



Mediterranean Action Plan
Barcelona Convention



United Nations
Environment Programme

**Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, First meeting
Nairobi, 29–31 May 2018**

Item 5: National, regional and international response options, including action and innovative approaches, and voluntary and legally binding governance strategies and approaches.

Statement by Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

The purpose of my intervention is to provide some highlights on the importance of the regional dimension and the need to continue supporting the Regional Seas work on marine litter. At the regional level, relevant legal and policy instruments are already in place in most of the regions, and past experience has demonstrated the added value of regional frameworks in supporting the development and implementation of well-coordinated national actions. Global action is essential to trigger concrete and coordinated actions at all levels and across relevant sectors, for instance addressing global production and trade of plastics. The work done by the GPA in this sense is very beneficial and provides the important platform for us at the regional sea level for action that translates into impact.

The UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention has adopted the legally-binding Regional Plan for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. It contains a set of measures to combat marine litter from different sources addressing also prevention of marine litter, with timetables for implementation. It includes innovative and traditional measures of a policy, regulatory (including incentive economic instruments) and technical nature, addressing marine litter prevention and management from land and sea based sources. It contains clear obligations regarding the waste management hierarchy, closure of illegal dumping/dumpsites, shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns, removal of existing marine litter using environmental sound practices such as fishing for litter, clean up campaigns, port reception facilities at possibly no special fees, and monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of measures as well as enforcement of national legislation. The prevention actions of Mediterranean Regional Plan are complemented by the suggested actions of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean.

In the Mediterranean, we have supported the integration of marine litter and microplastics management into the national plans and strategies with clear targets, measures and indicators. National Action Plans adopted in the framework of the Land Based Sources



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and Activities Protocol of the Barcelona Convention and in line with obligations of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, were updated in 2016. We are now providing support to a number of measures envisaged in the updated NAPs.

Best practices and lessons learned on marine litter management among Regional Seas are exchanged (case of European Regional Seas since 2015, thanks to bridge countries and others).

Inter sectorial coordination is key to define the best measures to combat marine litter and ensure effective implementation, to strengthen synergies and to maximize results. The implementation of the Regional Plan requires to foster national and regional cooperation among the major actor/players in the field, to harmonize common efforts and to maximize results. UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan has brought together major actors from the region (academia, policy-making, industry, fisheries, research institutions, and NGOs) in combating marine litter and its adverse effects, and has established the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter. This is an open-ended group of regional and international partners with mandates and activities contributing to the environmentally sound management of marine litter in the Mediterranean, acting as a forum for consultation, exchange of good practices, and solutions seeking. The GPA is providing support in turning this Platform into one of the regional nodes on Marine Litter.

Considering the different levels of action, there is a need to further streamline relevant global and regional processes aiming at the same objectives, and strengthen the links between actions at global, regional and national levels in view of maximizing synergies. The established collaboration between the Regional Seas Conventions of G7 countries, aiming at mainstreaming the work on marine litter of the Regional Sea Programmes and other regional organizations (i.e. fisheries) and the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter is a good example. This practice can be replicated in the framework of other processes and initiatives, e.g. the G20 for the implementation of the G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter, and the GPA Manila Declaration. Another good example is the cooperation established between UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention and Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and their Regional Centres to promote best practices with regards to marine litter management.

Further action is required towards long-term marine litter prevention strategies and measures, especially regarding marine plastic litter and microplastics aiming at promoting value chain approach and building circularity into production process and supply chain. In this regard, strengthening the support to eco-innovation, facilitating the creation of new



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green businesses are key aspect to develop tailor-made solutions that could be scaled-up nationally, regionally or globally.

Education and awareness raising campaigns at all levels and strengthened partnership with the private sector should be regarded as enabling conditions.

In conclusion, strengthened regional responses, supported by global political processes and voluntary global initiatives, guidelines, standards and tools, have a strong potential of catalyzing actions at the national level.