

STATEMENT of MINISTERS
at the first Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for
the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea

25 May, 2007
Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan

The Ministers of Ecology, Environment and Natural Resources and High-level Officials of the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, done at the city of Tehran on the fourth day of November 2003, (hereinafter referred as the Tehran Convention):

Conscious of the major challenges to the marine environment of the Caspian Sea, including depletion of biological resources, erosion of biodiversity, marine pollution and unsustainable use of coastal areas;

Acknowledging the high potential of international environmental cooperation in the Caspian Sea region, for sustainable development and use of natural resources, including biological diversity, hydrocarbon reserves, and for sustainable transportation and eco-tourism;

Further acknowledging the contribution of the Caspian Environment Programme and the support by the international community and the Caspian States to the development of the Tehran Convention;

Determined to further intensify the regional dialogue and partnership towards safeguarding the marine environment of the Caspian Sea and sustainable use of its natural wealth for the benefit of present and future generations;

Recognising the key role of the Tehran Convention in defining, an international legal framework for the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea and in sustainable utilization of its natural wealth;

Noting with satisfaction the entry into force of the Tehran Convention on 12 August 2006;

1. Reaffirm the intention of their Governments to continue the regional negotiations on the three priority area Protocols to the Tehran Convention, *i.e.*, Protocol on Conservation of Biodiversity, Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land Based Sources [and Activities] and Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in Transboundary Context, allowing for the Protocols to be adopted and signed at the second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
2. Noting the need to establish a regional mechanism for effective cooperation and coordination in case of major oil spills confirm the readiness of their Governments to expedite finalization of the national approval processes of the Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents with a view to its adoption and signature before or at the second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
3. Request the interim Secretariat to prepare a scoping paper on the interrelationship between the fisheries and the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea.

4. Express gratitude to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for its cooperation and support to the Convention process and requests UNEP to continue the functions of the Convention Secretariat ad interim until a permanent Secretariat has been put in place.
5. Acknowledge the need to align the Caspian Environment Programme and its instruments to the objectives of the Tehran Convention and its implementation.
6. Welcome the offer and recommendation of the Steering Committee of the Caspian Environment Programme to use, if it is considered necessary, the advisory and the technical services and assistance of the Caspian Environment Programme for the further development and implementation of the Tehran Convention.
7. Decide to continue further discussions on institutional arrangements of the Convention at the second and subsequent Meetings of the Conference of the Parties in view to finalize and reach consensus on these issues.
8. Decide to collectively provide an amount of US\$ 360,000 to the budget of the Tehran Convention for the year 2009 (US\$ 72,000 contribution of each Party).
9. While recognizing that the Contracting Parties bear the responsibility to ensure predictable funding for the operation of the Tehran Convention, call upon the concerned international agencies, financial institutions and donor community, in particular UNDP, UNEP, the European Union, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility, to continue to contribute to further development and effective implementation of the Tehran Convention and its programmes.
10. Welcome the invitation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to celebrate the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian sea on the 12th day of August 2007.
11. Express gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for the organization of the first Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea.
12. Agree that the second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties will take place in the first half of 2008 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.