



**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Regional Expert Meeting on National Action Plans
for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy
for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution
from Ships (2016-2021)

REMPEC/WG.39/7
Date: 22 May 2017

Barcelona, Spain, 8-9 November 2016

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Agenda Item 7

REPORT

REGIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

FOR PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO MARINE POLLUTION FROM SHIPS (2016-2021)

Barcelona, Spain, 8-9 November 2016

INTRODUCTION

1 The Regional Expert Meeting on National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) was convened in Barcelona, Spain from 8 to 9 November 2016, pursuant to the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), also referred to as UN Environment/MAP, adopted by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols (COP 19), which was held in Athens, Greece from 9 to 12 February 2016.

2 The principal objective of the Meeting was to support the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), which was adopted by COP 19, according to a common template including national assessment, prior to onward transmission to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), to be tentatively held in Malta in May 2017, for their review and recommendations. The Meeting was also an opportunity to present international, regional and national perspectives on National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as NAPs.

3 The organisation of the Meeting was jointly financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP).

4 Considering the scope of the Meeting, all REMPEC Prevention and OPRC Focal Points were invited to attend the Meeting. The invitation to participate in the Meeting was also extended to observers from relevant regional and international organisations whose activities are linked with the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

5 The Meeting was attended by delegations from the following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

ALBANIA	ITALY
ALGERIA	LIBYA
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	MALTA
CROATIA	MONTENEGRO
CYPRUS	MOROCCO
EGYPT	SLOVENIA
FRANCE	SPAIN
GREECE	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
ISRAEL	TUNISIA

6 A complete list of participants appears in **Annex I** to the present report.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

7 The Meeting was opened by the Programme Officer (Prevention), Mr Franck Lauwers, on Tuesday, 8 November 2016 at 09:30 hours. The Programme Officer (Prevention) welcomed the participants to the Meeting and explained the objectives of the Meeting. He also welcomed Mr Miguel Palomares, Consultant, who had been working with the Secretariat to prepare for the Meeting since April 2016. Mr Palomares, who used to be, amongst others, Director, Marine Environment Division, IMO, had been involved in the work of REMPEC for many years and had provided a very substantive contribution to the drafting of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2005-2015), hereinafter referred to as the original Regional Strategy (2005-2015), as well as of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

Rules of Procedure

8 The Meeting decided to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) to its deliberations.

Election of Officers

9 Following informal consultations held with the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Mr Malek Smaoui, Programme Officer (OPRC), proposed Greece as Chair, Albania as Vice-Chair and Morocco as Rapporteur. The Meeting unanimously decided to elect the following officers of the Meeting:

Cdr. (H.C.G.) Antonios DOUMANIS (Greece)	Chairperson
Mr Elson THANA (Albania)	Vice-Chairperson
Mr Radouane HANAN (Morocco)	Rapporteur

Working Languages

10 The working languages of the Meeting were English and French. Simultaneous English/French/English interpretation was provided during the Meeting. All working documents were available in both official languages of the Centre, i.e. in English and in French. Information documents were available in their original language only, unless a translation was provided in the second working language.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

11 The Chairperson thanked the Meeting for supporting his election and proposed that the Provisional Agenda, set out in document REMPEC/WG.39/1/Rev.1, be adopted.

12 The Meeting adopted the Agenda reproduced in **Annex II** to the present report. The list of documents is presented in **Annex III** thereto.

AGENDA ITEM 2: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY (2016-2021)

13 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Programme Officer (Prevention) provided information on NAPs, as detailed in the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

14 In particular, he recalled that, as explained under Specific Objective 3, the full implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) should also be a measure of the effectiveness of a maritime administration and that a well-structured and specific NAP clearly defining the procedures and required actions that would help each country to implement the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) would ensure, or at least facilitate, the attaining of the aims and objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) with the support of REMPEC.

15 The Programme Officer (Prevention) stressed that such initiative would also facilitate the linking of the NAP with IMO efforts concerning the definition of IMO instruments compliance gaps, *inter alia* the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), including the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), IMO's plans to assist developing countries with the preparation of national maritime policies focusing on IMO related issues, and, ultimately, to define a plan of action to fill the identified gaps. He indicated that, in other words, the NAPs would provide a useful tool to assess progress in individual countries and guide them in their implementation efforts in a tailored manner, including the carrying out of a national assessment and the definition of the remedial action that may be deemed necessary.

16 He also recalled that, under this Specific Objective, Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were expected to:

- .1 develop a NAP to enable them to fully implement the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) in a timely and thorough manner;
- .2 enhance, on the basis of their NAP, the performance of their maritime administration in accordance with the applicable IMO recommendations and guidelines; and
- .3 prepare for undertaking the IMSAS, using the III Code as the audit standard and following the Framework and Procedures for the Scheme.

17 Finally, he mentioned that, under this Specific Objective, depending on the availability of resources, the Secretariat (REMPEC) would:

- .1 assist Mediterranean coastal States in the development of a NAP, designed to enable them to assess progress made, to guide them in the full implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) in a tailored manner, and to conduct a national assessment of their capabilities and define the necessary remedial action;
- .2 assist Mediterranean coastal States in enhancing the performance of their maritime administrations in line with new IMO developments, in particular the IMSAS;
- .3 provide support to Mediterranean coastal States to prepare for undertaking the IMSAS, having explored the possible technical assistance to which some of them may be entitled under the IMO's ITCP and other sources; and
- .4 contribute to improve the knowledge and expertise of flag State inspection officers by running a programme of training activities related to relevant international instruments, in particular the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), ensuring appropriate training for ship inspectors.

18 The Chairperson then invited Ms Tatjana Hema, Deputy UN Environment/MAP Coordinator, who could not physically attend the Meeting, to deliver a presentation over Skype on the lessons learned and the way forward with regard to the NAPs for the implementation of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities ("the LBS Protocol") and its Regional Plans in the framework of the Strategic Action Programme to address Pollution from Land-Based Activities ("SAP MED") to achieve Good Environmental Status for pollution related Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) ecological objectives.

19 In particular, the Deputy MAP Coordinator suggested that measures related to marine litter from sea-based sources as well as marine pollution from dumping and offshore activities should be addressed, as appropriate, in the NAPs as these were not fully covered by the National Action Plans for the implementation of the LBS Protocol.

20 **The Meeting took note** of the lessons learned and the way forward with regard to the National Action Plans for the implementation of the LBS Protocol and its Regional Plans in the framework of the SAP MED to achieve Good Environmental Status for pollution related EcAp ecological objectives.

21 **The Meeting noted** with interest the proposal from the UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat to address measures related to marine litter from sea-based sources as well as marine pollution from dumping and offshore activities, as appropriate, in the NAPs as these were not fully covered by the National Action Plans for the implementation of the LBS Protocol.

22 **The Meeting recognised** that the NAPs were linked with the IMO's efforts concerning the definition of IMO instruments compliance gaps, *inter alia* the IMSAS, including the III Code, IMO's plans to assist developing countries with the preparation of national maritime policies focusing on IMO related issues, and, ultimately, to define a plan of action to fill the identified gaps.

AGENDA ITEM 3: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY (2016-2021)

23 During a round table, all participants presented their national perspectives on NAPs providing information on national Prevention and OPRC activities, including current and future projects or initiatives, as well as shared their views and expectations with regard to the preparation of their NAPs.

24 Having taken note of the information provided by the participants, **the Meeting acknowledged** that a substantive number of activities, including projects or initiatives, relevant to the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), were carried out at the national, sub-regional or regional level, and that other activities were foreseen in the near future.

25 **The Meeting recalled** that the preparation of NAPs was a high priority, and that it would enable the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to fully implement the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) in a timely and thorough manner.

26 **The Meeting further recalled** that a NAP should be well-structured and specific to each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention clearly defining the procedures and required actions that were necessary to implement the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) at the national level with a view to ensuring, or at least facilitating, the attaining of the aims and objectives of the said Strategy with the support of REMPEC.

AGENDA ITEM 4: COMMON APPROACH FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY (2016-2021)

27 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to introduce document REMPEC/WG.39/4 with regard to the development of a common template for the preparation of NAPs, including national assessments.

28 The Programme Officer (Prevention) recalled that COP 19 had agreed to support the preparation of NAPs according to a common template including national assessment in the UN Environment/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017, which had been made possible thanks to the generous financial support from the MTF and the IMO's ITCP.

29 He indicated that, consequently, REMPEC, with the assistance of Mr Palomares, Consultant, developed a draft Guidance Document for the preparation of NAPs, including Common Template, List of Examples of National Actions and National Assessment Form, for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the draft Guidance Document.

30 The Programme Officer (Prevention) highlighted that, in preparing the draft Guidance Document, it was acknowledged that a NAP should, amongst others:

- .1 be based on the twenty-two (22) Specific Objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and the Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;
- .2 translate into actions the said objectives and outputs, schedule in time the implementation of the said actions, and allocate the roles and responsibilities among the various stakeholders; and
- .3 consider the Outputs relating to the Secretariat (REMPEC) under each Specific Objective in order to be adapted to the achievement of the NAP activities.

31 He also mentioned that the objective was to prepare a final draft prior to its submission to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be tentatively held in Malta in May 2017, for their review and recommendations.

32 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Consultant presented the draft Guidance Document, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.39/4.

33 Mr Palomares explained that the draft Guidance Document was prepared with a view to facilitating the task of maritime administrations in developing a specific NAP by providing guidance for the identification of national actions, as well as examples of such actions, which could assist individual administrations when developing their own specific NAP.

34 He stressed that it was important to acknowledge that a specific NAP should not be seen as a static document but as a living tool that could be reviewed and updated regularly, using the results of the following assessments expected to be conducted by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as often as the circumstances dictate:

- .1 national assessment of their capabilities in implementing their specific NAP and identification of the necessary remedial action; and
- .2 a self-assessment of national capabilities and performance in giving full and complete effect to MARPOL and other applicable conventions to which they are Party in accordance with IMO Assembly resolution A.912(22).

35 Mr Palomares also recalled the importance of the preparations for undertaking the IMSAS to which the thorough application of a specific NAP would contribute significantly.

36 The Consultant then mentioned that the draft Guidance Document set out the required narrative and guidance to support Contracting Parties in the development of their NAP and that it included background information (Part I), guidance for the identification of national actions for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) (Part II), a common template for the preparation of a NAP (Annex I), a list of examples of national actions (Annex II) and a national assessment form (Annex III).

37 In particular, he indicated that Part I of the draft Guidance Document provided information on the development of a NAP, including its preparation and updating as well as the necessary institutional framework, highlighting that a specific NAP should be updated every time the IMSAS or the general audit was carried out by the IMO and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) respectively, or whenever there was a significant change in circumstances affecting the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

38 Turning to Part II of the draft Guidance Document, the Consultant pointed out that it provided a narrative under each of the Specific Objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), the purpose of which was to assist maritime administrations in identifying national actions additional to those tabulated in Annex II thereto, which provided a number of examples that should lead to the achievement of the implementation goals under the said Specific Objectives, or in modifying them according to their own circumstances.

39 Mr Palomares then referred to the National Assessment Form provided in Annex III to the draft Guidance Document, which was mainly based on the one developed with the same objective for the original Regional Strategy (2005-2015) and mentioned that, therefore, maritime administrations should be familiar with its contents.

40 Finally, he referred to the NAPs common template laid out in Annex I to the draft Guidance Document, which contained essential titles and placeholders under each Specific Objective. He recalled that it should serve as a core frame around which the specific NAP should be built by inserting the national actions determined through the process of identification of such actions using the examples provided in Annex II to the draft Guidance Document, the results of national assessments and self-assessments, the guidance contained in Part II thereto and any other actions singled out by the maritime administration.

41 Following this comprehensive presentation by the Consultant, the Chairperson invited the Secretariat to explain how to make use, in practical terms, of the draft Guidance Document, with a view to preparing a NAP, through separate case studies based on Specific Objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) respectively related to OPRC and Prevention.

42 In this respect, the Programme Officer (OPRC) delivered a presentation on an OPRC-related case study with regard to Specific Objectives 19 (To improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of decision-making processes in case of marine pollution incidents through the development and introduction of technical and decision support tools) and 22 (To strengthen the capacity of individual coastal States to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents through development of sub-regional operational agreements and contingency plans) of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

43 The Programme Officer (Prevention) delivered a presentation on a Prevention-related case study with regard to Specific Objectives 7 (Improved follow-up of pollution events as well as monitoring and surveillance of illicit discharges) and 8 (To improve the level of enforcement and the prosecution of discharge offenders) of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

44 Having taken note of the information provided, **the Meeting:**

- .1 **expressed** appreciation for the financial support provided to the activity related to NAPs by the MTF and the IMO's ITCP;
- .2 **welcomed** the draft Guidance Document, which was set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.39/4.
- .3 **was of the opinion** that the draft Guidance Document provided the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a useful tool to assess progress in individual countries and guide them in their implementation efforts of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) in a tailored manner, including the carrying out of a national assessment and the definition of the remedial action that might be deemed necessary.
- .4 **agreed** with the rationale set out in Part I (Background) of the draft Guidance Document and recognised the benefits for Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to adopt a common approach for the preparation of NAPs.
- .5 **also agreed** in principle with the use of the National Assessment Form, as set out in Annex III to the draft Guidance Document, with a view to ensuring that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention may be guided by the same questions when assessing their level of implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and preparing or updating their NAPs.
- .6 **requested** the Secretariat (REMPEC) to prepare a final draft Guidance Document prior to its submission to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be tentatively held in Malta in May 2017, for their review and recommendations, taking into consideration the comments and amendments proposed by the Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5: PRACTICAL SESSION

45 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Programme Officer (OPRC) introduced the practical session aimed at testing the use of the draft Guidance Document, which was set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.39/4. He also presented a work methodology for the preparation of a NAP.

46 The Chairperson then invited all participants to complete the NAPs common template, as circulated during the Meeting by the Secretariat, whilst highlighting the need for each participant to focus on the Specific Objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) respectively related to OPRC and Prevention falling within their respective remits.

47 During this practical session, all participants shared their practical experience on the use of the draft Guidance Document, providing information on the Specific Objective(s) they had focused on.

48 **The Meeting concurred** with the work methodology for the preparation of a NAP, as presented by the Secretariat (REMPEC) during the Meeting.

49 **The Meeting agreed** in principle with the use of the NAPs common template, based on that set out in Annex I to the draft Guidance Document and that circulated during the practical session, with a view to ensuring that the Secretariat (REMPEC) may be in a position to provide the necessary assistance to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in enhancing their national capacities and in facilitating the means for regional and sub-regional cooperation.

50 **The Meeting further acknowledged** that the preparation of a NAP was a complex undertaking requiring the involvement of various stakeholders at the national level.

51 **The Meeting appreciated** the limited time within which the ultimate aim of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) consisting in implementing the whole of the said Strategy by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Secretariat (REMPEC) should be achieved, well before the end of 2021, and the subsequent need for them to start preparing NAPs, with a matter of urgency.

52 **The Meeting encouraged** Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to use the outcome of the assessment of the level of implementation of the original Regional Strategy (2005-2015) as a basis for the preparation of their first NAPs.

53 **The Meeting invited** the Secretariat (REMPEC) to explore the possibility of carrying out pilot projects or activities as soon as possible with a view to assisting Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that so request in preparing or implementing their NAPs.

54 **The Meeting also requested** the Secretariat (REMPEC) to continue to explore the possibility of obtaining further financial assistance for the above-mentioned purposes under the MTF and the IMO's ITCP as well as to mobilise other external resources and means, as appropriate.

AGENDA ITEM 6: OTHER BUSINESS

55 The Chairperson invited the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to deliver the presentation she had mentioned she wanted to make during the round table under Agenda Item 3.

56 The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic provided information on national activities related to Specific Objective 22 (To strengthen the capacity of individual coastal States to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents through development of sub-regional operational agreements and contingency plans) of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and indicated that this should be also construed as her contribution to the practical session.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

57 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Rapporteur read through the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, which had been circulated to all participants, as document REMPEC/WG.39/WP.1, for their consideration, review, amendment and adoption.

58 Following interventions by some delegations to express their views on the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, and after having entrusted the Secretariat to make the necessary editorial amendments, **the Meeting adopted** the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Meeting, as detailed in **Annex IV** to the present report, and **further requested** the Secretariat to report to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC on the outcome of this meeting.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

59 Before closing the Meeting, the Programme Officer (OPRC) explained that, since the activity was co-financed by the IMO's ITCP, all participants were kindly requested to fill-in an evaluation questionnaire that included important information that would assist IMO in determining the success and impact of the activity.

60 Once this was completed, the Chairperson thanked all delegations for their active participation, the Secretariat for the work carried out and the interpreters for their support.

61 The Programme Officer (OPRC) expressed his appreciation to the Chairperson, Cdr. (H.C.G.) Doumanis, for the smooth running of the proceedings. He also thanked Mr Palomares for his valuable contribution to this activity.

62 The Chairperson closed the Meeting at 13:10 hours on Wednesday, 9 November 2016.

ANNEX(E) I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC) / CENTRE RÉGIONAL MÉDITERRANÉEN POUR
L'INTERVENTION D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)**

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

Opening of the Meeting

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. International and regional perspectives on National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021)
3. National perspectives on National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021)
4. Common approach for the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021)
5. Practical session
6. Other business
7. Conclusions and recommendations

Closure of the Meeting

ANNEX III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

WORKING DOCUMENTS

REMPEC/WG.39/1/Rev.1	Provisional agenda
REMPEC/WG.39/1/1	Annotated provisional agenda and draft timetable
REMPEC/WG.39/4	Development of a common template for the preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), including national assessments
REMPEC/WG.39/WP.1	Draft conclusions and recommendations
REMPEC/WG.39/7	Report of the Meeting

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

REMPEC/WG.39/INF.1	List of documents
REMPEC/WG.39/J/1	Provisional list of participants
REMPEC/WG.39/INF.2	List of participants
REMPEC/WG.39/INF.3	Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021)

ANNEX IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Regional Expert Meeting on National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), which met in Barcelona, Spain, from 8 to 9 November 2016:

1 expressed appreciation for the financial support provided to the activity related to National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP);

2 thanked the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), as Secretariat of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), as well as the Consultant specifically contracted for the above-mentioned activity, for their respective contributions to the preparation and organisation of this meeting;

3 took note of the lessons learned and the way forward with regard to the National Action Plans for the implementation of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities ("the LBS Protocol") and its Regional Plans in the framework of the Strategic Action Programme to address Pollution from Land-Based Activities ("SAP MED") to achieve Good Environmental Status for pollution related Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) ecological objectives;

4 noted with interest the proposal from the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to address measures related to marine litter from sea-based sources as well as marine pollution from dumping and offshore activities, as appropriate, in the National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) as these were not fully covered by the National Action Plans for the implementation of the LBS Protocol;

5 recognised that the National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) were linked with the IMO's efforts concerning the definition of IMO instruments compliance gaps, *inter alia* the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), including the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (IIC Code), IMO's plans to assist developing countries with the preparation of national maritime policies focusing on IMO related issues, and, ultimately, to define a plan of action to fill the identified gaps;

6 acknowledged that a substantive number of activities, including projects or initiatives, relevant to the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), were carried out at the national, sub-regional or regional level, and that other activities were foreseen in the near future;

7 recalled that the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) was a high priority, and that it would enable the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to fully implement the said Strategy in a timely and thorough manner;

8 further recalled that a National Action Plan should be well-structured and specific to each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention clearly defining the procedures and required actions that were necessary to implement the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) at the national level with a view to ensuring, or at least facilitating, the attaining of the aims and objectives of the said Strategy with the support of REMPEC;

9 welcomed the draft Guidance Document for the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), including Common Template, List of Examples of National Actions and National Assessment Form, hereinafter referred to as the draft Guidance Document, which was set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.39/4;

10 was of the opinion that the draft Guidance Document provided the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a useful tool to assess progress in individual countries and guide them in their implementation efforts of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) in a tailored manner, including the carrying out of a national assessment and the definition of the remedial action that might be deemed necessary;

11 agreed with the rationale set out in Part I (Background) of the draft Guidance Document and recognised the benefits for Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to adopt a common approach for the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021);

12 concurred with the work methodology for the preparation of a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), as presented by the Secretariat (REMPEC) during the Meeting;

13 agreed in principle with the use of the Common template for the preparation of a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the Common Template, based on that set out in Annex I to the draft Guidance Document and circulated during the practical session, with a view to ensuring that the Secretariat (REMPEC) may be in a position to provide the necessary assistance to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in enhancing their national capacities and in facilitating the means for regional and sub-regional cooperation;

14 also agreed in principle with the use of the National Assessment Form, as set out in Annex III to the draft Guidance Document, with a view to ensuring that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention may be guided by the same questions when assessing their level of implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and preparing or updating their National Action Plans for the implementation of the said Strategy;

15 requested the Secretariat (REMPEC) to prepare a final draft Guidance Document prior to its submission to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be tentatively held in Malta in May 2017, for their review and recommendations, taking into consideration the comments and amendments proposed by the Meeting;

16 further acknowledged that the preparation of a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) was a complex undertaking requiring the involvement of various stakeholders at the national level;

17 appreciated the limited time within which the ultimate aim of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) consisting in implementing the whole of the said Strategy by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Secretariat (REMPEC) should be achieved, well before the end of 2021, and the subsequent need for them to start preparing National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), with a matter of urgency;

18 encouraged Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to use the outcome of the assessment of the level of implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2005-2015) as a basis for the preparation of their first National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021);

19 invited the Secretariat (REMPEC) to explore the possibility of carrying out pilot projects or activities as soon as possible with a view to assisting Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that so request in preparing or implementing their National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021);

20 also requested the Secretariat (REMPEC) to continue to explore the possibility of obtaining further financial assistance for the above-mentioned purposes under the MTF and the IMO's ITCP as well as to mobilise other external resources and means, as appropriate; and

21 further requested the Secretariat to report to the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC on the outcome of this meeting.