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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

16th 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

Marrakesh (Morocco), 3-5 November 2009

Decision IG.20/4: Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing

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Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach roadmap

The 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties,

Recalling the objective of the Barcelona Convention to prevent, abate, combat and to the fullest possible extent eliminate pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas; to protect and preserve biological diversity, rare or fragile ecosystems, as well as species of wild fauna and flora which are rare, depleted, threatened or endangered and their habitats and to protect and enhance the marine environment so as to contribute towards its sustainable development;

Recalling the vision and the goals for the implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities adopted in decision IG. 17/6 of its 15th meeting held in Almeria, Spain (2008) providing for “A healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations” and the seven step road-map for implementing the ecosystem approach by Mediterranean Action Plan also adopted during that meeting;

Recalling also the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding the ecosystem approach and the Aichi targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted at the COP 10 of the CBD (Nagoya, 2010);

Considering the initiatives undertaken within the framework of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) to develop principles for and implement the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF);

Recalling also the four objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the UNEP/MAP Five Year Strategic Programme of Work adopted in Marrakech in 2009 that highlighted the ecosystem approach as the Programme’s overarching principle and several decisions of the Contracting Parties to ensure the necessary synergies and harmonization to the extent possible in terms of common understanding, tools used, reporting and timetable with the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Directive;

Acknowledging the need for synergy to the extent possible with relevant global and regional processes, such as those under the UN regular Process for Global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment and the UNEP Regional seas programmes;

Recognizing the special importance of MAP work related to ecosystem approach for those Contracting Parties that are EU members states in view of implementing the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) that provides for building on relevant existing programmes and activities developed in the framework of structures stemming from international agreements such as Regional Sea Conventions;

Acknowledging with satisfaction the progress achieved and work carried out in the Mediterranean with respect to the implementation of the ecosystem approach roadmap by the Government-designated Experts Group (GDE) supported by the Secretariat during the biennium 2010-2011;

Thanking the Secretariat including MEDPOL, SPA/RAC and BP/RAC for the successful preparation of the integrated assessment report of the status of the Mediterranean Sea using ecosystem approach and ecosystem services analysis;

Appreciating the conclusions and recommendations of the Government-designated Experts' Meeting held in Durres, Albania in June 2011;

Recognizing the necessity for the Contracting Parties to fully support the implementation of the ecosystem approach roadmap and the need for substantive financial resources to support the process at regional and national levels;

Recognizing the need to focus the PoW on ECAP amongst other priorities.

Recognizing also, the importance of moving forward towards establishing InfoMAP following the principles of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) for the purposes of the implementation of future phases of the ecosystems approach in the Mediterranean thus ensuring synergy and harmonization with national efforts by contracting parties with regards to the establishment of environmental information systems that support decision-making and enhance public information as well as recent global and regional developments in this field;

Considering the need to establish an effective governance of the knowledge and information generated through an appropriate data sharing policy which takes fully into account the GEOSS Data Sharing Action Plan for the implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles which was adopted by the GEO-VII Plenary of 3-4 November 2010 and which have been ratified by nearly all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;

Decides:

To re-affirm the commitment of the Contracting Parties to continue to apply the ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities while enabling a sustainable use of marine goods and services with the view to achieving or maintaining good environmental status of the Mediterranean sea and its coastal region; their protection and preservation, as well as preventing their subsequent deterioration as an integrated operational approach for the successful implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols while enhancing sustainable development in the region;

To endorse the Summary for decision-makers (attached as Annex I to this decision) that provides the main findings and priorities highlighted in the Initial Integrated Assessment Report (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.363/Inf.21) prepared by the Secretariat based on the available knowledge and information and with the precious contribution of the Contracting Parties, partners, as well as with the expertise of MEDPOL, SPA/RAC and Blue Plan and which has been peer reviewed by GESAMP;

To adopt based on Article 18 of the Barcelona Convention the Mediterranean Ecological Objectives associated with Operational Objectives and Indicators presented in Annex II to the present decision;

To adopt the timeline and projected outputs of the Ecosystem Approach roadmap implementation presented in Annex III to this decision for the next two years and on an indicative basis until 2017, as well as to update it on biannual basis to take into account progress achieved as need be;

To adopt the establishment of a review cycle for the integrated assessment of ecosystem approach roadmap implementation on a 6 year basis;

To establish an ECAP Coordination Group consisting of MAP focal points, the Coordinating Unit, the MAP components and MAP partners to oversee the implementation of the ecosystem approach, identifying progress gaps in the implementation of the road map and find feasible solutions for the advancement of the ECAP agenda. This Coordination Group will inform the Bureau about the results and the MAP components on the action they need to take;

To request the Secretariat to:

1. Prepare an integrated monitoring programme based on the agreed ecosystem approach indicators with the participation of and contribution from all MAP components and with a leadership role by MED POL and in cooperation with other regional competent organisations such as the Secretariats of GFCM, ICAT and ACCOBAMS;
2. Work on the determination of Mediterranean Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets during the next biennium through a participatory process involving MAP components, contracting parties and scientific community, with the leadership role by the Coordinating Unit with the view of submitting the proposed GES and targets by the meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2013;
3. Prepare in cooperation with Contracting Parties, MAP components and competent partner organizations and with a leadership role by Blue Plan an in-depth socio-economic analysis developed through a common methodology for the consideration of the Contracting Parties meeting at its 18th meeting;
4. Develop a MAP-Barcelona Convention policy on assessments in the framework of the implementation of the ECAP
5. Work in 2012-2013, with SPA/RAC, with the national authorities and the relevant organisations to (i) evaluate the progress made so far in the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of Biodiversity in the Mediterranean (SAPBIO) adopted by the 13th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Catania, 2003); (ii) to define the orientations of SAPBIO at national and regional levels for the coming years, in accordance with the Mediterranean Ecological Objectives and the Aichi targets; and, (iii) to investigate options for ensuring appropriate financial support for the implementation of SAPBIO at national and regional levels;
6. Establish and make operational, through INFO/RAC, by 2013, at the latest, an information system to support the implementation of ecosystem approach and MAP integrated monitoring system;
7. Develop with the participation of and contribution from all MAP components and with a leadership role by INFO/RAC a MAP/Barcelona Convention data sharing policy taking into account the SEIS data sharing principles and with due consideration of access rights and confidentiality for the consideration of MAP Focal Points and 18th Contracting Parties meeting;
8. Ensure the implementation of this decision through the operational activities of MAP/Barcelona Convention and its integration in the next Strategic and 2-year Programme of work;
9. Ensure that MAP/Barcelona Convention regional policies become coherent with the ecosystem approach progress and outcome and in particular to consider systematically the ECAP indicators when coordinating work of the various MAP components, or evaluating efficiency of MAP actions;
10. Consider the work carried out for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach by all MAP components where appropriate;
11. Undertake under the guidance of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties the necessary analysis to enhance MAP/Barcelona Convention governance structure with the view to implementing the ecosystem approach for the consideration of the 18th meeting of the Contracting Parties;

12. Continue supporting the Contracting Parties in their efforts to implement the other steps of the road map according to the agreed timeline and enhance cooperation with partners and stakeholders and other global and regional process in particular with the EU common MSFD implementation strategy;
13. Mobilize resources for supporting financially the application of ecosystem approach by MAP as a means to effectively achieve the objectives of the MAP/Barcelona Convention.