. He also noted that the evaluation of the Pelagos Sanctuary for the conservation of marine mammals of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) should be performed in 2019; he highlighted, however, that the post of Executive Secretary of the Pelagos Agreement is currently vacant creating possible delays to the process, and that this issue should be addressed. The Bureau highlighted the importance of contributing to the ongoing consultation on the Common Regional Framework on ICZM in view of the revised version to be presented at the PAP/RAC Focal Points meeting.

13. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the early initiation of the preparation and consultation on the PoW. Being of overarching importance, the Bureau asked to be informed on the preparation of the PoW 2020-2021, so as to be able to comment on even before the next Bureau meeting. The Secretariat noted that the issue will be discussed at the Executive Coordination Panel meeting scheduled to take place in January 2019 and that the relevant documentation will then be shared with the Bureau.

#### 14. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation for the work done in the period April - September 2018 as presented by the Secretariat, and for the efforts and results achieved so far;**

**(b) Considering the specificity of the Pelagos Sanctuary as SPAMI and the current operational condition of the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement, the Bureau asks the Secretariat to liaise with the President of the mentioned agreement to explore ways for completing the review process of the Pelagos Sanctuary as SPAMI in line with the Decision IG.23/9 adopted at COP 20;**

**(c) The Bureau also asks the Secretariat to ensure complementarity and synergies among databases within the MAP system, with the support of INFO/RAC.**

#### **IV. Agenda item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

15. The Coordinator informed the meeting on progress made as presented in document UNEP/MED BUR.87/5 "*Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues*", addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, and administrative matters.

16. He noted the importance of the early receipt of the assessed contributions by Contracting Parties, for allowing the Secretariat to start the implementation of activities using the budget approved by the COP. He highlighted the high level of assessed contributions received (almost 93% by September 2018). Furthermore, he introduced the new Fund Management Officer (FMO) at the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, who was invited to join the meeting.

17. The Bureau members expressed appreciation for the high level of contributions received and welcomed the new FMO, while they were invited to raise any questions in her presence. In response to a question on the existing surplus, the FMO highlighted that the surplus is made up of a number of distinct parts, such as the working capital reserve, arrears and advance payments that are recorded but not yet accounted for. She informed the Bureau that a detailed review of the accounts since 2012 is under way not only of the MTF but also of the other Trust Funds, in order to clarify issues. Further information in this respect is to be provided at the 88<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting.

18. With regards to a question by the Bureau on the losses/gains due to the exchange rate fluctuations, she reminded the Bureau of the provision adopted by the COP, noting that these can be covered from the working capital reserve. She also informed the Bureau that this issue is being discussed with UNEP Headquarters, and it was requested that the experiences of other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements on this issue are collected and presented.

19. The members of the Bureau welcomed the information provided, stressed the importance of clarifying the issue of the surplus, and agreed with the proposal to develop a financial strategy allow better allocation of funds.

20. The Coordinator referred to the issue of countries with arrears for over 24 months, noting the particularity of the situations of the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Libya. The Bureau members appreciated that this is a difficult situation to address. It was proposed to examine if there is a possibility of exemptions, due to specific situations of force majeure, from the mechanism on sanctions that can be introduced for Contracting Parties with longstanding arrears.

21. The Bureau members referred to the UN scale of assessment and to the need to align the assessed contributions to the MTF with the UN scale that will be issued at the end of 2018, noting that a new UN scale is adopted every three years, while the UNEP/MAP PoW and Budget every two years.

22. Finally, the Coordinator updated the Bureau with regards to the MAP premises and the possibility of renovation of the existing premises due to the difficulty of finding new premises.

#### **23. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with appreciation the high level of contributions received for the year 2018. It requests the Contracting Parties whose 2018 contributions are still pending to pay them and the arrears, as soon as possible;**

**(b) The Bureau takes note of the actions taken by the Secretariat for the cases of arrears for over 24 months and requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts to collect the arrears and report to the Bureau and to the Contracting Parties on the outcome of its actions;**

**(c) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts at finding a solution for the long-standing arrears of the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Libya, considering their current situation, and to report to the next session of the Bureau on any development;**

**(d) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to report to its 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting on existing UN procedures to address the issue of long standing arrears of countries in specific situations of force majeure that may also allow for a suspension of their loss of rights;**

**(e) The Bureau asks the Secretariat to report on the composition of the positive balance in the next Bureau meeting as reflected in the Financial Statement of 31.12.2017. The Secretariat, under the guidance of UNEP Headquarters, will also recommend a standard mechanism for the utilization of any surplus in line with UN Financial Rules and Regulations;**

**(f) The Bureau asks the Secretariat to update the next Bureau meeting the exchange rate mechanism under the current UMOJA accounting system and obtain information on comparative handling of the situation in other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The Secretariat will present to the next Bureau meeting a procedure for the use of the Working Capital Reserve to compensate for past exchange rate losses;**

**(g) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to provide at its 88<sup>th</sup> meeting the UN Scale of Assessments from the UN Headquarters as the basis for the calculation of the Assessed Contributions to the MTF and a proposal to ensure that contributions are constantly in line with the assessed scale. Such proposal will then be submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP 21.**

## **V. Agenda item 5: Specific Issues**

24. The Coordinator presented the “*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.87/6).

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

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

26. The Coordinator reported that Annex II of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean of 1995 (SPA/BD Protocol) entered into force on 14 September 2018. He informed the Bureau of the ongoing process in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim to achieve the universal ratification of the Barcelona Convention by COP 21. He also highlighted the constant efforts of the Secretariat in encouraging Contracting Parties towards ratifications, and especially of the Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol) which is not yet into force, ensuring that these efforts will continue.

27. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly.

### **28. Conclusions:**

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

**(b) The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to achieve the full ratification of the revised Barcelona Convention as well as the ratification of its Protocols, and specifically of the amended Dumping Protocol which would allow its entry into force.**

- **B. Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs**

29. The Coordinator presented the first draft of minimum common provisions to be included in the Host Country Agreements (HCAs) for Regional Activity Centres (RACs), to ensure their effective operation, in accordance with Decision IG.23/3 on *Governance*. He noted that the provisions are described in detail in Annex I of the Report on Specific Issues and informed the meeting that the Secretariat has looked at the different legal instruments used by other UN organizations to address their relationships with regional centres, such as the Basel Convention and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for GFCM.

30. The members of the Bureau welcomed the document prepared by the Secretariat on the minimum common provisions, and discussed this matter.

31. The Coordinator proposed to contact the countries hosting the RACs and invite them to provide inputs and comments on the proposed minimum common provisions. The aim of these contacts will be to reach a text acceptable by all parties involved, to be presented to the 2019 MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 21.

32. The Bureau members asked for clarifications regarding the Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) and if these can replace the HCA for RACs. The Coordinator replied that this process has been developed by UNEP to enable transfer of funds and is meant to be complementary to the HCA. Furthermore, he noted that the aim of the discussions is to find a flexible way forward, acceptable by all, to cover issues not covered by the PCA such as privileges and immunities. This is the reason why the templates of legal agreements used by other UN bodies are looked into.

33. The Bureau members noted that the immunity of premises and the consideration of possible application of privileges and immunities to personnel of RACs should be addressed within the minimum common provisions. Furthermore, it was noted that provisions should ensure transparency of the core budget of RACs.

34. It was agreed that a revised text of these minimum provisions would be developed by the Secretariat, reflecting the inputs and comments made by the Bureau. The draft provisions, with potential financial implications, will be shared with all the Contracting Parties, as per the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures of the Barcelona Convention.

35. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the minimum common provisions, as presented in Annex I of the Report on Specific Issues and requests the Secretariat to revise them in accordance with the comments received during the meeting and circulate the revised version to the Bureau members for consideration and guidance;**

**(b) As a following step, the Bureau requests the Secretariat to consult with Host Governments of RACs on the revised minimum common provisions and to report to the 88<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bureau.**

- **C. Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity**

36. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the preparations of the meeting of the thematic focal points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) for the biennium 2018–2019, in accordance with Decision IG.23/3 on *Governance*.

37. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly. In relation to the number of other focal points/experts to be invited at the meeting, it was noted by a member of the Bureau that any recommendation that might create additional cost should be accompanied by estimates. Reference was also made to the relevant discussions at COP 20, where this was considered as a trial exercise and as a prototype to better understand the implications of holding thematic focal point meetings, including in relation to the financial implications. It was recalled that Decision IG. 21/13 on Governance, adopted at COP 18, agreed on Thematic Focal Points in order to promote an integrated and coherent approach

in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Programme of Work, as well as to optimize the costs.

38. The Coordinator stressed that the Secretariat would need to have clear indications from the Bureau on the focal points/experts to be invited before being able to provide an estimate of the relevant costs, especially since this is the first time that such a meeting takes place. He also noted that the directors of all MAP components are expected to participate in the meeting and that the main issue to be addressed in this respect is the integration at the national level.

39. The possibility to hold back-to-back meetings of MAP components was also addressed by the Bureau members as a means to increase integration and, possibly, to reduce costs. Finally, on the agenda of the SPA/BD thematic focal points meeting, it was noted that this can be adjusted depending on the time available for discussion at the meeting.

40. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the proposed additional items of the provisional agenda of the meeting of the Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity (SPA/BD). Based on these items the Bureau recommends that the Contracting Parties be represented at the meeting by their SPA/BD Focal Point and their MAP Focal Point or another delegated focal point;**

**(b) The Bureau asks the Secretariat to explore the possibility of holding the meeting back-to-back with the PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting, given its relevance, and recommends identifying a venue, if not already booked, that is preferably the seat of a RAC;**

**(c) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to prepare a Concept Note on the meeting of the Thematic Focal Points for SPA/BD, including preliminary agenda, participation, financial information, and other relevant information, before the end of 2018 and to inform the Bureau for guidance.**

**- D. Compliance and Reporting**

41. The Secretariat provided an update on the status of implementation of Decision IG.23/1 on *Revised Reporting Format for the Implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols*, and of Decision IG.23/2 on *Compliance Committee: biennium 2016-2017*.

42. The Coordinator highlighted that the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Compliance Committee (Athens, Greece, 20-21 June 2018) had been very productive. It mainly discussed the most effective ways to review the information included in the National Implementation Reports submitted by the Contracting Parties. He also informed the Bureau on the results of the resumed session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Compliance Committee (Teleconference, 30 October 2018) which was held for the election of the Committee officers for the current biennium.

43. On the issue of the nomination of an Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee by Monaco, the Coordinator noted that the official letter of nomination was still pending, adding that the Secretariat had received the information from the country that the process is at its final stages.

44. On reporting, the Coordinator highlighted that the new online Barcelona Convention reporting System was launched in a timely manner for Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2016-2017. He reminded the Bureau that the submission of the reports is an important obligation of the Contracting Parties that enables the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system to have a clear understanding of the general advances made in the region as well as of the implementation gaps that need to be addressed.

45. A member of the Bureau recalled that the core mandate of the Compliance Committee is to assess compliance with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Since several Contracting Parties have not submitted their national implementation reports for more than two biennia, the Compliance Committee should address this as an issue of non-compliance.



46. The Bureau members expressed appreciation of the work of the Compliance Committee and of the election of its members during the resumed session of its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

47. **Conclusions:**

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

**(b) The Bureau recommends that the Compliance Committee develops a mechanism under which the non-submission of national implementation reports under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention for more than two consecutive biennia will be construed as a situation of non-compliance, leading to the consideration by the Compliance Committee of the measures laid down in Section VII of the Procedures and Mechanisms of Compliance;**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the new online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) as the collective effort of the UNEP/MAP system to facilitate the national reporting process, thereby increasing the submission rate of national implementation reports and their quality;**

**(d) The Bureau strongly encourages Contracting Parties to use the new online BCRS to timely submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2016-2017 by December 2018. This will enable the Secretariat to prepare a report on the general advances made in the region, including at the legal and institutional levels, in implementing the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols along with proposals for further measures, as necessary, as agreed by COP 20 Decision IG.23/1;**

**(e) The Bureau urges Contracting Parties to expedite in future biennia the process of nomination of the Compliance Committee Members and Alternate Members, so that the membership of the Compliance Committee is elected in full at the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, in accordance with the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.**

**- E. Cooperation and Partners**

48. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the progress in relation to the preparation of the Draft Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity, following Decision IG.23/3 on *Governance*. He noted that the Secretariat believes that the issue now transcends the nature of an operational agreement such as the Joint Cooperation Strategy between Secretariats, deserving therefore to be discussed in the appropriate fora of the Contracting Parties, and asked for the advice of the Bureau in this regard.

49. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the progress in relation to the Joint Cooperation Strategy and the information provided in Annex II of the Report on Specific Issues. One Bureau member noted that he believes that there is no need for a robust, fully implementing mechanism, but for a lighter mechanism to enable the Secretariats to collaborate efficiently. Furthermore, he noted that following this lighter mechanism/strategy, that would involve only international organizations, an action plan could be created to operationally implement the strategy, with reference also to the other actors to be involved.

50. The Coordinator noted that this is a long-standing issue and that guidance from the Bureau is necessary to define the way forward and to enable the Secretariat to effectively communicate with the other involved partners on the next steps. To this end, the members of the Bureau confirmed that they are convinced on the need to strengthen coordination between these secretariats/organizations on area-based management and advised accordingly.

51. With reference to Decision IG.19/6 on *MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership*, the Coordinator updated the Bureau members on the applications received by civil society organizations for accreditation as MAP Partners, as well as on the applications received for renewal of accreditation

by existing MAP Partners. He also introduced the evaluation by the Secretariat of the new applications, as in Annex III of the Report on Specific Issues.

52. The Bureau endorsed the seven applications of organizations to become new MAP Partners, while the member of the Bureau from Italy informed the meeting of its abstention with regards to the endorsement of The International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (IOGP) as MAP Partner. Furthermore, all seven applications for renewal of accreditation of existing MAP Partners were endorsed by the Bureau.

53. The Coordinator informed the meeting on the process of development and subscription of MOUs (and other legal instruments) signed by the Secretariat as well as by MAP components, and stressed that a range of legal agreements is available and not only MOUs.

54. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the information provided in Annex V of the Report on Specific Issues and noted that they trust the Coordinating Unit to proceed in the renewal and update of existing agreements. Following further discussion on the issue, the Bureau advised accordingly.

55. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat on mobilizing expression of interest from non-governmental organizations to be accredited as MAP Partners and on initiating the process of renewal of accreditation of existing MAP Partners;**

**(b) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new applications submitted by “INNODEV”, “BirdLife Malta”, “Eco-Union”, “CEDRE”, “MED SOS”, “French Water Academy” and “IOGP” for accreditation as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21 for consideration and endorsement;**

**(c) The Bureau endorses the proposal by the Secretariat to renew the accreditation as MAP Partners of “MEDPAN”, “MIO-ECSDE”, “SEPS”, “TUDAV”, “WWF MedPO”, “GFN” and “HELMPEA” following the applications submitted by these organizations, and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 21 for consideration and endorsement;**

**(d) In relation to the Joint Cooperation Strategy between Secretariats, the Bureau takes note of the progress and of the explanatory note prepared by the Secretariat, and requests that a revised version of the draft Strategy be prepared to reflect the comments received through the consultations with the Thematic Focal Points for SPA/BD and during the 87<sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting. The revised version will be circulated to the MAP Focal Points and the Thematic Focal Points for SPA/BD for additional comments and the resulting version will be presented to the Bureau at its 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting;**

**(e) The Bureau takes note of the legal advice prepared by the Secretariat on the process of development and subscription of MOUs and other legal instruments. The Bureau asks the Secretariat to work with the MAP components in order to:**

- i. Reinforce the flow of information among RACs-Coordinating Unit-Bureau;**
- ii. Set up a process, whereby the Coordinating Unit would be consulted on any MOUs or other legal instruments proposed by RACs;**
- iii. Strengthen the role of the Coordinating Unit in ensuring that MOUs or other legal instruments between RACs and other entities are within RACs mandate as set forth in COP 16 Decision IG.19/5 and linked to the MTS and/or corresponding output of the Programme of Work;**
- iv. Ensure the timely involvement of, and the regular sharing of information with the relevant thematic Focal Points on MOUs and other legal instruments, including their content.**

## - F. Preparation of Assessment Reports

56. The Coordinator introduced the draft Roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 MED QSR, as in Annex IV of the Report on Specific Issues.

57. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the document and welcomed the emphasis on science – policy interface, also noting the importance of national and cross-border implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP).

58. The Coordinator also updated the Bureau on the progress in the preparation of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED 2019).

59. One member of the Bureau, referring to the position of a Contracting Party, noted that the structure of the SoED 2019 should be in line with the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, and that the process should ensure that the report is finalized in a timely manner through the appropriate fora and with the timely involvement of the national experts. It was noted that the substance of the SoED 2019 is to be discussed within the dedicated Steering Committee that should meet timely, and preferably face-to-face, for the effective preparation of the report.

60. The Bureau members also noted that the report should provide a link between pressures and the state of the environment as well as links with the Quality Status Report.

### 61. Conclusions:

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work for the elaboration of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment, and expresses support to the process and timeline for the preparation of the report, as described in Annex IV to the Report on Specific Issues;**

**(b) The Bureau invites the Secretariat to pay full attention and participate in relevant regional environmental monitoring and assessment processes in order to strengthen synergies and ensure complementarities among them in view of developing the 2023 MED QSR;**

**(c) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to present the draft 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment to the members of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group for written consultation, and encourages the EcAp Coordination Group members to contribute to this process, with the view to conclude it as soon as possible;**

**(d) The Bureau welcomes the progress made for the elaboration of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report and re-iterates its request for the timely preparation and review process, with the full involvement and consideration of the comments of the Thematic Focal Points.**

## - G. Outreach, Information and Communication

62. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the information and communication activities and plans for the biennium in this area. Special reference was made to the process for the preparation of the operational Communication Strategy of UNEP/MAP.

63. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat and highlighted the important, horizontal, role of INFO/RAC in relation to information and communication activities, noting that these activities should be strengthened with the involvement of the entire MAP system.

64. The Coordinator informed the meeting of the very generous contribution of Italy, in the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and IMELS, that enhances the capabilities of the Secretariat to deal with information and communications issues.

65. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses appreciation for the efforts and results of the information and communication work and requests the Secretariat to strengthen such progress with the involvement of the entire MAP system;**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the work done and agrees with the proposals of the Secretariat for the preparation of the Operational Communication Strategy, including on the 2-year duration of the Strategy.**

**- H. Preparations for COP 21**

66. The Coordinator introduced this agenda item, with reference to organizational matters, to the preliminary list of subjects of COP 21 Decisions and to the possible general themes of COP 21. In relation to the latter, he highlighted the fact that COP 21 would give the mandate to develop the next UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy, and therefore the discussion should focus on main strategic issues for that purpose. In addition, COP 15 of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2020 will decide on the post-2020 biodiversity strategy and targets, making it desirable for the MAP system to develop a Mediterranean input to the preparation. He also recalled the theme of UNEA-4 (Nairobi, Kenya, 11-15 March 2019), which will be “*Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production*”. These elements should be central to the work and outcome of COP 21. In relation to the list of possible COP decisions, he noted that the main subjects of the decisions are provided in the Report on Specific Issues, while the full list of COP decisions will be developed and presented to the last Bureau meeting of this biennium, as per practice.

67. The Bureau member from Italy, host country of COP 21, provided information on organizational matters, while in relation to the theme of the COP he highlighted the importance of COP 21 for providing guidance in the preparation of the next UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy and the links with the relevant global processes. Furthermore, he noted the relevance of the *Man and Biosphere* process under UNESCO for the work of UNEP/MAP and the possibility to develop a formal agreement with UNESCO for cooperation on this subject.

68. Following the discussion, the Coordinator stressed the need for the support of the Bureau in mobilizing interest for COP 21, especially to secure high level of participation and identify and attract appropriate resource persons/speakers.

69. In relation to the development of provisional budget scenarios, the Observer recalled the request by the Contracting Parties provided in Decision IG. 23/14 (paragraph 14) and the clarifications on the alternatives (paragraph 15), highlighting the importance of taking into account relevant historic decisions of the Barcelona Convention, as the ones quoted in Decision IG. 23/14, paragraph 14 (provisions of the ‘Governance Paper’ and Decision IG. 19/5 of COP 16).

70. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Host Country Italy and the Secretariat for the preparation of COP 21;**

**(b) The Bureau takes note of the possible themes of COP 21 as presented in the “*Report on Specific Issues*”, and suggests 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;**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the proposal by Italy to develop for COP 21, a MOU between UNEP/MAP and UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme on the establishment of a strong cooperation among Mediterranean marine and coastal protected areas and the network of Man and Biosphere reserves, in order to contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Target 11 and the**

**SDG 14. The Bureau asks the Secretariat to liaise with the UNESCO Secretariat in order to prepare a possible draft for consideration at its 88<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting;**

**(d) The Bureau agrees with the proposal of the Secretariat to focus on a limited number of forward-looking Decisions, guided by the UNEP/MAP Mid Term Strategy 2016-2021 and relevant COP decisions. The Bureau asks the Secretariat to further work on this issue and prepare, taking into account the comments made by the Bureau members, the list of draft COP 21 Decisions for its 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting;**

**(e) The Bureau also asks the Secretariat, in line with the relevant Decision IG.23/14, to develop provisional budget scenarios that consider the financial effects of the application of the “*Minimum Common Provisions of HCA of RACs*”. Such scenarios will also consider the attribution to each RAC of an equal core share of financial support from the MTF to ensure the implementation of their mandate to be integrated by additional MTF resources to implement their Programme of Work of the biennium, for consideration and guidance of the Bureau at its 88<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Bureau is ready to provide a strengthened support to the Secretariat, in the intersessional period between this meeting and the 88<sup>th</sup> meeting, with further contributions on the budget and governance issues.**

**VI. Agenda item 6: Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**

71. The Bureau agreed that its 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting will be held on 21-22 May 2019, and that the venue will be Rome, Italy, pending final confirmation from the host country.

**VII. Agenda item 7: Any Other Matters**

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

**VIII. Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations**

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

**IX. Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting**

74. The meeting was closed by the President of the Bureau at 17:00 on Wednesday, 7 November 2018.

**Annex I**  
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**Annex II**

**Agenda**

## Agenda

- Agenda item 1**      **Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2**      **Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3**      **Progress Report for April - September 2018**
- Agenda item 4**      **Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**
- Agenda item 5**      **Specific Issues:**
- a) Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**
  - b) Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs**
  - c) Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity**
  - d) Compliance and Reporting**
  - e) Cooperation and Partners**
  - f) Preparation of Assessment Reports**
  - g) Outreach, Information and Communication**
  - h) Preparations for COP 21**
- Agenda item 6**      **Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 7**      **Any Other Matters**
- Agenda item 8**      **Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 9**      **Closure of the Meeting**