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Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties
(COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially
Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the
Wider Caribbean Region

Roatan, Honduras, 3 June 2019

DECISIONS OF THE MEETING

The Contracting Parties:

Having convened the Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region;

Recalling the adoption by the General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, which reaffirmed the commitment contained in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and **welcoming** target 14.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, calling for the conservation, by 2020, of at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas;

Recognizing the International Coral Reef Initiative Action Plan 2016 which set a basis for the integrated management of marine biodiversity following the International Coral Reef Initiative's General Meeting in Paris, November 2016;

Taking note of the “Status of Activities of the SPA Sub-programme for 2017-2018” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/INF.3)” and “Report of the SPA Regional Activity Centre (SPA-RAC) in Guadeloupe: RAC Operations and Budget for the period 2017-2018 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/INF.4);

Acknowledging the work of the Secretariat and SPA-RAC to address emerging issues such as Sargassum influx, as well as the continued work on conservation of coral reefs, management of invasive species and marine mammals;

Having reviewed the “Recommendations of the Eight Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to the SPA Protocol”, Panama City, Panama, 5-7 December 2018 contained in the Report of the Meeting (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/8);

Having reviewed the “Draft Workplan and Budget of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Sub-programme for the 2019-2020 Biennium” (UNEP (DEPI)/CAR WG.40/5 Rev.1);

Decide to:

1. **Encourage** the governments of the region, which have not yet done so, to become Contracting Parties to the SPA Protocol in particular the Mesoamerican Region.
2. **Approve** the proposed SPA Workplan and budget for 2019-2020 as presented to the meeting, including the amendments proposed by the STAC8; while noting that additional attention is needed for invasive species other than lionfish; as well as illegal traffic of species listed in the protocol and the new coral disease Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) and its spread through the Caribbean (possibly through ballast water); and work with the LBS Protocol and the regional Caribbean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (CMOU) to take measures against ballast water exchange in coastal waters.
3. **Urge** the Secretariat to allocate funds or seek funding sources for the management of protected areas listed as SPA sites.
4. **Recommend** that the STAC consider the inclusion of SCTLD as a subject of discussion and review at the next meeting reflecting the seriousness of this threat to the region's economy, food security and environmental integrity.
5. **Recommend** that the Secretariat undertake a comprehensive review to determine impact of CAMPAM activities thus far. envisaged to evaluate effectiveness and guide future work with a view towards ensuring activities linked to overall SPA Protocol activities/goals.

6. **Urge** Contracting Parties to respond to the requests of the Secretariat and to participate more actively in the Working Groups established by the Parties.
7. Secretariat **work closely** with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) and call on key countries (Trinidad and Tobago, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Canada) to cooperate with the SPAW Protocol and IAC to identify and address the threats to the North-West Atlantic leatherback population.
8. **Adopt** the Recommendations of the Eight Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to the SPAW Protocol as contained in UNEP/(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/6 with the following amendment:
 - i. Consider that according to the decisions of the first Conference of Parties and first Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, the Recommendations of STAC8 regarding the terms of reference (recommendations II.4, III.3, IV.1 and V.1) are to be submitted for the STAC assembly's approval and not to the COP's.
9. **Call upon** all Parties to the SPAW Protocol of the Wider Caribbean region in regards to cetaceans to:
 - i. Comply with the Protocol by implementing national legislation prohibiting the hunting of cetaceans and taking enforcement and conservation measures to aid their protection and recovery;
 - ii. Report the numbers and species of cetaceans taken in hunts or involved in other prohibited activities;
 - iii. Improve collaboration with the Secretariat, Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), other parties and experts to identify research needs and opportunities to collect and share data relating to the distribution and status of cetaceans in the Region;
 - iv. Reinstate the experts working group on marine mammals and charge it with overseeing the assessment of populations of exploited small cetacean species in the Wider Caribbean.
10. **The Secretariat prepare a proposal** for consideration by the COP and IGM on a formal network of data platforms for internalization of Geospatial information relevant to the SPAW Protocol (including the outputs of the State of Habitats report) and consider the trial use of the Caribbean Marine Atlas Phase 2 Geonode as one of such platforms. This information paper should consider issues such as sustainability, financial implications, data sharing and data sensitivities and how such a platform could be formalized for use as a possible regional data base or platform (preliminary information paper: UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/INF.10).
11. The Secretariat and Contracting Parties **continue to** contribute to the process developed by the CLME+ Project to identify a Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism (PPCM) and a Sustainable Financing Plan (SFP) for consolidation of an integrated ocean governance framework in the WCR.
12. **Encourage Parties** to report exemptions in a format in which all relevant information be included. A possibility is the Reporting Format for Exemptions accepted at STAC 7 and emphasize that the Reporting of exemptions is a critical component of the SPAW Protocol which enables Parties to confirm their compliance with the obligations they have taken on as Parties to the SPAW Protocol.

13. **Recommend that** the SPAW Ad Hoc Working group on Sargassum also include members/experts of the LBS protocol; look into potential health risks from heavy metals and liaise with the Atomic Energy Commission and Caricom building synergies with other national and regional groups or initiatives working on this issue that working in this area.
14. The Secretariat **continues** progress towards completing the draft State of Habitat and the 2020-2030 Regional Strategy and Action Plan and Investment Plan, supported by the CLME+ Project, for consideration at COP11 and further relevant action, taking into account the comments and inputs received by Parties and partners during the deliberations at the above Regional Workshop, the recommendations contained in Information Paper UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/INF.7 and other consultations as appropriate.
15. The Secretariat and Contracting Parties **ensure that** efforts are undertaken to communicate on and highlight the relevance of the State of the Habitat Report for supporting sustainable socio-economic development and blue economy efforts in the Wider Caribbean.
16. The Secretariat to **strengthen** and **enhance** cooperation links with international instruments adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) aiming to promote cooperation and integrality with the SPAW Protocol and the Convention in general, as well as with maritime issues affecting marine biodiversity, including among others, the transfer of invasive species and diseases as a result of the discharge of ballast water, physical damage to the coral reefs or threats to marine mammals due to navigation, shipwrecks, pollution and noise from ships and wrecks, among others. (Secretariat and RACs to strengthen cooperation accordingly).
17. **Welcome** offers from Governments to explore with the Secretariat the possibility of hosting the 9th SPAW STAC Meeting in 2020.