

Decision IG 17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment

The 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties,

Recalling decision V/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity regarding the description and the application of the ecosystem approach,

Recalling paragraph 30(d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encouraging the application of the ecosystem approach by 2010,

Recalling also its decision, adopted at its 14th Meeting held in Portoroz, Slovenia, to follow the initiative of the European Commission relating to a project on the ecosystem approach, with a view to the possible application of the ecosystem approach by the whole MAP system,

Acknowledging with satisfaction the work accomplished in the framework of the joint EC/MAP project on the application of the ecosystem approach,

Noting with appreciation the conclusions and recommendations of the Government-designated Experts' Meeting held in Athens in February 2007,

Decides to progressively apply the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment for the promotion of sustainable development;

Decides to initiate a process, involving scientists and policy makers, and when appropriate, other competent bodies/organizations/authorities, aiming at the gradual application of the ecosystem approach which would include the following steps:

- i) Definition of an ecological Vision for the Mediterranean.
- ii) Setting of common Mediterranean strategic goals.
- iii) Identification of important ecosystem properties and assessment of ecological status and pressures*.
- iv) Development of a set of ecological objectives corresponding to the Vision and strategic goals.
- v) Derivation of operational objectives with indicators and target levels.
- vi) Revision of existing monitoring programmes for ongoing assessment and regular updating of targets.
- vii) Development and review of relevant action plans and programmes;

Agrees, as far as the first step of the process is concerned, on the following ecological vision for the Mediterranean:

“A healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations”;

Agrees, as far as the second step of the process is concerned, on the following strategic goals for marine and coastal areas, on the basis of the relevant priority field of action of the MSSD and the experience gained by other international and regional bodies:

* From this step onwards, it is necessary to consider the appropriate spatial and temporal scale of application of the approach

- a) *To protect, allow recovery and, where practicable, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain good ecological status and allow for their sustainable use.*
- b) *To reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on and risks to human and/or ecosystem health and/or uses of the sea and the coasts.*
- c) *To prevent, reduce and manage the vulnerability of the sea and the coasts to risks induced by human activities and natural events;*

Requests the Secretariat to continue work on the basis of the road map specified above, taking into consideration relevant work undertaken by other regional and international organizations and initiatives and enhancing cooperation with them.