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

Distr.: General
August 2019
Original: English

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Sixth Meeting
6-8 November 2019, Baku, Azerbaijan

2nd State of the Caspian Environment Report

(Note by the interim Secretariat)

Introduction:

The provision of the State of the Environment reporting of the Caspian Sea is set out by the Tehran Convention and its Protocols: The Protocol on Conservation of Biological Diversity; the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land based Sources and Activities; the Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents; the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

According to the Convention, the Parties should regularly review and evaluate the state of the marine environment and, in particular, the state of pollution and its effects. The Protocols envisage reporting procedures relevant to their respective thematic areas. In addition, the Strategic Convention Action Programme (SCAP) – a long-term agenda with mid-term perspectives, developed and adopted by the Parties to implement provisions of the Convention, sets clear reporting items.

Historic overview:

At its 5th Meeting in Ashgabat, 30 May 2014, the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention "underlining the importance of regular Reports on the State of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (SOE)", "requested the (interim) Secretariat, resources permitting, to coordinate and oversee the preparation of a second State of the Caspian Sea Environment Report (SOE2), based on the principles and guidelines contained in document TC/COP5/6".

At the 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting (PrepCom1) for the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Conference of Parties to the Tehran Convention (COP6), in Baku, Azerbaijan, 24 – 27 November 2014, the Representatives of the Contracting Parties "emphasizing that the ownership of SOE reporting lies with the Governments of the Caspian States", "requested the (interim) Secretariat, in consultation with GRID-Arendal, to initiate the preparation of an outline for the next SOE Report as well as a procedure, timeline and budget for its preparation to be reviewed at an expert meeting, for consideration and approval by the second PrepCom for COP6.

PrepCom2, Baku, Azerbaijan, 31 May – 3 June 2015, agreed with the proposal for the preparation of the SOE2, prepared by the (interim) Secretariat in consultation with GRID-Arendal, and concluded that the preparations should start once funding has been secured.

At PrepCom5, Baku, Azerbaijan, 13-17 November 2017, the Parties agreed on the table of contents of the SOE2 as well as on maintaining the DPSIR approach but lightened and abbreviated where there are no data available. They confirmed that it will be a country driven report with country specific inputs.

At PrepCom6, Baku, Azerbaijan, 24-28 September 2018, the Representative of GRID Arenal introduced and the Meeting welcomed and agreed with the second State of the Caspian Sea Environment report, in the understanding that before its submission to COP6 an executive summary would be added and final corrections by Governments would be solicited and integrated in the report.

The Meeting furthermore agreed that for future State of the Environment reports a new methodology should be developed and questions concerning the information base, scope and measure of policy prescriptiveness should be resolved. A paragraph for the Ministerial Statement to that extent will be drafted for consideration and adoption by COP6.

The first Caspian Sea State of the Environment report was published in 2011. To serve the regularity in reviewing environmental trends, it was proposed that the SOE2 Report shall be published in 2018. The work was made possible by the generous support of BP Azerbaijan.

Objective and Tasks

The main objective of the State of Environment Report is to assess the current state of environmental and social conditions of the Sea and the adjoining territories.

The report is to serve the Parties as a decision-making tool provided by and aggregated for the Parties based on:

- the state of environment and identified environmental trends,
- social conditions and trends,
- analysis of compliance to the Convention,

The report aims at describing the situation in the whole Caspian Sea basin and making conclusions about environmental trends, analyses compliance to the Convention, and provides recommendations that could tackle challenges around the environmental situation. The report is meant to serve as a decision-making tool provided by the Parties and aggregated for the Parties.

According to the Convention, the report is covering the marine environment of the Caspian Sea, taking into account its water level fluctuations and pollution from land-based sources. The report aims at describing the situation in the whole Caspian Sea basin, based on national expert inputs from the five Caspian states.

It also provides recommendations to address environmental problems and aims at contributing to better public information in Caspian littoral states.

Methodology

In 2010, the (interim) Secretariat of the Tehran Convention proposed the Unified Reporting Format for the national reporting in the framework of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols. The Strategic Convention Action Plan (SCAP) sets out a clear scope and scale for regular reporting.

The development of the First State of the Environment Report of the Caspian Sea in 2011 was based on the Drivers-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) framework which shows relationships between human activity and the state and trends of the environment and human well-being. To maintain continuity, it was agreed to use DPSIR for the development of the SOE2 Report as well.

The following combination of the three methods was suggested to be used for the State of the Environment assessments:

- Indicator-based assessments
- Literature-based assessments
- Expert elicitation-based assessments

According to the decisions, taken at the PrepCom5 meeting in February 2018 in Geneva, the SOE2 Report should be a country-driven report mainly based on the government nominated expert contributions from all five Caspian countries. The PrepCom5 adopted the Table of Contents of the SOE2 Report.

Process

SOE National Experts were appointed by the relevant ministries, agencies, and institutions to collect and process data necessary and for the production of the National Contributions for the SOE2 Report. The national expert teams were backed by the designated National Environmental Information Officers. The activities were funded by BP Azerbaijan through its contract with GRID-Arendal and under the overall supervision of the interim Secretariat. GRID Arendal also provided technical assistance and guidance to the editorial team which, headed by the contracted chief editor (Anatoly Krutov), was made responsible for merging the National Contributions into a cohesive text. Inputs were also provided by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Following extensive consultations and exchanges by all involved the final draft of the SOE2 report was cleared by the national experts through the national approval mechanisms. The updated and corrected report, including the preface, executive summary and conclusion was circulated to the Governments by the interim Secretariat by email of 7 August 7. A few minor corrections from Turkmenistan were received and incorporated. The report has been proofread in both English and Russian, and its layout is being prepared by GRID-Arendal. The report will be presented to the parties at PrepCom7.

Suggested action:

The Meeting may welcome the second Report on the State of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea and request the Secretariat, assisted by GRID-Arendal to ensure publication; the meeting may furthermore agree that for future State of the Environment reports a new

methodology should be developed and questions concerning the information base, scope and measure of policy prescriptiveness should be resolved