Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region

Roatan, Honduras, 5-6 June 2019

DECISIONS OF THE MEETING
DECISIONS OF THE 18TH IGM

The Meeting:

Having convened the Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region;

Taking into account the Report of the Executive Director of the Cartagena Convention on the Implementation of the Caribbean Environment Programme (2017-2018) as presented in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/INF.4;

Welcoming the Decisions of the Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Roatan, Honduras, 3 June 2019 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/6);

Also Welcoming the Decisions of the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region, Roatan, Honduras, 4 June 2019 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/3);

Noting the Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, in Panama City, Panama, 18-20 July 2018 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.39/4;

Further Noting the Recommendations of the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Panama City, Panama, 5-7 December 2018 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/7); and

Having Reviewed the Report of the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee of Regional Activity Centre/Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Training, and Information Centre – Caribbean (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe) Steering Committee, Curaçao, 5-7 June 2018 as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/4 and the Recommendations of that 9th Meeting;

Decides:
DECISION I
WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

Having reviewed the draft Workplan and Budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2019-2020 contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/3;

Taking note of the status of voluntary contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) by the States and Territories of the Wider Caribbean Region for 2017-2018;

Having examined the budgetary needs of the Caribbean Environment Programme to implement its proposed Workplan for 2019-2020;

Noting with concern the severe impact that continued non-payment of annual contributions and arrears will have on the viability of the Secretariat, its ability to meet operational costs, and to implement the 2019-2020 Workplan;

Decides to:

1. Approve the Workplan and Budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2019-2020 taking into account comments and modifications made during the meeting.

2. Urge the Secretariat to continue to identify partnership opportunities to enable the most effective implementation of the 2019-2020 Workplan.

3. Request the Secretariat to continue its efforts to strengthen collaboration with regional agencies and relevant Convention Secretariats to enable more effective implementation of the Caribbean Environment Programme workplan.

4. Encourage greater involvement and participation of the Bureau, Monitoring Committee and Focal Points in the development and implementation of the work programme of the Caribbean Environment Programme including participation at meetings of the Secretariat.

5. Further Encourage Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to provide to the Secretariat existing knowledge management products and materials that may assist the Secretariat in the implementation of its proposed activities.
DEcision ii
financial arrangement

Noting with concern the critical financial situation of the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) that jeopardizes the sustainability of the Secretariat;

Recognizing that the effective implementation of the 2019-2020 workplan will depend on the Secretariat being able to meet, at a minimum, its ongoing operational costs;

Noting the additional financial commitments for the Secretariat associated with the UN Reform process, including a deduction of 1% of all funds received by the CTF and shared non-recurrent cost for the establishment of UN House; and

Acknowledging with thanks the commitments by Contracting and Non-Contracting Parties to contribute in a timely manner to the Caribbean Trust Fund including making arrangements with the Secretariat to honor outstanding pledges;

Decides to:

1. Encourage Contracting Parties to make their annual contributions as early as possible in the financial year to enable adequate planning and budgeting by the Secretariat.

2. Request the Secretariat to work with each Contracting Party with arrears to the CTF to agree on individual debt payment plans based on the ability of each country to meet their obligations.

3. Request that the Executive Director of UN Environment, make the necessary provisions to extend the Caribbean Trust Fund until the next Conference of Parties of the Cartagena Convention.
DECISION III
OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Welcoming the adoption of the State of Convention Area Report as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/INF.3 by the Fourth Conference of Parties to the Protocol on Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS COP4);

Acknowledging the importance of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment in providing technical guidance and oversight for the development and completion of this report;

Noting the several recommendations of the SOCAR relating to its dissemination as well as other guidance for the further implementation of pollution-related activities;

Further noting that Recommendation 8 of the LBS COP4 held 4 June 2019, Roatan, Honduras requests the formal establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) by the Conference of Parties to the Cartagena Convention and the value of its continued work to the Secretariat; and

Thanking the outgoing chair of the Interim Working Group from the Government of USA for the support and leadership and all members of the Working Group for technical support during the SOCAR development process;

Decides to:

1. Establish an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for Monitoring and Assessment to support the work of the LBS Protocol including the finalization of SOCAR for formal dissemination.

2. Invite all Contracting Parties who have an interest in participating in the OEWG to indicate that in writing to the Secretariat no later than 15 September 2019.

3. Requests that the OEWG, once convened, develop a new Terms of Reference for the and elects a new Chair.

4. Further requests that the OEWG work virtually while encouraging the Secretariat to mobilize additional financial sources to enable face to face meetings, as appropriate.

5. Also requests that the OEWG establish other Sub-Groups, as appropriate, in order to provide technical guidance for the work of the Secretariat including on areas of concern raised during the meetings of the LBS STAC, LBS COP and meetings of Contracting Parties to the Convention.

6. Requests that the OEWG provide a report of its work to the Fifth LBS STAC and as appropriate, to the Fifth LBS COP and Sixteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention.
DECISION IV
CEP STRATEGY

Recognizing that the Caribbean Action Plan developed in 1983 and the associated strategy adopted in 1990 do not reflect many of the current regional and global issues and priorities;

Acknowledging the importance of having an updated strategy for the Caribbean Environment Programme that will serve to guide the future work of the Secretariat and enable greater integration of the sub-programmes;

Noting that several thematic strategies and action plans already exist and/or are under development by the Secretariat;

Further noting that the updated strategy would provide the overall framework for the further implementation of regional strategies and action plans and enable the Secretariat to respond to new and emerging issues as well as take advantage of new funding opportunities;

Welcoming the presentation by the Secretariat of the draft Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) as contained in Document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/5;

Further welcoming the presentation by UN Environment on the development of a “Regional Strategy for Ocean-Based Economies in the Wider Caribbean Region” UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/INF.12;

Noting that at the global, regional, and national levels, there are various interpretations/definitions of the term “blue economy”;

Recognizing that the work of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat is contributing to the sustainable development of coastal and marine resources in an integrated manner and is directly related to the concepts of “blue economy” or “ocean-based economies”;

Noting that ocean-based economies are one of the proposed strategic objectives of the draft CEP Strategy;

Decides to:

1. Endorse the efforts by the Secretariat to develop the new CEP Strategy.

2. Requests Contracting Parties to conduct a further review and analysis of the draft Strategy and provide written comments to the Secretariat no later than 15 December 2019.

3. Requests that the Secretariat circulate an abbreviated version of the revised CEP strategy to all the Contracting and non-Contracting Parties by 15 July 2019 to assist in this review process

4. Also Requests the Secretariat, to provide a revised draft of the CEP Strategy for intersessional endorsement no later than 15 February 2020.

5. Further Requests the Secretariat to take action on the following key issues: ocean acidification, sargassum, the new coral disease Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), and invasive species, and consider how these issues can be incorporated in the new CEP Strategy.
6. **Encourage** the Secretariat to work with other regional agencies and Contracting Parties to gain a better understanding of ongoing blue economy initiatives in the Wider Caribbean Region.

7. **Request that** the Secretariat prepare an information paper based on its findings to be presented at the next Conference of Parties.
DECISION V
DECISIONS OF THE COPs

Having reviewed the Reports, Recommendations and Decisions of the Meetings convened under the Caribbean Environment Programme since the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting;

Noting the Decisions of the Fourth LBS COP (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/3) and Tenth SPAW COP (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/3);

Further noting the need for collaboration between the AMEP and SPAW sub-programmes and the Regional Activity Centres in responding to recommendations and decisions of the Meetings;

Welcoming the opportunity to have Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention who are not Parties to specific Protocols being able to attend those COP meetings as observers;

Decides to:

1. **Endorse** the Decisions of the Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP10) to the SPAW Protocol held in Roatan, Honduras, 3 June 2019 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/3.

2. **Also Endorse** the Decisions of the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP4) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held in Roatan, Honduras, 4 June 2019 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CARIG.41/3.

3. **Encourages** the Secretariat to continue in its efforts to have further integration of the two sub-programmes through joint STACs, COPs and/or full representation of all Contracting Parties at meetings of the Protocols.
DECISION VI
RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe

Having reviewed the Report of the Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee for the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, held in Willemstad, Curaçao, 5-7 June 2018 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG 42/INF.12);

Having examined the Long-Term Strategic Plan for 2015-2025 of the Regional Activity Centre, REMPEITC-Caribe (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/10);

Acknowledging the initiatives to create a regional notification system for oil spills which will improve communications and provide countries with forecasted trajectories;

Welcoming the efforts of the Global Oil and Gas Industry Association for Environmental and Social Issues (IPIECA) to provide a consultant seconded to RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe;

Recognizing with gratitude the continuous contribution of the Governments of Curaçao (Kingdom of the Netherlands), the United States and Jamaica to the operational support of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe; as well as the continuous funding support from many nations through the International Maritime Organization that enables RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe to conduct activities throughout the Region;

Noting the change in risk profile of maritime conditions and emerging issues relating to maritime transportation;

Noting the presentation on the development of Caribbean Marine Environment Protection Association (CARIBMEPA) and proposed collaboration with the Secretariat towards supporting the protection of the Caribbean marine environment;

Considering the Decision 2 of the SPAW COP10 to 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;

Decides to:

1. Endorse the Recommendations of the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee.
2. Encourage the sharing of expertise with Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention and the continued focus by the Centre on more practical regional response measures and training in this area.
3. Urge the Centre to disseminate information on their capabilities to countries in the Wider Caribbean Region.
4. Requests the Secretariat and RAC/REMPEITC to explore potential partnership opportunities with the Caribbean Marine Environment Protection Association (CARIBMEPA).
5. Also Requests the Secretariat to explore with RAC-REMPEITC how Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) and other potential ballast water borne invasive species or diseases may be addressed through the regional maritime sector and ballast water regulations.
DECISION VII
CARTAGENA REPORTING TEMPLATE

Having reviewed the progress of the Caribbean Environment Programme during 2017-2018;

Recognizing the need for the continuing development and implementation of the Caribbean Environment Programme for the 2019-2020 biennium and beyond;

Welcoming the progress made by several Parties towards ratification of the LBS and SPAW Protocols;

Noting the importance of the Cartagena Convention Reports as a tool for monitoring progress in implementing the obligations of the Cartagena Convention by Contracting Parties;

Acknowledging the efforts taken by countries to submit biennial reports to the Fifteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention and the increased number of countries providing such reports;

Recognizing that the reporting template should be kept under periodic review by the Secretariat including requesting governments to provide additional information as part of their reporting obligations under the Convention;

Decides to:

1. Encourage other governments in the Wider Caribbean Region to ratify the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

2. Encourage governments to inform the Secretariat of the status and impacts of the implementation of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and of its Protocols through the approved reporting template for the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

3. Encourage all Contracting Parties who have not yet submitted national reports to do so no later than 30 June 2019 and request the Secretariat to make all such reports available through the UN Environment CEP website.

4. Also Encourage the Secretariat, dependent on available resources, to develop a system that would enable online reporting and electronic submission of reports.

5. Request the Secretariat to amend the reporting template to include relevant parameters of the SOCAR.
DECISION VIII
STATE OF THE CONVENTION AREA REPORT

Acknowledging the achievements of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment established by Decision XII of the Fourteenth IGM and noting the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment for the 2019-2020 biennium as per Decision III of this meeting;

Having reviewed the Draft State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) for the Wider Caribbean Region as contained in UNEP(DEPI)CAR IG.41/INF.3;

Noting the progress made in the development of the State of Habitats Report for the Wider Caribbean Region as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/INF.3; and

Further noting the development of regional strategies under the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution and Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife sub-programme as contained in the Draft Regional Nutrients Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for the UNDP/GEF Caribbean and North Brazil Large Marine Ecosystems Project UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/INF.8 and the Strategic Plan for Marine Litter Management in the Wider Caribbean Region UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/INF.7;

Decides to:

2. Support the integration of the SOCAR and State of Habitat reports with State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE) report.
3. Request that the Secretariat continue to collaborate and coordinate with the Contracting Parties, the CLME+ Project Coordination Unit and members of the SAP Interim Coordination Mechanism to institutionalize, in alignment with the Convention’s geographic and thematic mandate, its long-term role in the collaborative integrated SOMEE reporting effort including visualization and dissemination, pursuing alignment and synergies between the SOCAR-Land-based Sources and State of Marine Habitats reports and the SOMEE approach, and incorporating such a support role to the SOMEE development process as part of the Secretariat’s 2019-2020 work programme and beyond.
DECISION IX
PERMANENT POLICY COORDINATION MECHANISM (PPCM)

Welcoming the presentation of the CLME+ PCU on the Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism;

Noting the alignment between the vision of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme and the Caribbean Environment Protection (CEP) Strategy as contained in the document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.42/5;

Recognising the potential for support for the work of the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention through the Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism (PPCM);

Decides to:

1. **Encourage** Contracting Parties to engage in national consultations on the Coordination Mechanism and the development of a Sustainable Financing Plan for Ocean Governance in preparation for the Regional Consultation Meeting scheduled for 30 July to 1 August 2019 in Panama, and for the last CLME+ Project Steering Committee Meeting planned for the first semester of 2020.

2. **Request** that the Secretariat continue to participate, *inter alia* through virtual discussions involving the Bureau, Monitoring Committee and/or all Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention, in the process towards the establishment of the Coordination Mechanism and the development of a Sustainable Financing Plan for Ocean Governance.

3. **Request** that the Secretariat undertake further investigations with the CLME+ Project Coordination Unit and members of the SAP Interim Coordination Mechanism, regarding the possibility of the Secretariat hosting the Coordination Mechanism including an analysis of all financial and legal implications and note that no final commitment will be made without the endorsement of the Contracting Parties.

4. **Encourage** the Contracting Parties to support the efforts to leverage additional donor funds to give continuity to the outcomes and the outputs of the CLME+ Project and to the further implementation of the CLME+ SAP, and that the Secretariat, as per their mandate, be engaged in the development and implementation of such projects and initiatives.
DECISION X
OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Welcoming The Ocean Foundation’s “International Ocean Acidification Initiative” to address ocean acidification as a regional topic of common concern as acknowledged by the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife;

Noting the Recommendation VIII of the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region to collaborate with The Ocean Foundation;

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Target 3 of SDG 14 which aims to “minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels”;

Decides to:

1. Request the Secretariat to work with The Ocean Foundation including through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that facilitates collaboration on addressing ocean acidification and related issues within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). This may include the development and implementation of joint strategies and pilot projects.