

## **Tehran Convention Stakeholders' Meeting, 12-13 August 2015, Astrakhan**

### **Statement by the Representatives of Civil Society of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention)**

We the participants of the Stakeholders' Meeting of the Tehran Convention, conscious of

- *Article 21 para. 2 of the Tehran Convention and its Rules of Procedures;*
- *Article 6 of the Aktau Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents;*
- *Article 15 of the Moscow Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea Against Pollution From Land Based Sources and Activities;*
- *Articles 10 and 18 of the Ashgabat Protocol for the Conservation of Biological Diversity;*
- *Article 4 of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (EIA);*
- *the Strategic Convention Action Program;*
- *the Tehran Convention Strategy for Civil Society Engagement;*
- *the National Public Participation Strategies as integral part of the National Convention Action Plans;*

have agreed on the following recommendations for enhanced civil society engagement in the Tehran Convention process:

- 1)** The Parties shall support, revitalize and extend national civil society networks, as formed during the preparation of the NPPS and interlink these national networks to form a Caspian regional network of civil society representatives. The regional network should meet on a regular basis, for example in the form of a "Caspian Sea Forum". The procedural rules and substantive details of such regional forum shall be worked out by the civil society representatives.
- 2)** Within the regional network stakeholders shall identify on an ad-hoc or institutionalized basis representatives who will participate and present collective positions and ideas on their behalf at the Tehran Convention Conferences of the Parties as well as relevant technical Convention meetings.
- 3)** Civil society representatives shall closely cooperate with the designated National Environmental Information Officers (EIOs) and promote and use the Caspian

Environmental Information Center (CEIC) as reliable central information and communication hub on the Caspian Sea environment and the Tehran Convention activities. The CEIC should be user-friendly and contain a “Caspian Sea Forum” section to facilitate virtual exchanges of civil society representatives.

**4)** Within the regional network civil society representatives shall exchange experience and practices to enhance civil society engagement with representatives of other Caspian states. They shall identify differences and gaps in the implementation of their NPPS and to that end make recommendations to their respective governments for enhancing civil society engagement with due regard to national specifics.

**5)** The national and regional civil society representatives shall identify priority activities in accordance with their respective capacities. They should duly inform the Convention Secretariat about their priorities for it to ensure their involvement in and solicit their inputs to the Tehran Convention process and relevant expert meetings.

**6)** Public access to information (e.g. via the CEIC), participation of the public in (transboundary) environmental impact assessment procedures as well as the integrated management of coastal area development are of particular importance for effective stakeholder engagement and the Parties shall make all efforts to implement activities to that effect within the framework of the Tehran Convention.

**7)** The Parties shall take into account the expertise and experience of national and regional civil society organizations and integrate them in the activities for the implementation of the Tehran Convention Program of Work, in particular in the area of environmental monitoring, assessment and information exchange.

**8)** The Parties shall encourage and support the formation of a Caspian academia and science network for research collaboration and sharing of scientific information on the Caspian Sea environment.

**9)** Civil society representatives shall assist the Convention Secretariat through fund raising for activities aimed at enhancing civil society engagement in the Tehran Convention process.

**10)** The Parties shall support the setup of a micro grants program to support local NGO and community action for the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, e.g. as pilot projects in the implementation of the Tehran Convention.

**11)** The Parties shall provide support for capacity building to relevant civil society organizations.

We the participants of this Stakeholders' Meeting of the Tehran Convention ask the host Party, the Russian Federation, to submit our recommendations for enhanced civil society engagement in the Tehran Convention process to the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of

the Parties (COP6).