

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



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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
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Activities towards the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention

(Note by the interim Secretariat)

Introduction:

The Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, also known as the “Tehran Convention” was signed on 12 August 2003 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, it is proposed to consider the list of potential events and activities to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Tehran Convention.

The main objective for holding the celebrations is an urge to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the Tehran Convention, to discuss and elaborate goals for future in short and long-term perspective to stimulate more actions and measures aiming.

The Islamic Republic of Iran together with the Tehran Convention interim Secretariat proposes to hold the high-level celebratory event (possibly in conjunction with the 7th Meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Tehran Convention in late autumn of 2023 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran). One of the main outcomes of the high-level celebratory event can be the launch of the “Caspian Decade 2023-2033” aiming at strengthening stakeholder engagement, scientific collaboration, and providing a platform for dialogue and exchange of perspectives on the future of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea. The content and exact structure of the Decade require discussion and agreement of the Contracting Parties. The draft proposal for the “Caspian Decade 2023-2033” is contained in the Annex I. It should

In order to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the Tehran Convention it is proposed to hold a Media workshop back-to back to the high-level celebratory event. The draft Concept note and the Agenda for the Media Workshop are attached as Annex II.

In addition to the regional events, the Caspian littoral countries are encouraged to include a number of the celebratory activities into the regular holding of the Caspian Sea Day. The Annex III provides, an open (non-exhaustive) list of recommended national activities to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention. The list has a recommendatory character, and the national authorities may wish to include them in the planning for national celebrations in particular Caspian Sea Day celebrations.

Suggested action

The Conference may wish to:

- Welcome the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host a high-level event to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention and agree on the specific date of the event;

- Request the Tehran Convention interim Secretariat to develop the concept of “the Caspian Decade 2023-2033” and hold necessary consultations with the Contracting Parties with the aim to launch the Decade at the high-level event proposed by Islamic Republic of Iran together with the update of the Strategic Convention Action Program (SCAP);
- Encourage the Tehran Convention Parties to hold the national activities marking the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention.

Draft proposal for the “Caspian Decade 2023-2033”

With the 20th anniversary of the Tehran Convention due to take place in 2023, the question of how Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders should enter the next ten years of the collaboration among the Caspian Sea countries naturally emerges. In this context, relevant documents, previous action plans, the broader UNEP programme of work, and the actions taken in the protection of the marine environment of other seas and regions of the world should be taken into consideration.

For that purpose, the Tehran Convention Parties may wish to enhance the national and regional measures aiming at the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea by launching a new initiative “the Caspian Decade 2023-2033” in the context of the Tehran Convention.

The tentative roadmap for conceptualizing the “Caspian Decade 2023-2033” is provided below.

Suggested action	Goal	Outcome
A series of three consultative meetings/workshops between relevant stakeholders with emphasis on cross-sectoral exchange and policy output; each workshop would focus on one thematic area (<i>climate stability, living in harmony with nature and towards a pollution-free planet</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening stakeholder engagement Defining priority areas of action needed in the short-term (5 years) and long-term (10 years) Taking stock of what has been achieved among stakeholders thus far 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint statement at the conclusion of the workshops, summarizing the priority areas as defined by and agreed upon by all stakeholders; to be taken into consideration by Contracting Parties in their deliberations
A round of consultations/meetings of the Caspian scientific community leading up to the Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortifying cooperation and exchange among scientists, research institutions, universities working in/on the Caspian region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A document articulating the needs and concerns of the scientific community for the purpose of maximising the impact of future research efforts on the marine environment of the Caspian Sea

The Caspian Decade will offer its own vision and its own timeframe independent, yet simultaneously compatible with UN-wide targets thereby reaffirming and assuming place in global environmental discourse.

Within this framework, the engagement of the scientific community will be crucial. Strengthening existing scientific cooperation, while also giving an opportunity for cross-sectoral dialogue between policymakers, scientists, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders will ensure that the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the Decade.

While developing the Caspian Decade 2023-2033 a special attention should be given to the New Caspian Environment Programme as proposed by Turkmenistan. The initiative of Turkmenistan shows not only the presence of palpable and genuine political will for cooperation, information-sharing and more effort into the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea, it also focuses on necessary improvements to the system that is already in place. The key lies in the

streamlining of existing methods, action plans and initiatives and their expansion in areas where such expansion is needed.

In addition, it would be useful to consider how the methodological infrastructure offered by the TDA-SCAP could be upgraded, with special emphasis on the most acute issues facing the Caspian Sea today. Moreover, revisiting the SCAP and TDA (Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis) presents a timely opportunity to consider the creation of a new 10-year SCAP as an outcome of the Caspian Decade.

In that regard, the formulation of a complimentary set of goals (similar to the SDGs or the Environmental Quality Objective - EQOs in the CEP-SAP (Caspian Ecological Programme – Strategic Action Plan) from 2007, as well as the more recent example of the Baltic Sea Action Plan) may be considered. These goals would articulate the objectives of the Action Plan to a wider audience and make the science behind it more accessible.

Finally, it may be useful to consider how the Decade may fit into the wider context of the UNEP programme of work, notably the medium-term strategy (2022-2025) which lays out three strategic objectives – “climate stability”, “living in harmony with nature” and “towards a pollution-free planet”.

List of References to the Draft proposal for the “Caspian Decade 2023-2033”

1. Concept for a New Caspian Environment Programme proposed by Turkmenistan
2. Strategic Convention Action Programme
3. EQOs as defined in the Caspian Strategic Action Programme Implementation: A Regional Review and Assessment
4. Med Vision2030
5. Goals as defined by the Baltic Sea Action Plan

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TEHRAN CONVENTION**Media Programme: "Title to be confirmed"**November XX-XX 2023, *name of the city*, Iran

Concept note

The purpose of the media workshop is to ensure that the most pressing issues relating to the marine environment of the Caspian Sea are adequately relayed to the media and consequently the public, as well as to raise more awareness about the impacts of climate change and pollution on Caspian ecosystems with emphasis on wetland conservation (*theme to be agreed with the host country*) in light of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention.

Journalists will have the opportunity to get well acquainted with the activities under the of the Tehran Convention and with the history and significance of the Convention as well as its auxiliary protocols. The workshop will also aim to make the science behind these issues more accessible and will give journalists ample interview opportunities with both the local populace of the Caspian region, scientists, policymakers, civil society. Journalists will also get the chance to see the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Caspian Sea through guided field trip, with a special visit to the some of the Ramsar wetland sites (*to be agreed with the host country, potentially*). Wetlands are some of the most important ecosystems which face great risks of degradation and conversion to other uses.

UNEP/TCIS will be in a position to support travel of one journalist per Caspian country. Other journalists are welcomed to join the Workshop at their own expenses.

Draft list of activities towards the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Tehran Convention recommended to be implemented on the national level

Activity	Main objectives and description	Comments
Coastal zone clean-up campaigns	<p>- mechanical disposal of solid debris in the coastal zone and the water column; - development of a culture of responsible attitude to the environment, in particular among young people and children.</p> <p>It doesn't have to be a simple ordinary collection of waste by volunteers. Creative approach is welcomed. Possible examples of innovative formats:</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition format: https://cleangames.org/ - Re-use and art objects creation from the garbage found: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/making-friends-plastic-trash-better-planet - Event format: individuals are encouraged to organize their one small campaigns in their local communities to mark important dates as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries with their friends: https://tide-turners.org/assets/Files/How_to_Organise_a_Cleanup_Campaign_.pdf
Sport and travel promotional activities (run, bike ride, sport challenges)	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC.</p> <p>Sport promotional activities enjoy great popularity. They allow you to draw attention to the problem by using the number of participants or one or more famous participants.</p> <p>Travel Youtube or Instagram bloggers are very popular as well, and the Caspian Sea region has a lot of potential as an original and infrequent travel destination.</p>	<p>Possible ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - run through the national coastline along the Caspian shoreline (can be combined with clearance campaigns); - in cooperation with any of famous travel bloggers to film an episode of his show in Caspian Sea region to discover its beauty. <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - run through the five countries along the Caspian shoreline (can be combined with clearance campaigns); - it can have a material goal: https://takeaction.parley.tv/missions/run-for-the-oceans-2021/ - or not: https://www.earthwatch.org.au/fundraisers/160km-run-for-environment-awareness - in cooperation with any of famous travel bloggers to film an episode of his show in Caspian Sea region to discover both: its beauty and its pollution; etc.
Lectures and activities for general public, children, students	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC;</p>	<p>As an additional source of reaching young people, many international UN-constituencies can be noted (e.g., YOUNGO, UNEP MGCY, UN1FY), their help can also be used to achieve other items</p>

	<p>- to discuss and elaborate goals for future in short and long-term perspective to stimulate more actions and measures aiming environment protection.</p> <p>Lectures or any other educational activities (games, quizzes, contests, essay competitions etc.) can be organized in schools, universities, or public sites and virtually.</p>	as well, such as: coastal zone clearance campaigns, sportive and travel promotional activities, etc.
Interviews with scientists, policy makers, environmental activists speaking out the contribution of the Convention and current challenges in the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC;</p> <p>- popularize the Caspian Sea and its environmental problems as an area of scientific research;</p> <p>- to find out more about the current state of the Caspian Sea and coastal zones, as well as the environmental, economic, and social problems of the region.</p> <p>A series of short interviews can be filmed within one or more scientific organizations or universities. They can be distributed via the Internet, on the websites of institutions and organizations, on Youtube, on local TV channels and in other ways.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>- 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Stockholm Convention: http://chm.pops.int/TheConvention/Overview/20thAnniversary/tabid/8966/Default.aspx</p>
Creative campaigns and contests for artists, photographers, children, students	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC;</p> <p>- popularize the Caspian Sea and its environmental problems as an area of research, activism, and creativity.</p> <p>Contests among adult artists or among children can be announced in advance, with a special theme and prizes provided, or the event can be carried out as a simultaneous campaign to create objects of art that can then make up an exhibition.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>- Old oil barrels in Baku as pieces of art: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuJ0Y-8XYBQ</p> <p>- Eco-art contest for contemporary artists: http://www.projetcoal.org/coal/en/le-prix-coal-art-et-environnement/</p>
Photo exhibitions or creative installations (interior – e.g., in public buildings and exteriors – e.g., in parks etc.).	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC.</p> <p>This event can be combined with the previous one and present the best works of photographers or</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>- Photo exhibition can be organized in a certain city space: https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/fr/evenements/launch-of-the-plastic-waste-partnership-photography-exhibit/</p>

	<p>artists created specifically for the exhibition. Or it can be an independent event and the photos can be selected by the organizers from photos of the Caspian Sea and events related to the Tehran Convention activities over the past 20 years.</p>	<p>- Photo exhibition at COP21 of Paris Climate Change Agreement: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2015/dec/11/cop21-environmental-photography-exhibition-in-pictures</p> <p>- In Moscow photos of wild nature at one of the boulevards to raise environmental awareness and honor the winners of the wild nature photography competition: https://www.mos.ru/news/item/104591073/</p>
<p>Activities at universities (student conferences and competitions for writing scientific papers)</p>	<p>- to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC; - popularize the Caspian Sea and its environmental problems as an area of scientific research; - to get new scientific data and information concerning the state of environment in the Caspian Sea region.</p> <p>This event can be held in the form of a university or inter-university (national) scientific conference with pre-defined requirements for the works and selection of the best papers for oral presentation or awarding prizes. Alternatively, it may be a competition of works that does not provide for their oral presentation at the conference. As a reward, the best works may be offered to be published in a special collection of papers, a certificate with honors issued by Secretariat or a small cash prize). Any other types of scientific activities are of course possible and welcome.</p>	<p>The special attention can be given to the faculties of Earth sciences (ecology, biology, meteorology, geophysics, etc.) of the leading universities and universities of the Caspian regions. Various faculties and institutes can be offered different focuses for the subject of work in accordance with the scientific field: biodiversity for biologists, sea level change for geophysicists, etc. The same, but at simpler level can be organized for children at schools as well, especially at science-oriented once.</p> <p>Science can also be considered broader than Natural Science. Representatives of the Humanitarian Sciences may also be involved: environmental sociologists, economists, urbanists, lawyers, etc. It can be a separate event or combined with Natural Sciences.</p>
<p>Cooperation activities with to trendy and popular resources</p>	<p>- to popularize the topic of the Caspian Sea, its achievements (tourist attractions, resources) and environmental problems among the public; - to attract more young people; - to raise public awareness about the problems of the Caspian Sea and the activities of the TC in general.</p> <p>This is more of an approach than an independent event. These measures can be applied in the implementation of the above-mentioned activities. The idea is to try new and trendy platforms and</p>	<p>Appeal to trendy and popular resources to cover the TC activities and problems of the Caspian Sea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popular science resources - Tourism society - Ecological activists and NGOs - Social media and blogs - Interviewers <p>Perhaps there are activists or famous people (singers, actors, athletes) in the Caspian countries who have already attracted public</p>

	<p>techniques to achieve the result. Popular science websites (like https://nplus1.ru/) can be used for promotion of scientific events and popularization of scientific research of the problems of the region. Travel, environmental or just popular bloggers can become promoters or participants of the events, etc.</p>	<p>attention to the environmental problems of the Caspian Sea and held any campaigns?</p>
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