
**Framework Convention
for the Protection of the Marine
Environment of the Caspian Sea**

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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fourth Meeting
Moscow, 10-12 December 2012**

**Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention
for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea**

Opening of the Meeting (Item 1)

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (COP4) was held in Moscow, Russian Federation, from 10 to 12 December 2012. The Working-level session as well as the High-level segment and the signing ceremony were held at the 'Golden Ring' Hotel.

2. The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties was opened by Mr. Marat Zheksemin, Director of the Department of International Ecological Agreements of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Nurlan Kapparov, Minister of Environmental Protection. In his opening statement, Mr. Zheksemin welcomed the participants to the meeting and expressed his gratitude to the host Government for organizing and hosting the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. He confirmed that the Kazakh Government is paying special attention to the implementation of the Tehran Convention and stressed the importance of preserving and protecting the unique Caspian Sea environment, before he wished the delegations a successful meeting.

3. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the five Contracting Parties to the Tehran Convention, as well as observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations such as UNEP, UNDP, IMO, FAO, GRID-Arendal, EU, CASPCOM, Safir-e-Tabiat, and All-Russian Society for Nature Conservation (Astrakhan Branch). The list of observers is contained in document TC/COP4/1/Add.3.

Organizational Matters (Item 2)

4. In accordance with the provisional agenda, the Meeting proceeded with the election of officers, including the Chairperson of the Meeting. Respecting the traditions, the chair was offered to the host Government which nominated His Excellency Mr. Sergey Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, to act as the chairperson of the Meeting. In his absence, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Nuritdin Inamov, Director of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, and his Deputy, Mr. Vladimr Ivlev. In his welcoming speech, Mr. Inamov outlined the challenges facing the delegations to the fourth Conference of the Parties, stressing that the time has come to build upon the earlier achievements for the implementation of the Convention and wished the meeting great success.

5. Turkmenistan was requested to provide the Vice-chairperson, and Mr. Frits Schlingemann from the interim Secretariat was nominated as the Rapporteur of the Meeting.

6. The provisional agenda of the meeting (TC/COP4/1) was adopted without change. The Meeting agreed to organize its work as proposed in the provisional organization of work (TC/COP4/1/Add.2), with working sessions on Monday and Tuesday, 10-11 December 2012, and a High-level segment along with a signing ceremony on Wednesday 12 December 2012.

7. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Conference considered the draft list of observers, contained in document TC/COP4/1/Add.3, and agreed on the admission of the observers to the Conference without objection.

Report on the credentials and full powers of representatives to the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Item 3)

8. Before turning to the substantive items of the Agenda, the interim Secretariat addressed the issue of credentials and full powers requesting all delegations to submit their credentials and full powers before the end of the working sessions of the Conference in line with the Rules of Procedure. In accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau subsequently reviewed and reported thereon to the Meeting. The credentials and full powers were found in order.

Report of the interim Secretariat to the Tehran Convention (Item 4)

9. Following the adoption of the Agenda and the Organization of Work, the Conference took note of the report of the interim Secretariat, contained in document TC/COP4/2, as a comprehensive overview of the progress in the implementation of the Tehran Convention since the third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Items for consideration and decision by the Conference of the Parties (Item 5)

10. Under item 5 of the Agenda the Conference reviewed the outstanding issues and related suggestions contained in paragraphs 17 – 29 of the provisional annotated agenda (TC/COP4/1/Add.1).

11. Based on the consultations which took place during the Preparatory Committee meetings in Geneva (11-13 July 2012) and Ashgabat (7-9 November 2012), including the feedback from the delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the bilateral consultations they were requested to hold with a view to reach a common understanding on the location and arrangements of the permanent Secretariat to the Convention, delegations addressed and exchanged views on this issue. All delegations reiterated their common view that the Secretariat shall be located in the territory of one of the Caspian littoral countries. Different views were expressed however as to the location of the Secretariat and related arrangements. After discussion, the Conference “requested the Contracting Parties, in particular the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, to continue the consultations on the location of the Secretariat to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea on a permanent basis in the territory of one of the Caspian littoral States, or on a rotational basis in alphabetical order of the English language”. In these consultations account will be taken of the standardized list of host country secretariat support prepared by the interim Secretariat and agreed upon by the delegations at the Preparatory Committee meeting in Ashgabat.

12. After a discussion on amendments proposed by the Russian delegation which the other delegations could not accept, the Conference decided to “note the agreement in principle reached on the text of the Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity to the Tehran Convention (TC/COP4/4) by the Contracting Parties”, and “to finalize the arrangements for adoption and signature of the Protocol as soon as possible before the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties”.

13. After having concluded that no agreement could be reached on the amendments which Turkmenistan had proposed at the Preparatory Committee meeting in Ashgabat, the Conference decided to “note the agreement in principle reached on the text of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context to the Tehran Convention (TC/COP4/3) by the Contracting Parties” and “to finalize the arrangements for adoption and signature of the Protocol as soon as possible before the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties”.

14. The Conference adopted the Program of Work and Budget of the Tehran Convention for 2013-2014 as contained in document TC/COP4/9. The Contracting Parties furthermore confirmed their decision to continue to collectively provide an amount of US \$ 360,000 per year (US \$ 72,000 as contribution of each Party) to the budget of the Tehran Convention. They also agreed “to consider the expediency and possibility of increasing their national contribution to the budget of the Tehran Convention” on the basis of “additional substantiation on the increase” to be prepared by the interim Secretariat.

15. The Conference welcomed the Action Plans on implementation of the Tehran Convention at the national level or NCAPs and requested the Secretariat to promote and coordinate capacity-building for their implementation; it also welcomed the finalization of the Public Participation Strategies of the Contracting Parties as a part of the Action Plans.

16. The Conference welcomed the holding of the Caspian Ecological Forum, 5-6 November 2012, in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan.

17. The Conference welcomed the Environmental Monitoring Programme contained in document TC/COP4/7 of the Caspian Sea and requested the Secretariat to coordinate and promote its implementation. It also decided to consider the expediency of developing a Protocol on Monitoring to the Tehran Convention, and requested the Secretariat to promote and service the related process.

18. The Conference welcomed the information for the virtual web-based Caspian Environmental Information Centre (CEIC) contained in the document TC/COP4/8 as the thesaurus of data and information submitted and collected in the context of the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its protocols, and requested the Secretariat to coordinate and ensure its full operation.

19. The Conference expressed its gratitude to IMO and the State Maritime Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan for co-organizing and sponsoring the workshop on Regional Contingency Planning for the Caspian Littoral States (Baku, Azerbaijan, 18 – 20 June 2012) and the Workshop on a Regional Strategy and Action Plan to implement the Ballast Water Management Convention, Baku, Azerbaijan, 9-11 July 2012.

Place and date of the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Item 6)

20. Under item 6 of the Agenda, the delegations considered a note by the interim Secretariat on the date and venue of the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Turkmenistan reconfirmed its readiness to host the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, upon which the Conference decided to “accept with gratitude the offer of Turkmenistan to host in 2014 the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention”.

Finalization Ministerial Statement and Decisions (Item 7)

21. Taking into account its decisions under previous agenda items, the Conference reviewed and finalized the text of the Ministerial Statement and Decisions of the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention.

Other matters (Item 8)

22 No other matters were discussed.

Opening of the High-level segment (Item 9)

23. The High-level segment took place in the morning of 12 December 2012.

24. His Excellency Mr. Sergey Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, inaugurated the high-level segment of COP4 with a welcoming address on behalf of the host Government.

25. Statements were made by the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the other Caspian littoral countries: His Excellency Mr. Rauf Hajiev, Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan; His Excellency Mohammad Javad Mohammadizadeh, Vice-President and Head of Department of Environment of Islamic Republic of Iran; His Excellency Mr. Marlen Iskakov, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and His Excellency Mr. Babageldy Annabairamov, Minister of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan.

26. Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, made a statement, expressing, *inter alia*, UNEP's willingness to continue to provide secretariat services to the Tehran Convention, and confirming that UNEP stands ready to assist the Contracting Parties with the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols after their adoption.

27. The Conference was further addressed by Mr. Vladimir Mamaev, United Nations Development Programme, who informed that a GEF Medium Size Project in support of the Convention process will be developed; and Mr. Jose Matheickal, International Maritime Organization who pledged continued support and cooperation of IMO. Other speakers were Mr. Shamil Magomedov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Republic of Dagestan; Mr. Thomas Moth-Poulsen, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations; Mr. Sergey Monakhov, CASPCOM; Mr. Amir Sayad Shirazi, Safir-e-Tabiat; Mr. Igor Krasnov, Government of the Astrakhan Oblast; Mr. Peter Prokosch, GRID-Arendal; Mr. Arkadiy Sokolskiy, All-Russian Society for Nature Conservation (Astrakhan Branch).

Report of the Bureau on the working session (Item 10)

28. Mr. Frits Schlingemann reported on the results and outstanding issues from the working level session to the High-level segment.

Adoption and signature of the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Item 11 c.)

29. The Conference adopted on 12 December 2012 the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. The Protocol was further opened for signature by the Caspian littoral States on 12 December 2012. It will remain open for signature at the office of the Depository in Tehran for six months and afterwards will be open for accession by the Caspian littoral States.

30. The Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea was signed on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Javad Mohammadizadeh, Vice-President and Head of Department of Environment and on behalf of Turkmenistan by His Excellency Mr. Babageldy Annabairamov, Minister of Nature Protection. His Excellency Mr. Rauf Hajiev, Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Mr. Marlen Iskakov, Vice-Minister of Environmental Protection of the

Republic of Kazakhstan and His Excellency Mr. Sergey Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, announced that their Governments will sign the Protocol soon.

31. The signing ceremony was followed by a press conference.

Adoption and signature of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Item 11 a.)

32. See paragraph 13 above.

Adoption and signature of the Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Item 11 b)

33. See paragraph 12 above.

Adoption of the Ministerial Statement and Decisions (Item 12)

34. The Conference reviewed and adopted the Ministerial Statement and Decisions (Annex 1), as well as the Final Act, as contained in Annex 2.

Closure of the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention (Item 14)

35. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was closed on Wednesday 12 December 2012 at 17:30 PM.