

ISTANBUL DECLARATION

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols, meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, on 5 December, 2013, on the occasion of the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties,

Recalling the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), in particular on the Oceans and Seas which was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in July 2012,

Acknowledging the significance of the regional cooperation framework established through the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) since 1975 and the fundamental contribution of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols to the definition of a shared regulatory and innovative framework of cooperation for the protection and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources in the Mediterranean,

Acknowledging also the progress carried out to jointly implement the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and Strategies as well as to achieve the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to human activities,

Noting the outputs of the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas forum (MPA), Antalya, November 2012, hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, in cooperation with UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA,

Welcoming the Ajaccio Declaration as the outcome of the third international marine protected areas congress (IMPAC III – Marseille-Ajaccio, October 2013),

Recognizing the important contributions by representatives of international, regional, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders through their well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity in support to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols,

Reaffirming the fundamental value of biological diversity and natural resources, as well as its critical role in maintaining marine and coastal ecosystems that provide goods and services essential for the sustainable development of the Mediterranean population,

Deeply concerned by the continued threats from land and sea based sources of pollution, in particular marine litter, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, and nutrients, as well as pollution sources originating from off-shore exploration and exploitation activities, shipping, and also concerned by the over-use of natural resources non-indigenous invasive species, over-fishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and soil and coastal degradation, and,

Being aware of the degradation of the marine and coastal environment posed by urban sprawl the continuous unplanned growth of coastal settlements during recent decades and adverse impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems,

In the continuity of commitments made by previous COPs Declarations, we commit to take all the necessary measures to make the Mediterranean an exemplary model in implementing activities effectively protecting the marine and coastal environment as well as contributing to sustainable development and resolve to:

- *Achieve* the targets adopted under the Ecosystem Approach to human activities which will be periodically reviewed through a Barcelona Convention/MAP integrated monitoring and assessment system based on a strengthened and shared capacity by the UNEP/MAP to collect, manage, analyse and share reliable data, making best possible use of the expertise of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention,
- *Develop*, a comprehensive, well-managed, effective and equitable, ecologically representative and well-connected system of coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean by 2020 in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in particular to meet by 2020 target 11 in the Mediterranean,
- *Underline the need* for sustainable financing mechanisms in support of marine protected areas and contribute, as appropriate to raise the number and visibility of the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI),
- *Invite* international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations and the private sector, with the interest and capacity to do so, to encourage the creation and the support of the activities of the trust fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas, promoted by Monaco, Tunisia and France,
- *Continue and strengthen* the process of regional cooperation to scientifically evaluate Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in Mediterranean in collaboration with the CBD with a view to finalize the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSA, in April 2014, in due time for CBD COP XII in October 2014,
- *Ensure implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan* adopted at this COP, which is the first regional effort to follow up on the global commitment to reduce marine debris adopted at Rio+20 and *engage* with stakeholders to support its implementation so as to reduce knowledge gaps, develop and provide capacities for sound technical solutions and provide sufficient financial resources to prevent, reduce and remove litter in the Mediterranean,
- *Take* the appropriate measures to enforce in cooperation with all relevant actors, in particular General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the amendments of Annexes II and III to the protocol concerning Special Protected Areas and Biological Biodiversity in the Mediterranean, improving the protection of biodiversity and contributing to the common goals at European Union (EU) and UN level,
- *Put in place* necessary measures to prevent pollution from Offshore and Shipping based activities in the Mediterranean including by the adoption or revision of corresponding Action Plans by COP 19,

- *Make all efforts to accelerate* implementation of the Action Plan on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as adopted by the Parties in COP17 and in particular define set back zones in accordance with the provisions of the ICZM Protocol and develop plans that protect coastal populations against the adverse effects of climate change such as rising seas and permit the integrated planning and the resolution of conflicts among the increasing multiple economic and social uses of the coastal zones,
- *Strengthen* our commitment to accelerate the shift towards Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns by adopting an Action Plan on SCP, which is in line with the commitments adopted at Rio+20 and which aims to reduce the impacts of human activities in the marine and coastal ecosystems,
- *Revise* the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development and reform the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development by 2015 in line with the outcomes of Rio+20,

Reaffirm our commitment to strengthen our cooperation under the Barcelona Convention/MAP system by enhancing its implementation and its articulation at local, national, sub-regional and global level in full cooperation and synergy with our partners and stakeholders and by promoting cooperation with local authorities and priority sectors, and in this context we,

- *Encourage* the Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to sign or ratify the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention and to make particular efforts to ensure the entry into force of the revised Dumping Protocol by COP 19 and thus achieve that all revised Protocols are in force by the 40th Anniversary of the Convention in 2016,
- *Welcome* the launch of a process to update the MAP Phase II, in close collaboration with MCSD and involving all relevant stakeholders, to assess the implementation of MAP Phase II, identify gaps and needs for operational activities, assess whether the challenges of Rio+20 are adequately reflected in the MAP, contribute to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the relevant actors in the region and present the findings of the assessment with a view to deciding on the appropriate way forward including the possible adoption at the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties of a MAP Phase III,
- *Request* the Contracting Parties to pay their contributions as soon as possible to assure the sustainability of the activities,
- *Encourage* further cooperation and synergies between UNEP/MAP and the Horizon 2020 initiative,
- *Recognize* the importance of coastal cities and communities as key actors for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention/MAP, its Protocols and relevant Strategies and Action Plans and *resolve* to engage with them in addressing pressures to the marine and coastal environment associated with urban development such as urban sprawl and marine litter,

- *Commit* to promote an integrated approach for Environment Friendly coastal cities and coastal urban settlements, including through working with local authorities in finding solutions that improve the sustainable management of waste (including through the application of the waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, recycle and recover) and waste water treatment,
- *Enhance* cooperation with local governments of coastal cities by acknowledging and promoting their valuable efforts in applying integrated coastal zone management principles to urban planning, introducing green technologies to reduce environmental pollution and adhering to the ecosystem based management of human activities,
- *Establish* the “Environment Friendly City” award to be conferred to coastal cities by setting out nomination and selection principles and criteria for such award till COP19,
- *Welcome* the cooperation established between the Barcelona Convention/MAP and relevant international and regional Organizations such as the GFCM, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the IUCN and *ask* the Secretariat to extend cooperation with the CBD, the ACCOBAMS and other relevant Organizations with whom synergy is needed for reaching the objectives of the Barcelona Convention/MAP,
- *Acknowledge* the efforts carried out and decisions taken in COP17 to enhance the effectiveness of the MAP governance system and improve its financial sustainability and *fully commit* to implement the agreed institutional reforms in order to achieve: effective fund allocation following a gradual approach, taking cost efficiency into account; coherence between MAP Components based on thematic priorities, the Components' mandates; and, sound cooperation and coordination between and among MAP Components towards common goals through an integrated planning,
- *Strengthen* the coordination of MAP activities at national level, particularly between MAP national and thematic focal points as well as with other relevant national institutions, including NGOs, with a view to exchanging information and achieving coherence and integration for the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, reinforcing the impact and visibility of national activities implementing the Barcelona Convention/MAP.

Thus preserve the wealth and sustainability of Mediterranean ecosystems, goods and services to serve as an example for other regions of the world and thus contribute to the adoption of global measures for the protection and sustainable development and management of the marine and coastal environment.