

**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**

Item 7 and 12 of the Provisional Agenda

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND DECISIONS
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**

**10-12 December 2012
Moscow, Russian Federation**

The Ministers of Natural Resources and Environment 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 (herein after referred to as the Tehran Convention), and entered into force on 12 August 2006:

Recalling their Statement and Decisions adopted at the third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention on 12 August 2011, Aktau, Republic of Kazakhstan (TC/COP3/13/Rev.3);

Noting the synthesis reports on the National Convention Action Plans (NCAP) and the National Public Participation Strategies (NPPS), as contained in documents TC/COP4/INF.4 and 5;

Noting the recommendations of the Final Steering Committee Meeting of the GEF/UNDP (CaspEco) Project: The Caspian Sea: Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of a Permanent Regional Environmental Governance Framework, Moscow, Russian Federation, 16 March 2012 (TC/COP4/INF.2);

Having considered the report by the (interim) Secretariat on the implementation of the Tehran Convention (TC/COP4/2);

Noting that the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have put forward their candidature for hosting the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention and that the Russian Federation has expressed interest;

Recalling the request to the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to enter into bilateral discussions in order to harmonize their views/positions on the location of the Convention Secretariat in the Caspian Sea region and on a standardized package of host country secretariat support, with a view to conclude the implementation of decision one of the Ministerial Statement and Decisions of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

1. Request 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;
2. Invite the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to continue to host and administer the interim Secretariat through its Regional Office for Europe in Geneva, and finalize the arrangements for hosting and administering the Convention Secretariat at location in the region if thereto invited by the Contracting Parties at their Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
3. Welcome the ratification by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the (Aktau) Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents to the Tehran Convention, and urge the other Contracting Parties to finalize the ratification process as soon as possible;
4. Welcome and express their 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); welcome the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop, contained in Section 7 of the report (TC/COP4/INF.3); and request the (interim) Secretariat to report on their implementation to COP5;
5. Express their appreciation to the Department of Environment and Ports and Maritime Organization of I.R. of Iran for holding the Regional Search & Rescue and Oil Spill Response Exercise and Seminar (Nowshahr Port, I.R. of Iran, 2-3 October 2012), attended by representatives of the Contracting Parties and the Tehran Convention (interim) Secretariat and hope that these kind of collaborative activities may lead to a better protection of the Caspian Sea marine environment;
6. Welcome the holding of the Caspian Ecological Forum, 5-6 November 2012, Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan; express gratitude to Turkmenistan for its holding, and note the proposal of Turkmenistan to hold such forum on a regular basis in the Caspian littoral States;
7. Welcome the adoption and signing of the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea Against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Tehran Convention (TC/COP4/5) by the Contracting Parties and confirm the intention of their respective Governments to ensure early ratification of the Protocol and request the (interim) Secretariat to undertake the necessary steps to promote its implementation;
8. Noting 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, decide 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;
9. Noting 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, decide 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;
10. Express their gratitude to IMO and the State Maritime Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan for organizing the Workshop on a Regional Strategy and Action Plan to implement the Ballast Water Management Convention, Baku, Azerbaijan, 9-11 July 2012; welcome the Strategy and Action Plan; and request the Contracting Parties, assisted by IMO and the (interim) Secretariat, to ensure that the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is integrated in the implementation of the SCAP and NCAPs, as well as in the reporting thereon;

11. Welcome the Action Plans containing measures on the implementation of the Tehran Convention at the national level or NCAPs, note the measures envisaged, *inter alia*, in the Caspian Seal Conservation Action Plan (CSCAP) which was developed with the assistance of the CEP, and the Synthesis Paper annexed to TC/COP4/INF.4. Request the (interim) Secretariat to promote and coordinate the required capacity-building for implementation of Action Plans containing measures on implementation of the Tehran Convention at the national level or NCAPs;

12. Welcome the finalization of the Public Participation Strategies of the Contracting Parties as a part of the Action Plans containing measures on the implementation of the Tehran Convention at the national level or NCAPs, *inter alia*, in connection with the Caspian Day celebrations; commit to promote stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols; and request the (interim) Secretariat to regularly update the synthesis report (TC/COP4/INF.5) based on the national reports of the Contracting Parties;

13. Welcome the Environmental Monitoring Programme (EMP) of the Caspian Sea contained in document TC/COP4/7 as the basis for continuation of this activity and capacity-building and regional cooperation for monitoring the parameters which determine the quality of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea; and request the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate and promote its implementation with the involvement and/or support of CaspCom, the GEF, the EU, and other stakeholders;

14. Decide to consider the expediency of developing a legal framework for the EMP in the form of a Protocol on Monitoring to the Tehran Convention and request the (interim) Secretariat to promote and service the related process;

15. Welcome 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 request the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate and ensure its full operation with the involvement and/or support of UNEP, the GEF, the EU, and other stakeholders, including the oil and gas industry;

16. Adopt the Program of Work and Budget of the Tehran Convention for 2013-2014 as contained in document TC/COP4/9;

17. Decide to continue to collectively provide an amount of USD 360,000 per year (USD 72,000 as contribution of each Party) to the budget of the Tehran Convention;

18. Agree to consider the expediency and possibility of increasing their national contribution to the budget of the Tehran Convention, and request the (interim) Secretariat to prepare additional substantiation on the increase taking into account the shift of the Secretariat to the territory of one of the Caspian littoral States starting in 2014;

19. Welcome the successful conclusion of the GEF-UNDP CaspEco project, and request the (interim) Secretariat to promote appropriate use and integration of its outcomes in the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols; and request GEF to assist the countries with the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols;

20. Welcome the participation in this Meeting of representatives of the oil, gas and shipping industry and call upon them to support the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols;

21. Welcome the contributions provided by other international organizations, in particular GEF, UNDP, UNEP, the European Union and IMO, and call upon all donors to consider, continue or

increase bilaterally or multilaterally their support to the implementation of the provisions of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols;

22. Express gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for the organization of the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention;

23. Accept with gratitude the offer of Turkmenistan to host in 2014 the fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention.