



United Nations Environment Programme



UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 314/Inf.5
4 May 2007

ENGLISH



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Seventh Meeting on Reporting under
the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

Istanbul, Turkey, 21-22 May 2007

REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING ON REPORTING UNDER THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/7
19 January 2007

ENGLISH



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Sixth Meeting on Reporting under
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Loutraki, Greece, 7-8 December 2006

**REPORT
OF THE SIXTH MEETING ON REPORTING
UNDER THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS**

Introduction

1. The adoption of a reporting format for the legal component of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and decision to launch a pilot reporting exercise date back to the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties held in Monaco in 2001. Since then, the reporting format has been refined in response to decisions of successive Meetings of the Contracting Parties, discussions at meetings on reporting and experience gained. The sixth Meeting on Reporting, preceded by two preparatory meetings of all MAP components held in June and September 2006, was held at the Club Hotel Loutraki, Loutraki (Greece) on 7 and 8 December 2007.

Participation

2. Representatives of the following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention attended the meeting: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, European Community, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Turkey. Montenegro participated as observer.

3. The MAP Coordinating Unit was represented by Mr Paul Mifsud, MAP Coordinator, Ms Tatjana Hema, MEDU Programme Officer, Mr Fouad Abousamra, MED POL Programme Officer, and Ms Vicky Karagiorgou, Mr, Mohammed Kayyal and Mr Chadley Rais, MAP Consultants. Mr Enrique Villamore, representing CP/RAC, and Mr Atef Ouerghi, representing SPA/RAC, also attended the meeting.

4. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

5. The MAP Coordinator declared the meeting open and welcomed participants. He recalled that the task before the meeting was consideration of a new reporting format which would be submitted for the possible approval of the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties, in 2007. It was no coincidence that the present meeting was being held back to back with a meeting on a draft compliance mechanism for the Barcelona Convention. The two issues were very closely related and compliance would be assessed on the basis of the reporting provided by Parties.

6. An important aspect of the task ahead was harmonization of the new reporting format with the reporting requirements of other multilateral environmental agreements. Parties had highlighted that issue, explaining that they might not have at their disposal sufficient time or human resources to cope with radically different reporting requirements under a variety of instruments. The Coordinator stressed that the reporting process had to be simple, easy to follow and not time-consuming in order to encourage Parties to produce good-quality reporting, or indeed any reporting at all.

Agenda item 2: Election of officers, adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work

7. In accordance with Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Barcelona Convention, the meeting elected Mr Hédi Amamou (Tunisia) as Chair, Mr Louis Vella (Malta), Mr Bruno Blanchy (Monaco) and Ms Reem Abedrabbah (Syrian Arab Republic) as Vice-Chairs and Ms Martina Sorsa (Croatia) as Rapporteur.

8. The meeting adopted the agenda proposed in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/1, which is attached as **Annex II** to the present report.

Agenda item 3: **New reporting format on the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols – approach paper**

9. Introducing the approach paper contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/3, the Secretariat recalled the decision taken by the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Portoroz to develop a new reporting format. According to Article 26, Parties had an obligation to report on measures taken in implementing both the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and the decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties difficulties encountered during their implementation and their effectiveness. Parties were in fact expected to report on implementation of all decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties that had been taken after entry into force of the Convention and those decisions that had been taken before that date providing that reporting on their implementation was mandatory for each one of them. At the preparatory meetings prior to the present meeting, the MAP components had concluded that progress in implementing regional strategies, such as SAP MED, other strategies, should be measured by means of indicators. Given the importance of harmonizing the reporting format with the requirements of reporting under other instruments, the MAP components had looked closely at other multilateral environmental agreements and relevant European Union directives and found that there were some disparities between the approaches. Three possible means of data submission of information on measures taken and their effectiveness were being proposed to the meeting, including an electronic system, which related to the information database being developed by MED POL and the MAP Coordinating Unit with INFO/RAC.

10. The status of implementation of the Convention was very hard to assess and guidance was sought as to how it might be assessed and whether certain Parties had already developed indicators or monitoring mechanisms that might assist the process of assessing the effectiveness.

11. On the basis of the discussions to date, the Secretariat had prepared draft reporting forms for the Barcelona Convention and the Protocols on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity, Dumping, Land-based Sources and Hazardous Waste, for consideration and possible amendment under a later agenda item. The questions asked on the forms did not go beyond the legally binding provisions of the instruments and contained no reference to optional provisions. Guidance was sought from the meeting on the frequency of reporting and whether it was necessary to provide all types of information on a biennial basis. Technical data might be provided annually, via the relevant MAP component, whereas legal, administrative, policy, and practical implementation reporting might be submitted less frequently.

12. The MAP Consultant presented the design of the proposed reporting format for the implementation of Convention for SPA and Biodiversity Protocol and the Dumping, LBS and Hazardous Waste Protocols, as detailed in the approach paper (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/3). He outlined the objectives of the format and the type of questions asked and of answers expected, noting that each question was associated with any challenges faced in implementation. Finally, the implementation measures were classified in five groups to facilitate assessment.

13. In the ensuing discussion, most speakers stressed the need for a reporting format to be user-friendly, and commended the revised format for its simplicity and readability. It was recalled that the principle objective of reporting, in addition to complying with reporting obligations under the Convention and its Protocols, was as a tool to monitor effective compliance, facilitate implementation and build capacity, hence the need for carefully targeted questions to facilitate such processes. One speaker considered that the sheer number of questions, many of which would not provide a gauge of effective implementation and of improvement or otherwise to the state of the environment, called into question the methodology used, which should be re-visited. That view was shared by another speaker,

while a third said that it merited consideration on account of the heavy reporting burden entailed. It was widely felt, however, that the new format, which had been gradually built up and refined over the years in response to wide-ranging discussions in meetings on reporting and experience gained from successive reporting exercises, should be tried and tested, albeit cautiously, before any final judgment on its feasibility should be passed. Reducing the number of questions might hamper full and accurate assessment. Participants were reassured that the request for “yes” and “no” answers in the questionnaire did not preclude the provision of additional comments.

14. The close link between the reporting system and the compliance mechanism was stressed, and it was suggested that the Compliance Committee, within its competence, would be in a good position to assess the effectiveness of implementation under the proposed format. Another suggestion was that the experts in national administrations who had experience of reporting under previous formats would be ideally placed to assess the effectiveness of the new format and its applicability by reporting Parties.

15. There were several specific suggestions for improvement to the format, including the addition of facts and figures on such parameters as population size and land area, quantities of pollutants, location of pollution incidents, names of submitting authorities, deadlines and frequency of submission and the tools to be used for reporting. It was pointed out in response that some of those issues would be covered by reporting under the Protocols. The use of indicators was considered crucial, with one speaker noting the lack of quality indicators.

16. The question of the burden of reporting, “reporting fatigue” and the frequency of reporting and updating prompted a number of comments on three main issues: on-line reporting, harmonization and challenges faced by developing countries.

17. On the first of the issues, several speakers noted that the future no doubt lay in on-line updating of reports, with access to a user-linked database. A continuous internet-based system with, for example, a digital pointer to relevant information available in individual countries might be envisaged in the long term. Attention was drawn to an ongoing European Union initiative to develop a shared environmental information system, comprising individual country databases but in comparable formats, with which MAP and other environmental organizations might possibly be associated in the future. Several speakers urged caution, however, in moving over-hastily into “top gear” before assessing the feasibility of the current system. Moreover, continual updating might hinder the process of assessment. The Secretariat informed the meeting that a database was under development.

18. Harmonizing the MAP reporting system with the systems of other environmental agencies was likewise considered crucial in easing the reporting burden on States, bearing in mind the often different requirements of the various conventions. That again raised the question of focusing the MAP reporting format on specific requirements under the Barcelona Convention, in order to avoid overlap. It was noted that the RACs possessed a mine of technical data, and that better integration, harmonization and accessibility of that information might meet the concerns of those requesting additions to the reporting format as such. Harmonization and further research to identify synergies with other UN organizations, especially with those UN organizations and the EEA already working on various tools to measure effectiveness of implementation of legal measures, as a needed pre-requisite to effective reporting, were also mentioned.

19. Several speakers observed that reporting was a very demanding exercise, particularly for developing countries, and appealed for solidarity and support for those countries in meeting their reporting obligations. Simplification of the reporting format and an extension in the frequency of reporting would be ways of easing the burden on reporting Parties,

developing and developed alike. Another possibility was to identify questions that needed answering more frequently than others.

20. In response to the question about changing the methodology and the focus to be placed on effectiveness, the Secretariat quoted the section of the UNEP Guidelines on the interpretation of "implementation". One of the phases of which was taking measures to meet the obligations under the Convention and its Protocols such as *inter alia* enacting legislation, formulating policies, allocating resources, etc. Interpreting implementation as reporting on the state of the environment was a new concept and not fully justified in terms of Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention. The MAP Consultant added that effectiveness was certainly a goal, but that the reporting format was strictly based on the requirements of the Convention and the Protocols and compliance with those requirements would ultimately lead to effective implementation and improvement in environmental protection. It was argued in response that there was nothing in the Convention to preclude a change of methodology in order to ease the reporting burden and focus on essential benchmarks for assessment.

21. The question of different periodicity of reporting on technical matters and on legal, administrative and other matters was raised, with one speaker noting that reporting on technical aspects was not specifically provided for in the Convention. It was generally agreed that reporting should cover all aspects, but that the periodicity might vary according to the issue. The Secretariat suggested more frequent – for example, annual – reporting on technical aspects and a longer period for other aspects, to be identified among the questions listed.

22. The Coordinator said that it should be borne in mind that, compared with other conventions, the reporting system under the Barcelona Convention was a somewhat late development. The format now before the meeting was the product of many years of debate and work to harmonize the system with other reporting systems, and provided a sound basis for future reporting. The number of questions was dictated by the provisions of the legal instruments themselves. At the same time, Article 26 of the Convention allowed for some flexibility. Further adjustments and improvements could of course be made, depending on the depth of information deemed necessary by the Parties.

23. The MED POL Programme Officer explained that MED POL had already developed a reporting system that was much more than a purely legal and administrative reporting framework. He outlined some of the rounds and types of data collection that MED POL had carried out over the years, relating to, for example, sources of pollution, dumping permits, and information reported in the framework of the Basel Convention. MED POL was aware that it needed to develop systems for reporting on authorizations under the LBS Protocol, and on the dumping of certain types of materials in accordance with existing guidelines. When giving examples of MED POL's work, he drew attention to the assessment of the quality of the marine environment that had been conducted during MED POL Phase II, for which some 60 per cent of Parties had reported monitoring data.

24. MED POL was concerned that 40 per cent of Parties were not participating in the Monitoring Programme. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the situation in the Mediterranean, data were required from all Parties. At the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties, MED POL would be presenting a new monitoring approach based on past experiences and the lessons learned. He called upon Parties to increase their efforts. The Secretariat highlighted the possibility that under the new reporting format Parties might be asked why they were not reporting data to the MED POL. With on-line data submission to MED POL possible as of 2007, the Programme looked forward to being in a position to provide baseline information to help identify trends in pollution. It already periodically worked with the European Environment Agency to produce reports on the status of the marine environment and the main pressures in the region.

25. In response to a question, the MED POL Programme Officer clarified that the current reporting system did not include specific requirements for a Contracting Party to report on its national legislation on Dumping. Nevertheless, every three to five years MED POL held a review meeting at which it considered national reports. At the last meeting, in 2002, the information that had been submitted had given MED POL a good overview of national legislation. MED POL intended holding another review meeting in the near future, which would bring to light any developments in that regard. Although he agreed that information on legislation in individual countries was useful, he said that it was the combined effect of that legislation on the whole Mediterranean that was of concern to MED POL. It was clear that legal and administrative data reporting, on the one hand, and technical data reporting, on the other, were taking place in parallel. It was therefore necessary to forge strong links between the two in order to facilitate assessment of implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. One participant questioned whether the reporting of technical data was an obligation for Parties as it was not referred to explicitly in Article 26 of the Convention.

26. The representative of CP/RAC outlined the work of the Centre that complemented the efforts of MED POL. CP/RAC carried out a biennial review of steps being taken, not to control pollution, but in fact to prevent it. Those measures, which might be related to legislation or planning, included non-compulsory action, such as economic agreements and environmental awareness-raising. Following the comments made by the CP/RAC representative, the Secretariat highlighted the involvement of CP/RAC in the process of development of the new reporting formats. In this respect, the Secretariat clarified that CP/RAC's name was not mentioned by mistake in the Approach Paper that had been previously introduced to the meeting.

27. The representative of SPA/RAC recalled that there were no technical-data reporting requirements under the SPA Protocol. Nevertheless, articles 3, 5 and 15 of the instrument dealt with inventories. A system had therefore been developed for the submission of information on sites and biodiversity on a voluntary basis. Data was also collected on the efficacy of SPA/RAC's assistance to Parties, to enable it to improve its services.

28. One speaker said that the comments made by the representatives of the various MAP components showed that a great deal of information was being collected, but the way forward was to collate it and put it to optimum use.

Agenda item 4: Review of the proposed new reporting format

29. The MAP Consultant introduced document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/4, which contained the proposed new reporting format on the Barcelona Convention. She outlined the differences between the proposed new format and the existing version, the main difference being that the questions were more specific. The aim was to make answering the questions easier for Parties and to obtain information that would better reflect their situations. Parties were not being asked to report on any provisions additional to those in the existing format, with the exception of Article 4, paragraph (d), which related to EIA.

30. The questions had been categorized according to type: legal measures, policy measures, institutional structures, practical implementation measures and the development of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of different articles of the Convention. The questions in the existing format relating to the latter two issues had been optional.

31. Finally, she stressed that significant efforts had been made to harmonize the questions in the new format with the reporting requirements of other relevant Conventions and relevant European Union directives.

32. The Chair also invited the meeting to review the reporting formats for the Dumping, LBS, and Hazardous Waste Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/6) and the SPA and Biological diversity Protocol and related Action Plans (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/5), which were introduced by the MAP Consultants.

General comments on the reporting format for the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

33. By way of general comment on the reporting format for the Convention and the Protocols, one participant, noting the necessary link between the reporting system and the compliance mechanism, expressed the view that the reporting format as it stood did not serve the propose for which it was intended, namely monitoring compliance in terms of determining the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Contracting Parties and the status of implementation. A different approach should be adopted, with three options proposed: (a) the questionnaires should be replaced by a limited set of indicators, drawn up by the Secretariat and selected by the Focal Points and the Contracting Parties at their next meetings, with additional information collected from official sources provided by the Parties; (b) those indicators should be used in conjunction with a reporting questionnaire, but reduced to a more compact form; and (c) the reporting format could be retained as it stood. The latter option would be unacceptable to him.

34. Those views were endorsed by another participant, who reiterated her view that there was no legal obligation under Article 26 of the Convention to report on every article of the Convention. She recalled furthermore the decision of the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties concerning reporting, which referred *inter alia* to an indicator-based approach, expressing concern that the approach currently being followed was not in compliance with that decision.

35. The Secretariat recalled the provisions of Article 26 of the Convention and the obligation for Parties to report on legal administrative and other measure to implement the Convention and its Protocols and their effectiveness. The reporting format, as refined in the course of the discussions, would go a long way towards meeting that requirement. It was true, however, that, it fell somewhat short in terms of monitoring the effectiveness of implementation, and for that reason the Secretariat, if the meeting so wished, was prepared to draw up a proposed limited list of implementation indicators for submission to the next meeting on reporting, to be considered in conjunction with the reporting format. As stated in the approach paper (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.301/3), work on such indicators was already in progress among the MAP components. The meeting agreed to that approach, with one speaker concurring that Article 26 was the prime reference and should be implemented in full.

36. Another general suggestion was that, for reasons of clarity, questions relating to the implementation of decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties be separated from questions relating to implementation of the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols. That way, decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in the future bienniums could be easily incorporated into the format.

37. In the course of the discussions, a number of drafting changes were proposed, in particular to clarify ambiguous, imprecise or subjective wording that apparently had no legal basis or might be open to different interpretations. Some questions should be re-phrased in order to elicit replies expressed in terms of figures, rather than merely in the affirmative or negative. Clarifications were given, and it was further explained that, in certain instances, the wording was that of the article of the Convention or Protocol. In all cases the terms would be checked for accuracy, including legal accuracy, clarity and consistency and would reflect the letter and the spirit of the legal instrument concerned.

38. There were suggestions for certain questions to be merged for reasons of simplification, in particular with regard to national legislative and regulatory provisions. The Secretariat agreed to adjust the format accordingly, where appropriate, observing however that in some instances more detailed questions elicited specific replies that proved more useful for assessment purposes. Some questions might be grouped together according to the type of measures implemented, such as legal, institutional, administrative, technical, monitoring, practical implementation and supporting measures. It was added that identification of specific instances of non-compliance also assisted the Secretariat in preparing work plans for the coming biennium, so that assistance could be provided in identified areas. The format inevitably offered room for improvement; that would emerge, on a trial and error basis, as reporting proceeded. One speaker also suggested that some questions might be put to Parties under separate questionnaires and not be included in this format.

39. Emphasis was placed on the need for further efforts to harmonize the reporting system to the extent possible with other reporting systems, such as the London Dumping Protocol, the Biological Diversity Convention, the Basel Convention and, where appropriate, with European Union directives.

40. In response to a question, it was clarified that the Secretariat intended to integrate the information provided by a Party during the previous round of reporting into the new format to enable that Party simply to update the information as required. Furthermore, all questions referred only to the time period of the relevant biennium.

41. One participant was concerned that the administrative challenges a Party might face could not be sufficiently evoked by the headings of the columns presented under the "Challenges" section. She suggested either adding another column or changing the heading "improved inter-sectoral coordination", which she considered too narrow in scope, to "improved administrative framework". She also requested that the Secretariat provide an annex to the questionnaire in which potential challenges were sorted into categories to assist Parties in deciding which column to tick. The Secretariat informed the meeting that it intended creating a glossary of terms for that purpose.

42. It was suggested that the column headings should mirror the content of Article 26. Challenges, which could alternatively be termed "Difficulties". A participant joined by other speakers suggested that Parties be given space in the format to explain their answers, whether they be in the affirmative or negative. In response, the Secretariat explained that the completed format would be integrated into the web-based system being developed and there might be some limitations as to the amount of information that could be added. Furthermore, the Secretariat's concern was for Parties simply to tick a box to make the reporting process as easy as possible for them. However, the Secretariat will amend it in order to make it possible to Parties to provide their comments.

43. The Secretariat clarified that the Meeting of the Contracting Parties would decide whether the information provided in the questionnaire would be made public once the format and content had been adopted. In the view of the Secretariat and some of the participants, however, it was desirable for the process to be as transparent as possible.

Specific comments on the reporting format for the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

44. In response to queries about how useful the questions relating to Article 3 of the Convention were for assessing implementation, the Secretariat pointed out that, although entering into bilateral or multilateral agreements was optional for a Contracting Party, as denoted by use of the term "may", if it chose to do so it was under an obligation to provide copies of the agreements to the Secretariat, as denoted by the term "shall".

45. It was pointed out that, although a Party might not have ratified any new instruments or concluded any new agreements during the biennium in question, that did not automatically mean that it had encountered any challenges to so doing. Although some participants said they would be happy to give reasons for ratification or lack thereof, several others felt that Parties should not have to explain their actions. It was therefore agreed that the “Challenges” section of the questionnaire would be deleted for the questions relating to Article 3. Furthermore, the Secretariat would prepare for each Party a list of the international instruments and agreements that it had ratified so that, if it had ticked the “yes” box on the form, indicating a new ratification, the Party could simply update the list to reflect the change.

46. During discussion of the reporting format on the LBS Protocol, one speaker said that Articles 6 and 13 were key to the Protocol and that instead of simple “yes” or “no” answers Parties should be required to give statistics to back up their responses. She suggested that a table might be attached to the questionnaire for Parties to fill in, or even that the questions regarding Article 13 might be deleted and included in the questionnaire that dealt with implementation of the Barcelona Convention. In response, the MED POL Programme Officer pointed out that MED POL had a parallel reporting system on authorizations, and duplication of reporting that information was unnecessary – all that was required in the questionnaire was an indicative “yes” or “no” answer.

47. It was clarified that, although the periodicity of reporting mentioned in Article 13 of the LBS Protocol, and therefore in the questions relating that article, was every two years, the same Article provided for the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to decide on another frequency. One speaker requested that a question relating to Article 13 sub-paragraph 2(d) be added to allow for reporting on the implementation of Articles 5, 7 and 15 of the Protocol. Another speaker suggested adding a question on the monitoring of any new toxic substances that were not listed in Annex I of the Protocol.

48. It was also suggested that the questions relating to Article 5 paragraph 4 of the LBS Protocol, referred to measures for the application of BAT and BEP and the use of CP/RAC guidelines in the implementation of those measures be reworked to make them more logical, in order to facilitate the task of the user responding them.

49. During discussion of the reporting format on the Hazardous Wastes Protocol, the Secretariat suggested contacting the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to discuss the possibility of sharing a reporting system on hazardous wastes so that Parties would have to submit information only once for use by both secretariats.

50. It was pointed out that there were very few questions relating to measures to reduce the generation of hazardous wastes and over-emphasis on measures for dealing the waste once it had been generated. Therefore, more emphasis should be made in questions referred to preventing generation. In that respect, the CP/RAC representative recalled that a Regional Plan for reducing hazardous waste had been adopted by a decision of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties. Hence, questions referred to the application of measures listed in that Plan should be included in the reporting format on the Hazardous Wastes Protocol. Other participants argued that, for the same reason, SAP fell within the requirements for reporting too. However, doubt was cast on whether it was worth incorporating the current SAP measures (including the hazardous waste plan) into the questionnaire given that a new SAP with reviewed targets and timetables was in the pipeline. CP/RAC representative clarified that he did not refer to incorporate questions on the application of the reduction targets and timetables of the hazardous waste plan but questions on the actions and measures stated in the document that would improve and make more clear the reporting on measures on hazardous waste reduction by the countries.

51. One participant proposed that statistics be given by Parties as an objective indication of their progress in implementing the provisions of the Hazardous Wastes Protocol, suggesting that such data might be found in the NAPs.

52. In the discussion on the Action Plans under the SPA and Biodiversity Protocol, particular emphasis was placed on the need for the format to be so worded as to elicit precise facts and figures about action taken for the conservation of the monk seal and marine turtles, species nearing extinction.

Agenda item 5: Briefing on the ongoing 2004-2005 reporting exercise

53. The Secretariat recalled that Parties were under an obligation to prepare and submit to the Secretariat, by the end of January 2007, their reports on the 2004-2005 biennium. Parties should be in the process of finalizing those reports, if indeed they had not already been submitted. The Secretariat offered its help to any Party that might be facing difficulties.

Agenda item 6: Discussion and next steps

54. The Secretariat introduced the item, explaining that the proposed new reporting formats would be amended on the basis of the discussions that had taken place during the meeting and the revised version would be sent to all participants for their comments and feedback. It was generally agreed that it was desirable to obtain as much input as possible regarding the new format, and that all MAP and RAC Focal Points might be involved.

55. After a discussion on whether that revised version be submitted to the MAP Focal Points, either as an institutional courtesy or for their expert opinion on the subject, it was agreed that the participants in the present meeting should be responsible for liaising with and incorporating the views of MAP Focal Points into the feedback that they would submit to the Secretariat on the revised format.

Agenda item 7: Adoption of the recommendations

56. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the meeting considered a set of recommendations and conclusions which was approved, as amended, and is attached as **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda item 8: Any other business

57. No matter was brought up under this agenda item.

Agenda item 9: Closure of the meeting

58. After an exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7 p.m. on Friday, 8 December 2006.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Officers, Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work
3. Approach of the proposed new on-line reporting system of MAP
4. Proposal for a new on line reporting format of MAP
5. Briefing on the ongoing 2004-2005 reporting exercise
6. Discussions and next steps
7. Adoption of the recommendations
8. Any other business
9. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX III

Main Conclusions/ Recommendations

The Meeting agrees that Article 26 of the Convention and the specific reporting requirements of the Protocols shall be the main basis for the formulation of the reporting format.

I. General Conclusions

1. Reporting should be a tool for:
 - a) Assessing, in the framework of the compliance mechanism, the level of compliance of each Contracting Party(CPs) with the obligations of the Convention and the Protocols;
 - b) assessing the status of implementation of the Convention and its Protocols at the national and regional level through clear indicators (DPSIR indicators);
 - c) creating information that can be used for the benefit of all CPs to enable them to learn from each other's experience.
2. The periodicity of reporting should be re-assessed and might be different for different types of questions or measures.
3. Where possible, further efforts should be made to ensure harmonization, with other global and regional sea conventions, when appropriate, with the EU Directives.
4. With respect to the description of the measures taken, it will be up to the Party to choose at least one of the three following options:
 - a) summarizing the measures taken;
 - b) informing the Secretariat that the answer has been already incorporated into the database;
 - [c)* indicating where this information can be found by the Secretariat in order to complete the database and use it for assessment purposes (national SoE reports, other official reports submitted to the secretariats of other conventions, website, etc.)]

II. Content of the reporting format

1. The format should include questions on the legal, administrative and other measures taken to implement the following:
 - a) The main provisions of the Convention and the Protocols.
 - b) Guidelines specifically mentioned in the text of the Protocols and adopted by the Meetings of the Contracting Parties.

* to be decided at a later stage

- c) Decisions that have been adopted by the Contracting Parties after the entry into force of the amended Convention. Implementation of the decisions should constitute a separate chapter of the reporting format. The decisions, guidelines and action plans to be adopted in the future by the Meetings of the Contracting Parties should be formulated in such a way as to facilitate reporting on their implementation. All decisions, guidelines and action plans that contain reporting obligations on their implementation should have a corresponding reporting format.
 - d) Action plans regarding conservation and management of endangered species adopted by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.
 - e) Regional and national action plans on the reduction of generation of hazardous wastes.
 - f) Technical data as per requirements of specific articles of all Protocols.
- 2) Effectiveness indicators should be developed and adopted in order to assess the effectiveness of measures taken at the national level, taking in due account the indicators already finalized or being developed by RACs and MED POL in order to avoid any duplication of work.
- 3) A glossary including definitions of the terms used in the reporting format will be prepared.
- 4) The reporting format should also cover the difficulties encountered during implementation, presented in the form of tables, as the proposed draft reporting format.

III. Design of the reporting format

1. The design should allow for:
- a) a variety of answers such as yes, no, in process, not applicable, and not relevant, in order to accommodate the specific situations of Parties;
 - b) inserting comments;
 - c) inserting headings for questions dealing with the same subject at Article level;
 - d) grouping questions, where appropriate, according to the type of measures implemented, such as legal, institutional, administrative, technical, monitoring and practical implementation measures;
 - e) Parties that are not party to specific Protocols to give answers on implementation of similar provisions in the Convention and the Protocols.
2. In designing the reporting format, the possibility of connecting it into an electronic on-line system should be explored and implemented, giving in mind the prospect of creating an environmental information-sharing in the future.
3. Greater efforts must be made to avoid duplication and overlapping of the content of questions in order to reduce their number to the extent possible.