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

Virtual, 28–30 July 2021

## DECISIONS OF THE MEETING

*For reasons of public health and safety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting is being convened virtually. Delegates are kindly requested to access all meeting documents electronically.*



## DECISIONS OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION

**The Contracting Parties** to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

**Taking into account** the Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on the Implementation of the 2019-2020 Workplan and Budget of the Caribbean Environment Programme as presented in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.45/INF.4;

**Welcoming** the Decisions of the Fifth Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held virtually on 26 July 2021 (UNEP(DEPI) CAR IG.43/3);

**Also welcoming** the Decisions of the Eleventh Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held virtually on 27 July 2021 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.44/3);

**Noting** the Recommendations of the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, held virtually from 15–17 March 2021, as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/5; and

**Also noting** the Recommendations of the Ninth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region, held virtually from 17–19 March 2021 and 14-15 April 2021, as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/8;

Adopt the decisions as per below.

## DECISION I WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention:

**Having reviewed** the draft Work Plan and Budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2021-2022 contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.45/3;

**Taking note** of the status of contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) by the States and Territories of the Wider Caribbean Region for 2019-2020;

**Having examined** the budgetary needs of the Caribbean Environment Programme to implement its proposed Workplan for 2021-2022;

**Noting with concern** the severe impact that continued non-payment of annual contributions and outstanding contributions will have on the viability of the Secretariat, its ability to meet operational costs, and to implement the 2021-2022 Workplan;

**Considering** the need for the Secretariat to adopt realistic workplans and budgets that prioritize effective, direct implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, as the status of activities from the 2019-2020 workplan and the proposed workplan for 2021-2022 highlight the need for immediate action to improve the financial sustainability of the Caribbean Trust Fund; and

**Taking note** of Clause 24 on administration of Amendment 1 dated 13 December 2014 to the Financial Rules for the Convention;

1. **Approves** the Workplan and Budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2021-2022, as attached.
2. **Welcomes the** efforts by the Secretariat to produce more Knowledge Management Products in French and Spanish and **requests** the Secretariat to continue to expand these efforts as reflected in the 2021-2022 Communications Workplan and within available resources.
3. **Requests** the Secretariat, with the support of the Contracting Parties, to mobilize financial resources for implementing the as of yet unfunded activities within the 2021-2022 workplan.
4. **Urges** the Secretariat to continue to identify new partnership opportunities to enable the most effective implementation of the 2021-2022 workplan of the Cartagena Convention, while ensuring synergy, harmonization of efforts, and optimization in the use of resources.
5. **Encourages** greater involvement and participation of all Contracting Parties in the implementation of the 2021-2022 workplan.
6. **Requests** the Secretariat, in close collaboration with Contracting Parties, to enhance synergies with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Regional Seas Programme conventions and action plans, and the international global agenda as appropriate, by collaborating on topics of interest to the Wider Caribbean Region without prejudice to their specific objectives and recognizing their respective mandates.
7. **Notes** the urgent call for marine and coastal issues to be duly included and incorporated into the new post-2020 global framework for biodiversity, which is currently being negotiated.

8. **Urges** Contracting Parties to participate, as appropriate, in discussions on the development and implementation of strategies of interest to the Caribbean Sea in other international settings to ensure that the States of the Wider Caribbean Region have a vocal participation in these processes.

## DECISION II FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

### The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:

**Noting with concern** the financial situation of the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) which threatens the sustainability of the Secretariat;

**Recognizing** that the effective implementation of the 2021-2022 workplan is dependent 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 the Umoja maintenance fees and the non-recurrent cost associated with the renovation and establishment of the UN House in Jamaica;

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

**Further acknowledging** the importance of the need for the Secretariat and UNEP to provide efficient and effective services to the Contracting Parties of the Convention;

**Recognizing** that the strategic action points in the Strategic and Functional Review provide a valuable tool for improving the overall functioning of the Secretariat and the financial sustainability of the Trust Fund; and

**Taking note** of Clause 24 on administration of Amendment 1 dated 13 December 2014 to the Financial Rules for the Convention;

1. **Recognizes** the urgent need to strengthen and stabilize the financial situation of the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) and **encourage** Contracting Parties, including through high-level political engagement, to make their annual contributions as early as possible in the financial year to enable adequate planning and budgeting by the Secretariat.
2. **Requests** the Secretariat to invoke Clause 24 on Administration of Amendment 1 dated 13 December 2014 to the "Financial Rules for the Convention" and work with Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to the CTF to agree on individual debt-payment plans.
3. **Requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to make the necessary provisions to extend the Caribbean Trust Fund until the next meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Cartagena Convention.
4. **Endorses** strategic action point 9 from the Strategic and Functional Review and **urges** Contracting Parties to support junior professional officers or other professional secondments to the Secretariat, in line with the UN policies, rules and procedures, as a supplementary resource to the existing capacity of the Secretariat.
5. **Proposes** that in light of the difficult financial realities of the Secretariat and the current lack of available funding for the next group of Intergovernmental Meetings, that these meetings should be convened virtually during the next biennium, with the aim of reconvening physical meetings in the subsequent biennium. Contracting Parties further recognize the importance of convening in person meetings, in particular for the decision-making fora of the COPs, and **further requests** that if the financial situation of the Secretariat improves sufficiently during the biennium through improved contributions by Contracting Parties to the

Caribbean Trust Fund and/or through extraordinary contributions for the convening of the meetings, that in person meetings of the COPs should be made a priority.

## DECISION III GOVERNANCE

### The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:

**Acknowledging** that Parties' views and stances should be dealt with in a balanced and equitable manner;

**Noting** the call by Contracting Parties for more transparency and accountability by the Secretariat; and

**Further acknowledging** the request of Contracting Parties to the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention and its three (3) Protocols to ensure that the governance arrangement is clear to all Contracting Parties;

1. **Encourages** the Secretariat to keep Contracting Parties informed of all memoranda of understanding (MOUs) processes and negotiations.
2. **Recommends** that UNEP provide further analysis and substantive input to the Contracting Parties on strategic actions of the review related to the financial sustainability of the Secretariat and financial reform.
3. **Notes the need for** stricter adherence to the Rules of Procedure for all meetings of the Cartagena Convention and its protocols.
4. **Requests** that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the four (4) Regional Activity Centers (RACs), UNEP HQ and members of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs), conduct a detailed review and analysis of the architecture of the general operations and funding source, and the organization with the Secretariat of the RACs and RANs including reviewing the current guidelines and associated decisions and host agreements for the RACs.
5. **Requests** that UNEP, through the Secretariat, provide an analysis on how they see the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and other Divisions supporting the work of the Secretariat.
6. **Requests** that the Bureau, in addition to preparing for the 20<sup>th</sup> IGM/17<sup>th</sup> COP to monitor the implementation of the work programme, report to Contracting Parties halfway through the biennium.
7. **Decides to** move forward with the organizational restructuring to align it to the workplan especially the new Secretariat staffing pattern and reclassification of posts, which is already reflected in the 2021-2022 Workplan and Budget, attached.



## DECISION IV CEP STRATEGY

### The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:

**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 updated draft Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) as contained in Document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.22/Rev.1; and

**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” and that the most appropriate path towards a Blue Economy is full implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

1. **Requests** that the Secretariat compile all comments received on the CEP Strategy to date and establish a working group to review and consider how best to incorporate these comments into the current draft, with a view to having formal adoption take place intersessionally no later than December 2021.
2. **Urges** the Secretariat to ensure that the finalization of the CEP Strategy is informed by the decisions of the 19<sup>th</sup> IGM and 16<sup>th</sup> COP.
3. **Encourages** the Secretariat to formulate the work that needs to be done under the Convention as essential to support and arrive at sustainable blue economies, but not to take on additional work streams, create working groups and utilize additional resources.

**DECISION V**  
**DECISIONS OF THE COPs**

**The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:**

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

**Noting** the Decisions of the Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP5) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) in the Wider Caribbean Region (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.41/3) and Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region (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; and

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

1. **Endorses** the Decisions of the Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP5) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held virtually on 26 July 2021 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.43/3.
2. **Endorses** the Decisions of the Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP11) to the SPAW Protocol held virtually on 27 July 2021 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.44/3.
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**

**The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:**

**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 risk of oil spills and other contaminants in the Convention area from maritime activities and other pollution sources and the need to monitor for response and mitigation; and

**Welcoming** the presentation made by NOAA on their efforts to support Trinidad and Tobago's Creation of a pilot Satellite Oil Spill Monitoring Programme;

1. **Urges** the Secretariat to continue to enhance the promotion of the work of the Centre and disseminate information on their activities and capabilities to Contracting Parties in the Wider Caribbean Region.
2. **Recommends** that the Secretariat strengthen collaboration in the region on oil spill monitoring.
3. **Requests** the Secretariat, RACs and other partner agencies to actively explore opportunities for replicating and upscaling training for detection of oil spills using satellite remote sensing technology as well as for other emerging pollutants.
4. **Encourages** those Contracting Parties in a position to do so, to commit human or financial resources to support the operations of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe.

## DECISION VII COORDINATION MECHANISM

### **The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:**

**Noting** the alignment between the vision of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme and the work of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat;

**Acknowledging** the significant support received through Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters Projects such as the Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWEco), Testing a Prototype Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW), An integrated approach to water and wastewater management in the Wider Caribbean Region using innovative solutions and sustainable financing mechanisms (CReW+), Shared Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) for the work of the Secretariat and the recent approval by the GEF of the Project Information Form (PIF) for the project on Protecting and Restoring the Ocean's natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue Socio-Economic development (PROCARIBE+), as a follow up to CLME+ to enhance ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region; and

**Recognising** the support for the work of the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention through the Coordination Mechanism;

1. **Requests** that the Secretariat continue to participate in the PROCARIBE+ project development process with a view to possible involvement as a partner executing agency for project activities that build on activities implemented under the previous CLME and CLME+ projects, dependent on available resources, and keep the Contracting Parties informed.
2. **Acknowledges** the Secretariat as an essential partner in the Coordination Mechanism, and encourage their participation in the Coordination Mechanism, once established, thus promoting collaboration and synergies in ocean governance in the region.

## DECISION VIII INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

### The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:

**Recognizing** the urgent need to strengthen and stabilize the financial situation of the Cartagena Convention Trust Fund;

**Noting** the recommendations from the Strategic and Functional Review of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, conducted during the first half of 2021, to "assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Secretariat in terms of organizational structure and function and the adequacy and sustainability of the financing of Secretariat operations to meet the needs of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention";

**Acknowledging** the importance of efficient and effective services to the Contracting Parties of the Convention by the Secretariat and UNEP;

**Intent** on increasing transparency and accountability of the operations of the Secretariat; and

**Acknowledging** that Parties' views and positions should be considered and implemented in a balanced and equitable manner;

1. **Decides** on a revised staffing structure of the Secretariat, to fit within the available financial resources and ensure operational efficiency, by reclassifying three posts, under the Caribbean Trust Fund of the Coordinator from D1 to P5, that of G6 Finance and Budget Assistant to G6 Administrative Assistant and that of G2 Driver to G3 Driver Team Assistant.
2. **Requests** the Coordinator as a matter of priority, and in close consultation with UNEP HQ, to put in place the new organizational structure of the secretariat, ensuring that responsibilities, delegation of authority, reporting lines and accountability of each position on the organization chart are clear and coherent.
3. **Requests** that the Coordinator, in close consultation with UNEP and UNON Human Resources, ensure that the competencies and skillsets in job descriptions of staff are up-to-date and that training needs of staff are identified and rationalized.
4. **Requests** that the work of the Bureau be guided by established terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Convention and that its work be conducted transparently and inclusively. The terms of reference of the Bureau and Steering Committee Meetings of the Oil Spills Protocol should be shared with all Contracting Parties no later than two (2) weeks after the meeting, thus increasing Parties' opportunity to engage in its work through the members of the Bureau. The Coordinator should be supported by secretariat staff in the servicing of the Bureau meetings.
5. **Requests** that the Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP headquarters, continues to engage with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to ensure involvement of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in more marine projects that support implementation of the Convention and protocols and that Parties through the Bureau or at COP meetings be informed of progress.
6. **Requests** that the Secretariat present a resource mobilisation strategy to the next Conference of the Parties that would build on UNEP's Resource Mobilisation Strategy and the action points of the Strategic and Functional Review, including increasing coordination and communication with Contracting Parties that have arrears and contributions of Contracting Parties in the form of secondment of Junior Professional Officers/Associate Experts.

**DECISION IX**  
**CARTAGENA REPORTING TEMPLATE**

**The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention:**

**Having reviewed** the progress of the Caribbean Environment Programme during 2019-2020;

**Recognizing** the need for the continuing development and implementation of the Caribbean Environment Programme for the 2021-2022 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 Contracting Parties to submit biennial reports to the Sixteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention; and

**Further** welcoming efforts by the Secretariat to update the reporting template and provide in an online format that will enable easier reporting by Contracting Parties;

1. **Strongly urges** Governments in the Wider Caribbean Region to ratify the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
2. **Encourages** all Contracting Parties to submit future biennial reports in a timely manner through the online reporting platform or by e-mail.
3. **Also encourages** the Secretariat, dependent on available resources, to improve the reporting template's online format taking into account formats used by other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Regional Seas Convention Secretariats and Action Plans.