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Summary of the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention Its Protocols: 7-10 December 2021

“COP 22 will go down in history... as a COP that will not be easily forgotten” and “From a regional seas’ perspective, you set high standards for all the regional seas family.” These were, respectively, concluding interventions of Tatjana Hema, Coordinator, UN Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, and Kerstin Stendahl, Head of the Ecosystems Integration Branch, UNEP. These statements are indicative of the successes achieved by the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 22) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols.

The MAP has been a pioneer since its inception, being the first Regional Seas Programme under UNEP. Forty-five years later, COP 22 proved that it continues to be a trailblazer in efforts to ensure environmental protection, sustainable development, and building back greener following the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the adoption of 19 decisions addressing an array of environmental issues, COP 22 has continued to pave the way toward addressing acute environmental threats to the Mediterranean and ensuring a healthy and productive Mediterranean region for future generations.

COP 22 highlights included:

- agreement to submit a joint and coordinated proposal to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides (Med SOx ECA), as established under Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL);
- adoption of the Programme of Work (PoW) and budget for the next biennium (2022-2023), as well as of the UNEP/MAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) for 2022-2027, which will solidify future work under the Convention and offer an integrated approach to tackle the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- the Ministerial Session, which culminated in the adoption of the Antalya Ministerial Declaration, showcasing strong political will for joint sustainability efforts in the region;



Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Turkey

- adoption of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (Post-2020 SAPBIO), complemented by a strategic document on marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to strengthen regional biodiversity conservation, as well as the adoption of Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats;

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- adoption of measures to combat pollution and marine litter, including the Regional Strategy on Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) and the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Strategy (2022-2027);
- adoption of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products, highlighting the holistic approach of the Convention; and
- the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award 2021, presented to the municipality of Málaga, Spain, by First Lady of Turkey Emine Erdoğan.

During the discussions, delegates and participants highlighted the constructive debates and spirit of solidarity. Many underscored the landmark decision on sulphur oxide emissions, noting the resulting reduction in emissions will have major health and environmental benefits for Mediterranean communities, especially for populations living close to ports and coasts. Sulphur oxides are harmful to human health, causing respiratory, cardiovascular and lung disease; once released into the atmosphere, they can lead to acid rain, which impacts crops, forests, and aquatic species, and contributes to ocean acidification.

Delegates further renewed their commitment, through both interventions and hard work during the meeting's deliberations, to continue working towards the vision of a healthy Mediterranean and protecting this fragile ecosystem, which "needs its human stewards more than ever before."

COP 22 took place from 7-10 December 2021 in Antalya, Turkey, with a Ministerial Session on 9 December. The meeting marked 45 years of regional solidarity and mutual efforts for environmental sustainability. Over 400 participants from Contracting Parties and representatives from UN agencies, international research organizations, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and civil society attended the four-day meeting. A number of side events took place on the sidelines of the COP.

A Brief History of the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan

UNEP launched its Regional Seas Programme in 1974 with the aim of protecting the marine environment using a "shared seas" approach to address the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas. More than 143 countries have joined 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans for the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment. Although individual Conventions and Action Plans reflect a similar approach, each is tailored by its governments and institutions to suit the unique environmental challenges faced in each region.

Mediterranean Action Plan: The MAP was the first regional seas initiative. Spearheaded under the auspices of UNEP, the MAP was approved in 1975 by Mediterranean states and the European Commission as the institutional framework for addressing marine environmental degradation in the region. It also endorsed the preparation of a framework convention for protecting the marine environment against pollution, as well as two related protocols that would provide a legal basis for action in protecting the Mediterranean marine environment against pollution.

Initial MAP objectives included assisting Mediterranean governments to assess and control pollution, as well as to formulate their national marine environmental policies. Over time, the MAP's focus widened gradually from a sectoral approach to pollution control to integrated coastal zone planning and management for solutions that protect the marine environment.

MAP Phase II: The Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II) was adopted in 1995 to address weaknesses in the first action plan and evolving circumstances, specifically with respect to environmental protection and sustainable development following the 1992 Rio UN Conference on Environment and Development. Its objectives include: ensuring the sustainable management of natural marine and land resources and integrating the environment into socio-economic development and land-use policies; protecting the marine environment and coastal zones through preventing and reducing pollution; protecting nature and enhancing sites and landscapes of ecological or cultural value; strengthening solidarity among Mediterranean states; and contributing to improving the quality of life.

The Barcelona Convention: The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention) was adopted in 1976 and entered into force in 1978. The first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5-10 February 1979.

The Convention was subsequently amended in 1995 and renamed as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. These changes were primarily made to reflect coasts in the Convention's scope and incorporate concepts that dominated the 1992 Rio UN Conference on Environment and Development, such as the protection and preservation of biodiversity, and the application of the precautionary and "polluter pays" principles. These amendments entered into force in 2004.

The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) was established in 1996, in line with Article 4 of the Barcelona Convention, as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to assist in their efforts to integrate environmental issues in their socioeconomic programmes and to promote sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean region and countries.

In 2008, the MAP-Barcelona Convention system committed to the Ecosystem Approach as an overarching principle and established its Compliance Procedures and Mechanism. In 2015, Contracting Parties adopted the first six-year MTS for 2016-2021 and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025, providing a strategic policy framework for securing a sustainable future for the Mediterranean region consistent with the SDGs.

The Barcelona Convention currently has 22 Contracting Parties: the 21 Mediterranean countries and the European Union. The Convention's specific objectives include: assessing and controlling marine pollution; ensuring the sustainable management of natural marine and coastal resources; and protecting natural and cultural heritage. The Contracting Parties meet every two years to decide on the MAP PoW and budget, policies, and plans.

Seven protocols have also been adopted under the Convention:

- Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol), which was adopted in 1976 and entered into force in 1978;
- Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol), which was adopted in 1976 and entered into force in 1978;
- Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol), which was adopted in 1980 and entered into force in 1983;
- Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, which was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1986;
- Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from the Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and Its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol), which was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 2011;
- Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (Hazardous Wastes Protocol), which was adopted in 1996 and entered into force in 2008; and
- Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol), which was adopted in 2008 and entered into force in 2011.

COP 21: The 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 21) took place from 2-5 December 2019, in Naples, Italy. The Contracting Parties adopted 14 decisions to ensure the Barcelona Convention can continue its “pioneering role” in the Regional Seas Programme, including 13 thematic decisions, and one on the PoW and Budget 2020-2021. Thematic decisions included: the common regional ICZM framework; development of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses; and the identification and conservation of sites of particular ecological interest in the Mediterranean. A key outcome of COP 21 was the Naples Ministerial Declaration, which committed Contracting Parties to taking concrete action for enhanced safeguarding of the Mediterranean Sea. A key event during the meeting was the second Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award presented to the Municipality of Ashdod, Israel.

COP 22 Preparatory Process: UNEP/MAP Focal Points met online from 10-17 September 2021, paving the way for COP 22 discussions on all substantive items. Meetings of the MAP Focal Points, which take place prior to COPs, constitute important milestones as part of the intergovernmental process. Another preparatory meeting, hosted in Antalya, Turkey, from 28-30 September 2021, included the unveiling of the COP 22 logo, a pictogram depicting the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), an iconic symbol of the biodiversity-rich Mediterranean region and a symbol of hope thanks to recent positive conservation trends. Finally, the “Let’s Meet at Success Stories in the Mediterranean” Youth Event took place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 16-17 November 2021; three of its participants were selected to present the outcome of the event to the Ministerial Session at COP 22.



Kerstin Stendahl, Head of the Ecosystems Integration Branch, UNEP

Barcelona Convention COP 22 Report

Opening of the Meeting

Opening the meeting, Carlo Zaghi, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, Ministry for Ecological Transition, ITALY, via audio address, noted COP 22 was convening at a crucial moment with the international community working towards a green recovery, while still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. He pointed out that the Mediterranean Sea region has one of highest rates of biodiversity loss in the world, citing its main drivers, including pollutants and emissions from the maritime sector. Underscoring Italy’s commitment to addressing these challenges, he highlighted bilateral cooperation with UNEP to support activities aimed at strengthening the ecosystem approach and an integrated monitoring programme for the region.

Welcoming delegates, Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, TURKEY, highlighted the Ministerial Session’s theme: Towards a Blue Mediterranean: Leaving a Pollution-Free Legacy, Protecting Biodiversity and Sustaining Climate Stability. He described the theme as “extremely valuable” given the backdrop of the pandemic. He observed that best evidence suggests no single country can combat the Mediterranean Sea region’s sustainability problems alone and expressed hope the conference would be a turning point in recognizing this reality.

Kerstin Stendahl, Head of the Ecosystems Integration Branch, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, highlighted COP 22 as the first meeting of the Contracting Parties since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted this demonstrates the strong commitment to the process and, moreover, the resilience and willingness to “rebuild, rebound and prosper” in an environmentally sustainable way, which is reflected in the meeting’s agenda. Stendahl stated that the MTS for 2022-2027 will demonstrate the linkages, integration, and mainstreaming of sea and ocean protection in overarching policies and programmes.

Tatjana Hema, Coordinator of UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, expressed a desire that COP 22 be rendered a historical one, setting the path for a green recovery in the region. She prioritized a blue economy that will enable Mediterranean countries to overcome economic losses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Nazan Özyürek, Turkey

Organizational Matters

Tatjana Hema outlined the schedule of the plenary sessions and the organization of work. She said two contact groups would convene on: the PoW and budget for the biennium 2022-2023, chaired by Miftah Almadni, Libya; and the Antalya Ministerial Declaration, chaired by Nazan Özyürek, Turkey. She explained that both groups would report back to plenary on their progress and outcome.

COP 22 President Mehmet Emin Birpınar, Deputy Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, TURKEY, invited delegates to adopt the meeting's agenda and the organization of work.

SLOVENIA, on behalf of the EU, suggested allocating additional time for discussing important draft decisions, by reducing the time scheduled for discussions on the PoW and budget, which, he said, could be better accommodated in the contact group. She further called for establishing the contact group on the Antalya Ministerial Declaration as soon as possible so deliberations could begin, noting direct correlation between the declaration and some of the decisions under discussion. With these remarks, delegates adopted the meeting's agenda and organization of work.

On Friday, Rapporteur Senad Oprašić, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, reported that all credentials had been submitted and examined, and are now in order.

Thematic Decisions

These draft decisions were introduced and discussed on Tuesday and Wednesday. All the decisions were adopted during the closing plenary on Friday.

UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/1 on this issue. She noted the draft decision, *inter alia*, asks Contracting Parties to adopt the UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027; calls on Contracting Parties to fully take part and contribute to its implementation with support from the Secretariat; and urges MAP Partners, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry, the private sector, and other stakeholders to collaborate and support implementation of the MTS, ensuring synergy, harmonization of efforts, and optimization of the use of resources, and avoiding duplication.

Hema noted the decision had been addressed at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points. Delegates made no further comments and on Friday, during the closing plenary, Contracting Parties adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/ Add.1), the COP adopts the UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027; calls on Contracting Parties to contribute to its implementation; and urges MAP Partners and others to collaborate and support implementation of the MTS.

The annex to the decision contains the MTS, outlining how it will contribute to implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

Compliance Committee: On Tuesday, Odeta Çato, ALBANIA, Compliance Committee Chair, presented draft decision IG.25/2. Tatjana Hema further introduced the outstanding issues and bracketed text in the draft decision, and asked members of the three geographical groups under the Compliance Committee to confirm the renewal or new nomination of their respective members.

The EU expressed appreciation for the Committee's work, endorsing the draft decision except for the amendments to the rules of procedure. She requested more time be devoted to these amendments intersessionally and said COP 23 should discuss the issue further.

ISRAEL said the Committee's mandate had been broadened at COP 21, leading to increased cooperation with concerned Contracting Parties when compliance cases arise. She argued that the suggestions provided in the draft decision fall outside the broadened mandate, querying the nature of the problem that the recommendations are trying to address. She suggested spending less energy on changes to the procedure unless specific problems arise that need to be addressed.

The Secretariat incorporated the EU's request for intersessional work in the draft decision as a request to the Secretariat to "undertake a consultation process with the Contracting Parties, no later than January 2023, with a view to review the proposed amendments and report on the outcome at COP 23."

ISRAEL suggested intersessional discussions should not be limited to the current content of the draft decision, but should focus on strengthening the role of the Compliance Committee.

On Friday, delegates adopted the decision with no further comments.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/ Add.2), the COP *inter alia*: adopts the PoW of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2022-2023; invites the Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2020-2021; requests the Secretariat to undertake a consultation process no later than January 2023 with the Contracting Parties to review the proposed amendments to the procedures and mechanisms on compliance; and requests the Compliance Committee to report to the Contracting Parties at COP 23 on work carried out to fulfill its functions.

The annexes to this decision include: the activity report of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2020-2021; a detailed breakdown of the Committee's PoW for the Biennium 2022-2023; and the renewal or election of the members of the Committee. The proposed amendments to the procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are contained in the Appendix.

Governance: On Tuesday, Ilias Mavroeidis, Programme Manager Officer, Barcelona Convention Secretariat, presented draft decision IG/25/3. He mentioned: the Ecosystem Approach Governance Mechanism; new memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the Parliamentary of the Mediterranean (PAM), and the update of the MoU with the General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); membership of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSUD); the Host Country Agreements of Regional Activity Centres (RACs); and MAP Partners.

On MAP Partners, he noted that the Secretariat received and assessed fourteen new applications from NGOs for accreditation as MAP Partners and nine applications for renewal of accreditation.

Mavroeidis further highlighted two small amendments in the annexes on the MoUs: one on legal advice in relation to PAM; and the other regarding an addition to the COMPSUD MoU.

Delegates agreed on the draft decision without further interventions. On Friday, the COP adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.3), the COP calls on Contracting Parties to, *inter alia*: renew their commitment to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and endorse the Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach policy in the Mediterranean; endorse the list of new and renewed MAP Partners; approve the membership of the MCSUD for the biennium 2022-2023; and adopt the Common Operational Principles for Host Country Agreements of MAP Components.

The annexes provide further guidance on the governance mechanism for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean. The annexes further include: the MoU between UNEP/MAP and COMPSUD, and UNEP/MAP and PAM; an updated appendix of the MoU between UNEP/MAP and GFCM; a list of renewed and new MAP Partners; a composition of the MCSUD for 2022-2023 – Non-Contracting Party Members; and the Common Operational Principles for Host Country Agreements of MAP Components.

Assessment Studies: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/4, noting it has been discussed in the meeting of MAP Focal Points and that the text forwarded to COP 22 contains no brackets. Delegates agreed on the draft decision without further interventions. On Friday, they adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.4), the COP, *inter alia*:

- endorses the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the first Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR 1) on the current situation and risks for the future of climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean basin;
- urges Contracting Parties to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps identified in MAR 1;
- further urges Contracting Parties to provide adequate and sustained support to Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) and its science-policy-society interface within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, and encourage greater participation of all the Mediterranean and women scientists; and



Tatjana Hema, Coordinator of UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention

- requests the Secretariat and invites the Contracting Parties to properly disseminate the results of the MAR 1 and its SPM in all relevant national and international fora beyond the Barcelona Convention.

Annex I of the decision contains the SPM.

Amendments to Annexes I, II, and IV to the LBS Protocol:

On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/5, noting the document was thoroughly discussed and provisionally agreed at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points. Delegates approved the draft decision without comment. On Friday, they adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.5), the COP, *inter alia*, adopts the amendments to Annexes I, II and IV to the LBS Protocol; and requests the Depository to communicate without delay to all Contracting Parties the adopted amendments.

Annex I to the draft decision details the elements to be considered in the preparation of action plans, programmes, and measures for the elimination of pollution from land-based sources and activities. Annex II to the draft decision includes elements to be considered in the issue of the authorizations for discharges of wastes.

Amendments to the Annex to the Dumping Protocol:

On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/6, explaining that proposed amendments were designed to reflect recent developments under the London Dumping Protocol. The draft decision was approved without further discussion. On Friday, the decision was adopted.

Final Outcome: In its final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.6), the COP, *inter alia*: adopts the amendments to the Annex to the Dumping Protocol; and requests the Depository to communicate without delay to all Contracting Parties the adopted amendments. The annex to this decision contains the Dumping Protocol with the relevant amendments.

Amendments to the Annexes to the Offshore Protocol:

On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/7. ISRAEL requested clarifications in relation to the distance that drilling fluids can be discharged or dumped. The Secretariat responded that the metric issue regarding distance reflected in meters or nautical miles would be addressed. The draft decision was agreed without amendments. On Friday, delegates adopted the decision with no further discussion.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.7) the COP:

- adopts the amended Annexes I, II, III, IV and VII to the Offshore Protocol;
- urges Contracting Parties to control and report in a timely manner on the harmful and noxious substances and materials listed in Annexes I and II, using the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS);
- agrees to determine a period of 60 days since the adoption of this decision, within which any Contracting Party that is unable to approve the amendments to notify the Depositary in writing; and
- requests the Depositary to communicate without delay to all Contracting Parties the adopted amendments.

The Annex of the decision comprises five appendices relating to the amendments to the Protocol:

- Appendix 1 – Harmful or noxious substances and materials the disposal of which in the Protocol area is prohibited;
- Appendix 2 – Harmful or noxious substances and materials the disposal of which in the Protocol area is subject to a special permit;
- Appendix 3 – Factors to be considered for the issue of permits;
- Appendix 4 – Environmental impact assessment; and
- Appendix 5 – Contingency Plan.

Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/8, explaining it is an important upgrade to the regional plan adopted a number of years ago. She noted that bracketed text remained around the qualifying reference “to the extent possible” regarding timelines for adopting measures for the collection and treatment of urban wastewater. TUNISIA, EGYPT, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MOROCCO, and LEBANON proposed retaining the reference. ISRAEL preferred its deletion, explaining that it would remove the necessity of meeting the requirements by the timelines specified. SPAIN requested further clarifications.

On Wednesday, the EU proposed a compromise: removing the reference “to the extent possible” regarding a provision on Contracting Parties ensuring all agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater by 2025 or 2030 according to their population; and retaining the same reference in a provision ensuring that prior to discharge, treated wastewater from urban wastewater treatment plants meets certain requirements, being subject to secondary or tertiary treatment, according to population, provided that the Good Environmental Status of the recipient environment is maintained.

ISRAEL maintained that keeping the language referring “to the extent possible” sends the wrong message, since sewage is the main source of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. Contracting Parties eventually agreed to maintain the reference, with a stipulation in the meeting report that the flexibility with regard to adopting abatement measures does not go beyond the scope provided in LBS Protocol Article 15 (adoption of programmes and measures for eliminating pollution from land-based sources).

On Friday, delegates adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.8), the COP:

- adopts the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment in the framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol;
- adopts the Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management in the framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol; and
- adopts the work plans with timetables for the implementation of articles of the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment and the Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management.

The COP further:

- calls on the Contracting Parties to effectively implement the Regional Plans and to report to the Secretariat, accordingly;
- requests the Secretariat to provide, upon request and subject to availability of funds, the necessary assistance to the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Regional Plans; and
- urges the Contracting Parties, intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies, industry, NGOs and academic institutions to support the implementation of the different measures of the Regional Plans by providing sufficient financial, technical, and scientific contribution.

The decision is comprised of four annexes:

- Annex I sets out the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment, which includes a number of appendices:
- Appendix I.A sets out the emission limit values for discharge of effluents from urban wastewater treatment plants to the environment;
 - Appendix I.B determines the emission limit values for reuse of reclaimed wastewater for agriculture irrigation;
 - Appendix I.C establishes emission limit values for discharge of industrial wastewater into collecting systems and urban wastewater treatment plants;
 - Appendix II outlines guiding principles on reuse of reclaimed wastewater for aquifer recharge; and
 - Appendix III stipulates monitoring frequencies of pollutants discharged directly to the environment, destined for reuse in agriculture, or discharged from industrial facilities to collecting systems.

Annex II includes a work plan that includes a timetable for implementation of the various articles of the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment.

Annex III comprises the Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management.

Annex IV consist of a work plan with a timetable for implementing the articles of the Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management.

Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema presented draft decision IG.25/9, highlighting proposed bracketed text on “marine litter hotspots.” EGYPT expressed reservations with the proposed text given the “fluidity of its definition” between Contracting Parties. The EU maintained that this “extremely important” text should be retained, particularly in the absence of any international commission to oversee marine litter. President Birpınar said the draft decision would be revisited to allow additional time for bilateral consultations.

Following these consultations on Wednesday, EGYPT stood steadfast that the language on hotspots raises the problem of litter generation and asked Parties to recall that litter generation is a



Heba Sharawy, Egypt

two-way problem in the Mediterranean coming from the north to the south where it is absorbed by the Nile Basin and vice versa.

The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN), supported by the EU, pointed out that marine litter in the Mediterranean represents some of the highest volumes in the world and cannot be ignored. The EU reiterated no convention exists on marine litter; therefore, it is the responsibility of the Barcelona Convention to tackle the issue of marine litter within its jurisdiction. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA supported the aforementioned interventions explaining that the usage of river basins is appropriate for this decision, as marine litter will flow from the rivers into the Mediterranean Sea.

Contracting Parties reached a compromise via a proposal to delete reference to “hotspots” and replace it with “in conformity with the LBS Protocol.”

The Association of Continuity of Generations suggested adding language on monitoring and evaluation of marine litter generators to help put systems in place for controlling the movement of litter through the seas.

On Friday, the Contracting Parties adopted the final decision with no further comments.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.9), the COP adopts the amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol.

The COP also adopts:

- Annex II – “Work Plan with Timetable for the Implementation of Relevant Articles of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter” to guide and facilitate the work of the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties on priority measures regarding implementation of the Regional Plan and to mobilize external resources for this purpose, as appropriate;
- Annex III – “Potential Research Topics” to promote and support scientific research by the Contracting Parties and scientific community to fill knowledge gaps on marine litter sources and impacts, as well as to support implementation of relevant measures; and
- Annex IV – “2021 Baseline Values and Threshold Values for the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) Common Indicator 22” to facilitate the assessment

of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean, under IMAP Ecological Objective 10 on Marine Litter.

In addition, the COP:

- calls on the Contracting Parties to effectively implement the Regional Plan on Marine Litter and its measures and to report to the Secretariat, accordingly;
- requests the Secretariat to provide, upon request and subject to availability of funds, necessary assistance for the Contracting Parties to implement the measures provided for in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter, specifically through the provision of support for implementing technical guidelines developed in the framework of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the new Guidelines to Tackle Single-use Plastic Products in the Mediterranean;
- requests the Secretariat to promote work undertaken by the MAP – Barcelona Convention system on sharing best practices on marine litter management and combating plastic pollution in other international fora; and
- urges the Contracting Parties, intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies, industry, NGOs, and academic institutions to support implementation of the different measures of the Regional Plan through the provision of sufficient financial, technical, and scientific contributions.

Annex I sets out the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. Two appendices list: single-se plastic items; and chemical additives of concern used in plastic production.

Annex II sets out a work plan with a timetable for the implementation of the Plan .

Annex III consists of potential research topics to support the Plan’s implementation, including: sources, distribution and composition of marine litter; degradation of marine litter; micro-litter; modelling; impacts and effects; education and sensitization; monitoring; social aspects; technical measures; and legal measures and institutions.

Annex IV sets out 2021 Baseline and Threshold Values for IMAP Common Indicator 22.

MAP Data Policy: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema presented draft decision IG.25/10, noting it asks Contracting Parties to adopt the UNEP/MAP Data Policy. EGYPT underscored the need to consider matters of national security in data sharing. With no further comments, delegates agreed on the draft decision.

On Friday, Contracting Parties adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.10), the COP adopts the UNEP/MAP Data Policy; requests the Secretariat to provide the necessary technical support to Contracting Parties and to address any needs identified to fully implement the Data Policy; and calls on the Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the Data Policy.

Annex I sets out the Data Policy, Annex II contains a minimum dataset list, and Annex III comprises a metric table template.

Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO): On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/11 on the Post-2020 SAPBIO. She noted that it, among others, invites the Contracting Parties to prepare or revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by fully incorporating the relevant elements of the Post-2020

SAPBIO, and maximize efforts for timely implementation of the programme. Noting the document contains no bracketed text, Hema applauded the efforts to develop this draft decision following a bottom-up process of extensive local and regional expert consultation. Contracting Parties approved the draft decision without further comments.

On Friday, the COP adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2 Add.11), the COP:

- adopts the Post-2020 SAPBIO, as a Mediterranean action-oriented marine and coastal biodiversity conservation policy aimed at contributing to the achievement of Good Environmental Status, the SDGs and their respective targets, and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- urges the Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures, for the effective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, and to report on their implementation in the framework of the BCRS; and
- urges the Secretariat to provide technical support for the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, through technical cooperation, capacity building activities, and external resource mobilization.

Annex I contains the Post-2020 SAPBIO.

Protecting and Conserving the Mediterranean Through Well Connected and Effective Systems of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas and OECMs, Including SPAs and SPAs of Mediterranean Importance: On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema presented draft decision IG.25/12.

TURKEY commented that it would like to have a separate discussion with concerned parties and the Secretariat regarding hesitations about a map portraying protected areas in the Mediterranean, used in the annex to the decision. She maintained that usage of the map would contravene Turkey's position on other maritime issues. The EU requested additional time to consider Turkey's suggestion on removing the map of protected areas. Following further discussions on Wednesday, the map was deleted from the annex.

The Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN) expressed full support for the draft decision and implored Contracting Parties to integrate recommendations from the third edition of the Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, held in Monaco in November 2021, into the Antalya Ministerial Declaration.

On Friday, Contracting Parties adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/ Add.12), the COP:

- adopts the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and OECMs in the Mediterranean (Post-2020 Regional Strategy);
- calls on Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the Post-2020 Regional Strategy;
- requests the Secretariat to support the Contracting Parties with technical and, where possible, financial assistance to undertake the activities indicated in the Post-2020 Regional Strategy;
- requests the Secretariat to develop an evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, with the technical support of the *Ad hoc* Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, using, to the extent possible, existing monitoring tools in the region; and
- requests the Secretariat to work with the relevant designated national authorities in Albania, Algeria, France, and Italy to carry out the ordinary periodic review for five SPAs of Mediterranean Importance listed in the decision.

In the decision, the COP also:

- adopts the criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs; and
- calls on the Contracting Parties to report on the SPAs to the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs based on the adopted criteria, at the time of submitting their national implementation reports under the Convention, starting with reports for the biennium 2020-2021 to be submitted by December 2022.

Annex I sets out the Post-2020 Regional Strategy. Annex II consists of concepts to set up the SPAs of Mediterranean Importance Day and the SPAs of Mediterranean Importance Certificate. Annex III sets out criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs.

Action Plans for the Conservation of Species and Habitats Under the Protocol Concerning SPAs and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean: On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema presented draft decision IG.25/13. She noted that the two annexes include

Action Plans for the conservation of cetaceans, and of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds, and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea. She stressed that the draft decision was thoroughly discussed at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points and contains no brackets.

TURKEY thanked the Secretariat for producing a quality document. IUCN underscored that an updated Red List on cetaceans will be published next week, calling for relevant amendments in Annex 1 according to the updated list. She further suggested increasing efforts to combat water noise, pollution, and marine traffic. The International Association of Geophysical Contractors noted that some examples of underwater noise are inaccurate and called for further understanding of population-level consequences.

Khalil Attia, SPA/RAC Director, noted that the action plans, especially on cetaceans, have been updated following an extensive consultation process with Contracting Parties and regional partners, including the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Contiguous Atlantic Area. He requested interested parties to submit their proposals in writing, with the Secretariat cautioning



Delegates from Libya confer

against reopening an annex that was thoroughly discussed at all levels prior to COP 22.

Following informal discussions, the COP adopted the final decision on Friday, with no further comments.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.13), the COP:

- adopts the Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and the Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan);
- urges Contracting Parties to take necessary measures for the Action Plans' effective implementation and report on implementation;
- requests the SPA/RAC Secretariat to continue to provide technical support to Contracting Parties, and update the Action Plan for the conservation of bird species and the Action plan concerning species introduction and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea and submit them to COP 23; and
- invites the SPA/RAC Secretariat to establish a multidisciplinary group of experts to define parameters allowing to use phytoplankton and zooplankton for relevant IMAP biodiversity indicators and elaborate the List of Reference of Pelagic Habitat Types in the Mediterranean Sea for consideration at COP 23.

Annex I contains the Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea, which includes, among others, information on cetacean species with regular occurrence and resident populations in the Mediterranean Sea, and main threats faced by cetaceans. Annex II contains the Dark Habitats Action Plan.

Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, As a Whole, As an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA) Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI: On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/14, noting the intention to table a joint proposal to MARPOL to establish the Med SOx ECA. She stressed that all appropriate steps were followed to produce a very important decision, which will put the region in a very strong position regarding environmental sustainability.

The EU emphasized this may be the most important decision at COP 22, noting that control of nitrogen oxides could be added to sulphur oxides in the near future. She highlighted relevant provisions of the European Green Deal; thanked the Secretariat, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), and all MAP components for their contributions; stressed that the draft reflects the ambition of the process and the urgency to address the problem; and underscored the importance of designating the Mediterranean Sea as a whole, urging Contracting Parties that have not ratified MARPOL Annex VI to do so, aligning their legal frameworks.

EGYPT noted that, while not opposing the reduction of sulphur oxide emissions, there may be difficulties in implementation, stressing that Egypt is not a signatory to MARPOL Annex VI and requesting clarifications on specific geographical areas.

On Wednesday, EGYPT tabled a proposal amending the description of the proposed area of application, introducing an exception for “the waiting area of Suez Canal as referred

to by the determined coordinates according to the maps to be introduced formally to the Secretariat by the Egyptian delegation.” She further called for including a footnote in the annex regarding the coordinates or, alternatively, deleting the reference to the designation of the Mediterranean Sea “as a whole.” The EU requested additional time to consider the proposal, stressing that addressing the Mediterranean “as a whole” is an important aspect of the draft decision.

On a paragraph urging Contracting Parties to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, if they have not yet done so, as soon as possible, the EU suggested adding “at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SOx ECA.”

ISRAEL underscored that while his country is in the process of ratifying MARPOL Annex VI, the legislation process is time consuming and committing to a specific timeframe is impossible. He, thus, proposed adding “to the extent possible,” to the EU submission. ISRAEL further queried which party will take the lead in making the relevant submission to the IMO. The Secretariat clarified that only parties to MARPOL Annex VI can submit the proposal to the IMO. The EU said that they would be happy to submit the proposal.

On a paragraph encouraging UNEP/MEP to progress on exploring the feasibility of a ECA for nitrous oxides in the Mediterranean Sea as a whole, the EU requested including “health and socioeconomic impact on the Contracting Parties.”

On Wednesday night, following further informal consultations, delegates agreed to add an exception on the geographical scope regarding the waiting area of the Suez Canal in its determined coordinates according to a map included in the Annex 2. The respective coordinates reflecting the map will be submitted by Egypt to the Secretariat at least by 24 December 2021 and will be subject to technical review by the IMO. Delegates agreed to 1 January 2025 as the date for the effective entry into force of the designation. They further agreed to “urge the Contracting Parties to ratify MARPOL Annex VI as soon as possible, at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SOx ECA to the extent possible.” With these amendments, delegates agreed on the draft decision.

On Friday, during closing plenary, EGYPT requested language noting that the same exception on the Suez Canal and its waiting area must apply to enable Egypt to sign and ratify MARPOL Annex VI. Contracting Parties adopted the decision with no further comments.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.14), the COP:



Patrick Child, EU

- agrees to submit the joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as a Med SOx ECA, to the 78th session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) scheduled for 2022;
- calls on the Contracting Parties to coordinate the submission process with its effective entry into force on 1 January 2025 and encourages them to actively participate in the deliberations at MEPC 78 and following sessions;
- urges the Contracting Parties to ratify MARPOL Annex VI as soon as possible, at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SOx ECA to the extent possible;
- requests the REMPEC Secretariat to provide technical support in synergy with the IMO and other relevant stakeholders; and
- encourages all stakeholders, including the shipping industry, to contribute to and support the designation and implementation of the Med SOx ECA.

The Annex to the final decision contains the proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as Med SOx ECA. Annexed to the proposal, the document includes, *inter alia*, a description of the proposed Med SOx ECA, including an exception on the geographical scope regarding the waiting area of the Suez Canal in its determined coordinates according to a map included in Annex 2. The respective coordinates reflecting the map will be submitted by Egypt to the Secretariat at least by 24 December 2021 and will be subject to technical review by the IMO.

Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Under the Offshore Protocol: On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/15, noting the operational part calls on Contracting Parties to adopt the EIA guidelines under the Offshore Protocol, requests Contracting Parties that have not ratified the Protocol to do so, and invites oil and gas industry partners to give due consideration to the guidelines. She concluded that, following a rich discussion and some changes made in the MAP Focal Points meeting, the draft decision presented at COP 22 contains no brackets.

IUCN, noting the Mediterranean contains no coral reefs, requested substitution of the reference with "coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions," in line with the Convention's language. Contracting Parties approved the draft decision with no further comments. On Friday, the COP adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.15), the COP adopts the EIA Offshore Protocol Guidelines, urging Contracting Parties, which have not yet done so, to ratify the Offshore Protocol. It further calls upon the Contracting Parties to make every effort for the effective implementation of the Guidelines with support from the REMPEC Secretariat, and invites offshore oil and gas industry partners operating in the Mediterranean Sea area to give due consideration to the implementation of the Guidelines, and, as appropriate, to provide technical support to offshore facility operators.

Annexed to the final decision are the EIA Offshore Protocol Guidelines, containing sections on the EIA process, screening, guidance for offshore activities, and guidance for the conduct of EIAs.

Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness for, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031): On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/16, noting the draft strategy was prepared



Nazli Renal and Nazan Özyürek, Turkey

by REMPEC through a wide consultative process with the Contracting Parties and partners. She highlighted meetings organized for preparation of the strategy, including the regional meeting of national experts on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, held online on 10 March 2021, and the 14th meeting of REMPEC focal points held virtually from 31 May – 2 June 2021. Hema further noted the annex containing the strategy is a comprehensive clean document, including provisions on monitoring and implementation.

Delegates approved the draft decision with no further comments. On Friday, Contracting Parties adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.16), the COP:

- adopts the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness for, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031);
- calls upon the Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the Strategy;
- urges the Contracting Parties, which have not yet done so, to ratify the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, and invites them to also ratify relevant IMO Conventions;
- requests the REMPEC Secretariat to provide technical support for the implementation of the Strategy in synergy with the IMO;
- invites stakeholders to actively contribute to the mobilization of resources needed for the effective implementation of the Strategy; and
- encourages, under the coordination of REMPEC, the building of sustainable partnerships, as a means to leverage financial resources and technical support.

Annexed to the decision is the Mediterranean Strategy 2022-2031 with sections on, *inter alia*, seven Common Strategic Objectives, which represent the thematic priority areas for the Mediterranean Strategy.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy, included as an appendix, contains sections on areas of influence, actions, indicators, targets, supporting institutions, and priority levels for each of the Objectives.

Ballast Water Management (BWM) Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027): On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema presented draft decision IG.25/17, noting the issue has been addressed for a long time under the Barcelona Convention. She underscored that the BWM Strategy contains important elements, aligning work in the Mediterranean with global efforts on ballast water. She added that the strategy builds on lessons learned from

the implementation of the current strategy and was prepared by REMPEC, in cooperation with SPA/RAC, through a consultative process with the Contracting Parties.

TURKEY supported the strategy, drawing attention to its recent ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments under the IMO as well as to the preparation of relevant national legislation. With no further comments, delegates agreed on the draft decision.

On Friday, the COP adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.17), the COP:

- adopts the BWM Strategy;
- calls on the Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the BWM Strategy;
- urges the Contracting Parties, which have not yet done so, to ratify the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, as well as the Protocol concerning SPAs and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean;
- encourages Contracting Parties, which have not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement the BWM Convention under the IMO, as soon as possible; and
- requests the REMPEC and SPA/RAC Secretariat to provide technical support for implementation of the BWM Strategy, in synergy with the IMO.

Annexed to the decision is the BWM Strategy. The work plan and implementation timetable are included in the Appendix.

Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for More Sustainable Products: On Wednesday, Tatjana Hema introduced draft decision IG.25/18, stressing its importance. She highlighted regulatory and policy references in the document, including: the LBS and Hazardous Wastes Protocols; the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production; and COP 21 Decision IG.24/13 on the development of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products. She added that lessons learned from COVID-19 and the need to build back better have been taken into account, with the aim of strengthening and promoting sustainable and green business in the Mediterranean region.

COP President Birpınar highlighted the importance of new issues, such as the circular economy, being included in the Convention's deliberations. TURKEY supported the draft decision, noting its commitment to support work on the circular economy and green business. She highlighted the national Green Action Plan, which aims to contribute to the transition to a sustainable and resource-efficient economy, and underscored amendments to promote zero waste and circular economy practices. She requested: integrating the information to be provided on a biannual basis on the implementation of the regional measures at the national level in the reporting obligations under the UNEP/MAP MTS and the corresponding PoW; and replacing a reference to a "ban on certain single-use plastic products" with "phasing-out" those products.

Regarding the first proposal, the Secretariat responded that the suggestion will be included in the report of the meeting. On the second suggestion, the EU proposed compromise language introducing "a phase out, including banning," expressing



COP 22 President **Mehmet Emin Birpınar**, Deputy Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Turkey

flexibility since the process is still in its infancy. Following further discussions, delegates reached agreement to replace the reference to a ban with one on phasing-out certain single-use plastic products.

During closing plenary on Friday, COP 22 adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.18), the COP:

- adopts the set of regional measures;
- calls upon Contracting Parties to promote green and circular businesses;
- approves the definitions of sustainable businesses; and
- invites Contracting Parties to provide information on a biannual basis on implementation at the national level.

The set of regional measures is included in Annex I to the decision. They include distinct categories of regional measures targeting mainly: entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small and medium enterprises; policymakers; business support organizations; financial actors; and economic sectors having a particular impact on the marine and coastal environment. The regional measures also address the demand for sustainable products and services and their visibility on the market. Annex II contains definitions of sustainable businesses.

Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023

On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced the PoW and budget for the next biennium, included in draft decision IG. 25/19. She explained that the PoW is fully aligned with the MTS and has taken into account lessons learned from the previous biennium. She described the PoW as an important step towards results-based management, focused on impacts and characterized by longer-term activities with measurable impacts. Hema summarized proposed work under various themes: a pollution- and litter free Mediterranean Sea, including plans to provide technical standards to facilitate work on wastewater treatment; biodiversity and ecosystems, focused on expanding and strengthening the management of marine protected areas; climate change; governance; shared vision; sustainable use of resources; and advocacy and communication.

On the budget, Hema highlighted a proposal to use savings for implementing the PoW, as well as support from external funding secured from various sources. She explained that no increase was envisaged for assessed contributions, but overall administrative costs were expected to increase by 2-3%, adding that the budget includes a new P5 position.

The EU stressed that the PoW is consistent with the MTS 2022-2027 and that foreseen expenditure is adequate to meet the Convention's needs. She noted that the allocation for RACs should be maintained at the same level to ensure they remain fully effective. She added that half of the budget surplus, held back to retain a net cash balance, should be used. She noted this was a temporary measure taken in Naples at COP 21, and that using the surplus would not affect the Convention's financial stability.

Discussions continued throughout the week in the contact group, chaired by Miftah Almadni, Libya. On Wednesday evening in plenary, Almadni reported that a number of amendments had been introduced in the document, including an increase in the overall budget, with additional funds coming from the Mediterranean Trust Fund's surplus.

On Thursday evening, following the conclusion of the Ministerial Session, plenary reconvened to address the PoW and budget for 2022-2023. Almadni and Hema presented the main changes in the documents following the contact group's deliberations.

Changes included, among others:

- an increase via the Mediterranean Trust Fund of the total budget by approximately EUR 981,000 compared to the original proposal, to strengthen the operation capacities of RACs;
- that the Coordinator may approve budget transfers of up to 20% of the budget per programme per component;
- a request to the Secretariat, in consultation with UNEP, to explore possible ways of simplifying the structure of the PoW and budget to ensure that Contracting Parties have a clear understanding of the priorities and the relationship with the Mediterranean Trust Fund when adopting the budget; and
- a request to the Secretariat to prepare a results-based PoW and budget for 2024-2025, explaining the key principles and assumptions on which it is based and taking into account progress achieved during the implementation of the 2022-2023 PoW for consideration at COP 23.

ISRAEL requested including, in the report of the meeting, language from the COP 21 report, reminding Contracting Parties that the increased funding for RACs for specified activities in the biennium 2020-21 had been done on an exceptional basis. She cautioned that such exceptions should not constitute an argument for future allocations.

Without further comments, delegates agreed on the PoW and budget for 2022-2023. On Friday, COP 22 adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.2/Add.19), the COP, *inter alia*:

- approves the 2022-2023 PoW and budget;
- approves budget appropriations, as set out the draft decision;
- approves the assessed 2022-2023 ordinary contributions from Contracting Parties;
- requests the Executive Director of UNEP to extend the Mediterranean Trust Fund through 31 December 2023;
- approves the staffing of the Coordinating Unit, including the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL) for 2022-2023;
- authorizes the Coordinator to approve transfers up to 20% between appropriation lines within the same component and the respective MTS programmes;
- urges Contracting Parties to pay their contributions in the first quarter of each year;
- invites Contracting Parties to consider increasing their voluntary contributions;
- urges the Contracting Parties and other partners including industry to contribute adequate human and financial resources to meet the external funding requirements; and
- urges the Government of Greece, as host of the Coordinating Unit, to undertake all the required steps to ensure that fully adequate premises are made available to the Coordinating Unit within the shortest delay and in line with its commitments under the Host Country Agreement; and



The dais during the panel discussion: L-R: **Elham Ali**, Professor of Oceanography at the University of Suez (Egypt) and Lead Author of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report; **Lefteris Arapakis**, UNEP Young Champion of the Earth (2020) and Ambassador for the Mediterranean Coast (2021); **Yakup Kaska**, Professor, Pamukkale University, Turkey; **Dania Abdul-Malak**, Director, European Topic Centre at the University of Málaga (ETC-UMA); **Şahika Ercümen**, Life Below Water Advocate of UNDP in Turkey; and Moderator **Jihed Ghannem**, Barcelona Convention Secretariat (on screen).



Emine Erdogan, First Lady of Turkey, and **Joyce Msuya**, UNEP Deputy Executive Director

- requests the Secretariat to prepare a results-based PoW and budget for 2024-2025 for consideration and approval by COP 23.
- Annexed to the decision is the PoW and budget for 2022-2023.

Ministerial Session

The Ministerial session, which convened on Thursday, 9 December, opened with a COP 22 promotional video.

Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, TURKEY, noted that the Mediterranean, which has always been a meeting point and cradle of remarkable civilizations throughout human history, is in trouble. He listed several threats and pressures, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, invasive alien species, and drought, stressing that the roadmap to be adopted at COP 22 is critical to address these problems.

Kurum underscored that the Mediterranean is one of the most fragile basins in the world in terms of climate change. He highlighted sea level rise and increasing seawater temperature, and drew attention to recent wildfires, droughts, and mucilage problems in the Sea of Marmara. He stressed that everyone, especially those who created the climate crisis, must take responsibility and facilitate global justice. He highlighted Turkey's zero waste project, initiated in 2017 under the auspices of First Lady Emine Erdoğan, to contain waste under sustainable development principles; expressed Turkey's willingness to set up a regional activity hub and host the secretariat of a new international body on marine litter and single-use plastics; and called for additional scientific work to protect flora, fauna, and habitats, as well as increased cooperation and synergies with relevant bodies.

Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, stressed that "never before has the Mediterranean needed its human stewards as much as it does today," emphasizing that humanity is currently on a collision course with nature. She attributed overfishing, untreated sewage, heavy unsustainable tourism, heavy shipping, and plastic waste as impacts rapidly eroding human health and well-being in the Mediterranean region.

Msuya further highlighted the impacts of climate change in the region, noting that rainfall will decrease by 30%, demand for water is expected to triple, and wildfires and heatwaves will intensify. She underscored that ocean acidification threatens the fabric of marine ecosystems, bringing many species to the brink of extinction in the Mediterranean Sea, which has the highest degree of endemism. She emphasized that if the seven Protocols

are effectively implemented, they will fulfil the Convention's vision of a healthy, biologically diverse Mediterranean, urging all to make peace with nature.

Youth representatives Faik Yetgin, Turkey, Aina Pujol, Spain, and Asma Tarek, Egypt, delivered the outcome of the pre-COP 22 Youth Forum, held in Istanbul from 16-17 November.

In their statement, they emphasized the need for Contracting Parties to provide financial, administrative, and logistical support to youth so that they can establish a permanent council of youth to meet biannually and contribute to the work of the Barcelona Convention in a meaningful way. They also called for a collaborative youth exchange programme between northern and southern Mediterranean regions. Joyce Msuya, on behalf of the UN, delivered gifts to the youth representatives to honor their commitment.

Report on Activities Carried Out in the Framework of UNEP/MAP Since COP 21: Tatjana Hema, on behalf of UNEP/MAP, provided a progress report on key achievements over the last biennium (UNEP/MED IG.25/3). She encouraged Contracting Parties to increase and enhance ratification and compliance to all protocols under the Barcelona Convention. Hema also noted that several partnerships and MoUs have been secured recently with partners, such as IUCN and the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention). She added that although a gap remains in the submission of national implementation reports, the Convention has adopted a robust basis for informed decision making, citing the example of the MAR 1. Hema explained that the Convention also supports other UN entities; in that respect, she highlighted the ongoing work of Contracting Parties to protect marine and coastal biodiversity aligned with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework being negotiated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). She explained that the Secretariat, with the support of Contracting Parties, have also increased its visibility and advocacy by revamping the Convention website and disseminating updates in the UN Secretary-General's daily briefings. Hema applauded the work undertaken at COP 22 as evidence of the continued commitment of Contracting Parties.

COP 22 President Birpınar stressed that climate change will be a primary focus of the Convention during the next biennium, reiterating Turkey's willingness to host a relevant regional center. TURKEY noted that the biennium report shows the way forward for all Contracting Parties, underscoring the substantive steps during COP 22 for the final adoption of: the thematic decisions; the PoW and budget for the next biennium; and the Antalya Ministerial Declaration.

Recommendations by the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD): Mitja Bricelj, President, MCSD, focused on the Commission's work over the last biennium and presented the MCSD's recommendations for COP 22. He stressed the need to engage in an inter-sectoral, cross-cutting approach, overcoming silos and delivering quality programmes for the benefit of the people around the shared Mediterranean Sea.

Bricelj highlighted the MCSD's virtual meeting, hosted by Slovenia from 7-9 June 2021, emphasizing that a sustainable blue economy was recognized as an enabler of a post-COVID-19 green recovery in the region. He highlighted MCSD's inputs for

the MTS 2022-2027, and the PoW and budget for 2022-2023, discussed during the meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points held online in September.

He highlighted, *inter alia*: that marine and coastal ecosystems are crucial for building back better in the post-COVID-19 era; the One-Health approach to bolster resilience in the Mediterranean; synergies with regional, national, and local initiatives towards green recovery; sector integration; recovery-related resources that can be used to accelerate enforcement, compliance, and full implementation of the Barcelona Convention; and the MCS D's flagship initiatives over the last biennium.

Towards a Blue Mediterranean – Leaving a Pollution-Free Legacy, Protecting Biodiversity, and Sustaining Climate Stability: Reflecting on UNFCCC COP 26, Peter Thomson, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, expressed "mixed feelings," but satisfaction with the outcome on the ocean-climate-nexus front, which he said could be claimed as "a lasting legacy from COP 26." However, he noted disappointment with the last-minute watering down of language on the phase out of coal. He described the linear exploitation of finite planetary resources as a "dead-end street," and called for courage to end the plague of plastic pollution. Looking ahead to the UN Ocean Conference set to convene in Portugal from 27 June – 1 July 2022, he said it would be a game changer for ocean action, describing COP 22 as an important steppingstone towards Lisbon.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, CBD, emphasized the need to craft regional strategies to support the implementation of global goals. She noted with satisfaction that the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties have embraced this role and shown leadership in carrying through with their commitments. She highlighted joint collaboration on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas, and on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative. Emphasizing the need to reverse trends in ocean degradation, and for global action, she underscored the critical role that the Mediterranean region can play in this regard.

Erika Coppola, The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy, and Anna Pirani, University Paris-Saclay, France, provided an overview of the physical science basis of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, discussing: the current state of the climate; possible climate futures; climate information for risk assessment and regional adaptation; and

limiting future climate change. Coppola explained that: changes are widespread, rapid, and intensifying; the surface ocean is warming; and all observed warming is a consequence of human activity. On possible climate futures, she noted that global surface temperatures will continue to increase and multiple climate impact drivers will change all regions in the world.

Panel Discussion: Moderator Jihed Ghannem, Barcelona Convention Secretariat, said the panel discussion brought together "a beautiful Mediterranean palette of skillsets, walks of life, and experiences" to exchange ideas on the sustainability path for the region.

Elham Ali, Egypt, Professor of Oceanography, University of Suez, Egypt, and Lead Author, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, addressed the science behind the assessment report, highlighting a chapter dedicated to the Mediterranean basin. She underscored challenges including water scarcity, drought, floods, coastal erosion, temperature increase, sea-level rise, and precipitation patterns. Ali proposed, *inter alia*: taking into account all risks, including cascading and projected ones; moving towards a green economy and using green energy; changing the seasonality of cropping; and improving knowledge sharing. She further highlighted the need to incorporate Indigenous and local knowledge and strive for climate justice.

Yakup Kaska, Pamukkale University, Turkey, highlighted threats to the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). He noted that the loggerhead sea turtle's sex is determined by the sand's temperature during the incubation period. He went on to explain that increasing temperatures due to global warming are leading to a very high proportion of female turtles, constituting another threat for the survival of the species. He further underscored the need to address habitat protection and bycatch, and called for further collaboration, stressing hopeful conservation outcomes following decades of efforts.

Dania Abdul-Malak, Director, European Topic Centre, University of Málaga, Spain, talked about how the three environmental crises of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change can be tackled by nature-based solutions that are backed by science and mainstreamed across policies and sectors. This can be accomplished, Abdul-Malak added, by monitoring implementation and establishing financial mechanisms to support actors trying to achieve the necessary transformation.

Sahika Ercumen, UN Development Programme Turkey Life Under Water Advocate, described how her professional diving experience degenerated to swimming in water bodies polluted by microplastics and other marine debris, even in Antarctic waters.

Lefteris Arapakis, UNEP Young Champion of the Earth (2020) and Ambassador for the Mediterranean Coast (2021), described how fishing communities across the Mediterranean are dealing with marine litter and microplastics in their catches. He noted the need for government support to help eliminate the ghost gear and pollution in the Mediterranean. Following his intervention, Arapakis was presented with an "Ambassador of the Mediterranean" award by UNEP/MAP for his advocacy role.

A short video from the host country showcased the work of Kaptan June, Sea Turtle Conservation Foundation, in preserving biodiversity in Dalyan, Turkey.



Elham Ali, Lead Author, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report



Athanasios Leousis, Greece

Statements from Ministers, Heads of Delegations, and Partners: Ibrahim Munir, Minister of Environment, LIBYA, underscored the Barcelona Convention's role in protecting the environment for future generations and stressed that Libya will honor its commitments towards the Convention with the help of UNEP and its development partners.

Almira Xhembulla, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment, ALBANIA, stressed her country's commitment to the protection and conservation of the environment, tackling climate change challenges with concrete programmes and cooperation with key development partners. She underscored, *inter alia*: the need to create of an intergovernmental panel for marine pollution and marine litter; the need for a transition from a linear to a circular economy; and national efforts for environmental sustainability, including a blue economy programme, protected areas' network, and moving towards a zero-waste society.

Ambassador Hithem El Mohri, Embassy of ALGERIA in Ankara, on behalf of the Algerian Minister of Environment Fatma Zohra Zerouati, stressed that the Contracting Parties' commitment reflects their dedication to a healthy Mediterranean. He underscored that isolated solutions are neither sufficient nor lasting. He presented strategic actions at the national level, including a national coastal zone management strategy, integrated waste management efforts, and a national climate plan.

Mirza Hujic, Assistant Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, noted that despite the small size of his country's Adriatic coast, they are well aware of the importance of the Mediterranean. He drew attention to national efforts, including the process of ratifying three of the Barcelona Convention's protocols and the drafting of the national environment strategy, and highlighted the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

Mario Šiljeg, State Secretary Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, CROATIA, underlined the importance of individual country efforts under the umbrella of international conventions to tackle environmental challenges. He stressed that the Barcelona Convention is crucial for the transition to a green economy and a blue Mediterranean.

Andreas Gregoriou, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, CYPRUS, highlighted how the eastern Mediterranean has been identified as a climate change hotspot. He recalled the President of Cyprus' announcement, made during UNFCCC COP 26, regarding a

framework for a Regional Action Plan that will bring together over 200 scientists and international organizations to provide policy recommendations, measures, and specific solutions to combat this challenge.

Ali Abosena, CEO, Environmental Affairs Agency, EGYPT, stated that regional cooperation for safeguarding the environment is no longer a choice but a necessity. He detailed the many initiatives and policies the Egyptian government has put in place to encourage the transition to a green economy. He also noted the Egyptian government's commitment to international conventions as evidenced by its hosting of the biodiversity COP in 2019 and its plan to host UNFCCC COP 27 in November 2022.

Primož Šeligo, Ambassador of Slovenia to Turkey, and Patrick Child, Deputy Director General, DG Environment, European Commission, on behalf of the EU, called on COP 22 to send a clear signal following on from UNFCCC COP 26, saying it was the "last window of opportunity to limit global temperature rise and halt pollution." They welcomed the MTS as a clear and valuable roadmap to set environmental priorities as well as the decision on an emission control area for sulphur oxides. They, *inter alia*, emphasized the need to: transform the design, use, and disposal of plastic products; and continue to ensure the sustainability of maritime economic activities.

Stéphane Pailler, Deputy Director of Environment and Climate, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, FRANCE, highlighted the PAMEx Action Plan aimed at transforming the Mediterranean Sea by 2030 by: preserving marine biodiversity; sustainably managing fish stocks; fighting plastic pollution; and promoting sustainable maritime transport.

Athanasios Leousis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GREECE, on behalf of Konstantinos Aravossis, Secretary General for Natural Environment and Water, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a rearranging of priorities. He said "building forward" is a challenge as well as an opportunity to integrate environmental dimensions into recovery packages. He highlighted national efforts including: a national energy and climate plan; the intention to decommission nuclear power plants by 2028; and a new national plan for waste and plastics management.

Ayelet Rosen, Ministry of Environmental Protection, ISRAEL, highlighted national efforts to reduce pollution from land-based sources through a strict application of LBS law. She explained that 90% of wastewater is treated and 88% is reclaimed. Rosen also discussed efforts to overcome the scourge of single-use plastics and the successful implementation of the Clean Coast Programme, noting that prior to the programme, only 20% of the coast was clean 70% of the time.

Carlo Zaghi, Director General for the Sea and Coasts, Ministry for Ecological Transition, ITALY, via video address, noted that climate change, overexploitation of the marine environment, and pollution are recognized as major drivers of biodiversity loss. He urged for changes to the development model, stressing this is possible only via effective coordination of all actors in the region. He highlighted important outcomes from COP 22.

Habib Maalouf, Assistant Minister of Environment, LEBANON, highlighted risks related to mining activities, emphasizing that the Mediterranean should be a protected area in its totality due to its size and vulnerability. He cautioned that

technology advancement cannot effectively mitigate risks since environmental deterioration is much faster than technological development.

Danilo Mrdak, Secretary of State, Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, MONTENEGRO, focused on efforts to promote the objective of the Convention at the national level. He highlighted, *inter alia*: two new marine protected areas and a third one in the pipeline; the national strategy for ICZM; measures to control marine plastic litter and microplastics; and the recent establishment of a national office for sustainable development.

Mohammed Ali Lazreq, Ambassador of MOROCCO to Turkey, highlighted Morocco's commitment to environmental multilateralism, underscoring: a national strategy for sustainable development; national legislation to protect the coastal and marine environment; comprehensive coastal management under the national plan for the coast; the development of a strategy for ballast water; and a national plan on sustainable consumption and production.

Héctor Castañeda Callejón, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of SPAIN in Ankara, Turkey, called for: a shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns; and breaking the link between human development and environmental degradation. He celebrated the MAP/Barcelona Convention's pioneering role in environmental protection in the Mediterranean and underscored that the MTS provides a roadmap for specific measures inspired by the SDGs.

Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, TURKEY, noted that COP 22 hosted around 40 special events attended by more than 400 participants from 21 countries. He thanked First Lady of Turkey Emine Erdoğan for hosting a productive roundtable with women leaders of the Contracting Parties. He committed to making youth central to achieving the objectives set out in this COP.

IUCN stated its support for the MTS and noted the importance of increasing resiliency to climate change and implementing nature-based solutions in dealing with the environmental challenges the world is grappling with. The Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET) stated that a number of its targeted projects and campaigns are aligned with UNEP/MAP, but maintained more needs to be done to protect the Mediterranean, and expressed willingness to support the COP on this.

The Arabic Network for Environment and Development called for more access to information, awareness raising and education, and participation of civil society. MedCities, a network of Mediterranean cities, stressed the central role cities play in sustainability efforts and underscored the importance of accounting for cities and local communities in accelerating action for the Barcelona Convention.

A representative from the Association de Recherche Environnement et Bio Innovation explained how her NGO provides the tools to measure pollution impacts and its effects on human health and marine biodiversity. She welcomed the opportunity to join the UNEP/MAP family as a MAP Partner.



COP 22 | Málaga winner of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award

Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award 2021: This session opened with the screening of two videos depicting: an overview of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award; and actions to protect the loggerhead sea turtles in Turkey. Tatjana Hema explained that each year, the award is given to a city on the Mediterranean coast that is taking concrete steps to protect the environment and improve the quality of life through sustainable, inclusive urban initiatives.

First Lady Emine Erdoğan, TURKEY, presented the award to the municipality of Málaga, Spain, for its successful work on increasing green areas and renewing and protecting the coastline, which she lauded as an inspiration for everyone. Genoa, Italy, was awarded second place and Crikvenica, Croatia, third.

Reflecting on environmental challenges confronting the region, she implored delegates to “start from our doorstep and leave a blue Mediterranean” to future generations. She highlighted local efforts including the Zero Waste Initiative in Turkey, aimed at minimizing waste generation and transitioning to a circular economy. Erdoğan explained that: recycling has increased; zero waste training has been provided to approximately 14 million people; consumer behavior patterns are changing; and 88,000 tons of marine litter have been collected and sent for disposal. She also highlighted efforts to protect sea turtles.

Antalya Ministerial Declaration

On Tuesday, Tatjana Hema introduced the draft declaration (UNEP/MED IG.25/24/Rev.1), noting work on it prior to the meeting by an informal group established by the COP. She invited Turkey, the presiding country of the informal group, to provide additional information on the status of negotiations so far.

TURKEY underscored the declaration's importance in drawing a roadmap, reflecting the Contracting Parties' commitment to environmental protection. She noted significant progress has been made on the declaration, expressing hope that outstanding issues will be addressed during contact group deliberations.

Discussion continued on Tuesday and Wednesday in a contact group, chaired by Nazan Özyürek, Turkey. Reporting back to plenary on Wednesday, Özyürek said the contact group had completed all sections of the draft declaration. On Thursday, at the end of the Ministerial Session, the Secretariat presented the text as proposed by the contact group.

The Antalya Ministerial Declaration was adopted with no further comments.

Final Outcome: The Antalya Ministerial Declaration calls for a renewed commitment to a healthy, clean, sustainable, and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and coast, with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems. It further emphasizes the intention to help realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Declaration recalls the main outcomes of COP 22 such as the finalization of the MTS 2022-2027, an alignment with other global commitments such as the Paris Agreement; conservation of biological diversity, and a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery.

The Declaration centers on the COP 22 theme of a blue Mediterranean by emphasizing the dedication of Contracting Parties to leave a pollution and litter-free legacy for future generations. The Declaration states this will be achieved through, *inter alia*: regulations such as an emission control area for sulphur oxides; a Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness for, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships; and implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean adopted at COP 22.

Finally, the Declaration highlights the diverse participation and inclusion of Contracting Parties and partners leading to COP 22.

Closing Plenary

Date and Place of COP 23: On Friday, during the closing plenary, Slovenia offered to host COP 23 and Egypt offered to host COP 24. Contracting Parties accepted the offers with appreciation.

Adoption of the Report of the Meeting: On Friday, the Secretariat presented the meeting report (UNEP/MED IG.25/L.1). TURKEY clarified that her country offered to host the secretariat of the possible new international instrument on “marine litter” and not on “plastic pollution,” and requested making the necessary change to reflect this.

EGYPT asked that the report specify in the section on the discussion on emissions control and future technical work on nitrogen oxides, that Egypt said “its obligations might impede its implementation.” EGYPT further clarified that it requested a reference in the report stating that the same coordinates used to exclude the Suez Canal and its waiting area from the application of the Med SOx ECA must apply for Egypt to sign and ratify MARPOL Annex VI.

With these amendments, Contracting Parties adopted the report of the meeting.

Closure of COP 22: On Friday, in closing remarks, Kerstin Stendahl, UNEP, emphasized that the debates throughout the week had been “extremely constructive,” stressing that “from a regional seas’ perspective, you set high standards for all the regional seas family.”

The EU celebrated the decision to submit a joint proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides, stressing it was an important deliverable for the region.

SLOVENIA underscored the importance of the meeting’s success for the future health of the Mediterranean. He

highlighted the need to promote synergies among regional conventions, drawing attention to the Danube River Protection Convention and the Bucharest Convention. He urged addressing interrelations to the extent possible among these shared ecosystems.

Tatjana Hema noted that “COP 22 will enter into the history of the Mediterranean Action Plan as a COP that will not be easily forgotten.” She applauded the approval of an ambitious agenda that sets the region on a path towards sustainability, progressing in a solid way towards contributing to the SDGs. She further underscored the renewal of commitment of the entire MAP system, noting that their physical presence in such challenging times proves their dedication to the process. She highlighted the spirit of solidarity during constructive discussions, and thanked the host country for its hospitality, and all COP 22 participants for their hard work.

COP 22 President Birpınar applauded the Secretariat and Contracting Parties for their tireless work on the Antalya Ministerial Declaration. He recalled how since ancient times, the Mediterranean has served as a central basin for civilization, rich in resources, and diverse in cultures, and stressed that preserving this is vital for future generations. He drew upon the famous words of poet Jalal-Uddin Rumi to assert that if the sea is beautiful, then the coast and everything else will follow in beauty.

President Birpınar shared some of his highlights of COP 22 noting: the MTS; the commitment to decrease sulphur emissions from ships; and a renewed commitment to protect biodiversity and tackle marine litter. He shared his hope that the complex decisions agreed upon at this COP will serve as a model for related conventions and for the world at large. He shared a story on how lessons learned from sea turtles may help humans to live long and happy lives, and closed the meeting at 18:14 GMT+3.

Upcoming Meetings

IPCC-55 and WG II AR6 Approval Plenary (WG II-12):

This session is expected to focus on the approval of the WG II contribution to the AR6, which assesses climate change impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. **dates:** 14-18 February 2022 (TBC) **location:** Germany (TBC) **www:** www.ipcc.ch/calendar/

Resumed Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2): UNEA- 5.2 will take place under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs.” Its aim is to connect and consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and motivate the sharing and implementation of successful approaches. At this Conference, UNEA will also discuss whether to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee for a new agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution. The in-person session of UNEA-5 will be followed by a Special Session of the UNEA on 3-4 March 2022, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP in 1972. The first session of UNEA-5 (UNEA-5.1) was held online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on 22 - 23 February 2021 with a revised and streamlined agenda that focused on urgent and procedural issues. **dates:** 28 February – 2 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea5

BBNJ IGC-4: This session will continue to negotiate issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), in particular, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, marine protected areas, EIAs, and capacity building and technology transfer. **dates:** 7-18 March 2022

location: UN Headquarters, New York **www:** www.un.org/bbnj/

IPCC-56 and WG III AR6 Approval Plenary (WG III-14): This session is expected to focus on the approval of the WG III contribution to the AR6, which assesses the mitigation of climate change. **dates:** 21-25 March (TBC) **location:** UK (TBC) **www:** ipcc.ch/calendar/

2023 UN Conference on the Water Action Decade: The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on the “Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ 2018-2028” (A/RES/73/226). It calls for convening a Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action. The Conference will focus on the objectives of the Decade as laid out in the Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018-2028. **dates:** 22-24 March 2023 **location:** New York, US **www:** sdgs.un.org/un-2023-conference-water-action-decade

Ninth World Water Forum: The 9th World Water Forum is the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. The event will focus on the theme, “Water Security for Peace and Development,” and will consider four priorities: water security and sanitation; cooperation; rural development; and means tools. **date:** 22-27 March 2022 **location:** Dakar, Senegal **www:** www.worldwatercouncil.org/en/dakar-2022

Second UN Ocean Conference: The Second Ocean Conference will meet under the theme “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions.” **dates:** 27 June-1 July 2022 **location:** Lisbon, Portugal **www:** oceanconference.un.org/

Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5): The fifth global forum will bring together ocean conservation professionals and high-level officials to inform, inspire, and act on marine protected areas. **dates:** 1-8 September 2022 **location:** Vancouver, Canada **www:** www.IMPAC5.ca/?sfw=pass1639152148

IPCC-57: The focus of this session will be on the approval of the Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report, which will integrate the findings of the three Working Groups and the three Special Reports of the sixth assessment cycle. **dates:** 26-30 September 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** ipcc.ch/calendar/

Seventh International Marine Debris Conference: This meeting will bring together close to 50 countries and regions to discuss a range of topics including: prevention of microplastics in the marine environment; collaboration with and in the private sector; and the effective implementation of laws, regulations, and policies. This is the first time the conference, held under the auspices of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association will take place in a country other than the US. **dates:** September 2022 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** www.7imdc.org/

Resumed Sessions of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and WG-3 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

The resumed sessions of CBD Subsidiary Bodies and the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are scheduled to reconvene as face-to-face meetings and address outstanding issues with regards to the framework and the work of the Convention. **dates:** 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Second Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15): The second part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to reconvene in a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China. COP 15 is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 2022 (TBC) **location:** Kunming, China **www:** cbd.int/meetings/

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

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| COMPSUD | Circle of Mediterranean Partners for Sustainable Development |
| ICZM | Integrated coastal zone management |
| IMAP | Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| MAP | Mediterranean Action Plan |
| MARPOL | International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships |
| Med SOx ECA | Mediterranean Sea sulphur oxides’ emission control area |
| MTS | Medium-Term Strategy |
| OECM | Other effective area-based conservation measures |
| PAM | Parliamentary of the Mediterranean |
| PoW | Programme of Work |
| REMPEC | Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea |
| SAPBIO | Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SPA/RAC | Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas |
| UNEP | UN Environment Programme |