

STATEMENT
by Professor Evangelos Raftopoulos, Director of MEPIELAN CENTRE,
Addressing the COP21 Ministerial Policy Review Session

I feel privileged and I am most delighted to address the Ministerial Segment. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Italian Government for the successful hosting of COP21 in the historic and artistic city of Naples and to the UNEP/MAP Secretariat for their exemplary and devoted work in an increasingly complex and demanding context.

For the preparation of the next UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy, MEPIELAN is engaged in the advancement of certain inter-related action-areas - permeating through all specific issues - which should be consistently pursued and promoted. At the heart of these action-areas lie two mystic but motivating words: “**innovation**” and “**transition**”. Innovation to support transition towards better environmental and sustainability governance, more effective legal approaches oriented to trusteeship and integrated management for addressing the current legal gaps, and better, structured ways for strengthening the culture and practice of consensus-building, dialogue and communication between and among all participants.

More specifically:

First, take specific steps to strengthen **capacity building** of the Contracting Parties related to the implementation and compliance of the MAP/Barcelona Convention system for a more relational, effective, context-efficient, knowledgeable and coherent application of sustainable environmental governance based on enhanced commitment. Promote the directive importance of the recommendations of the MCSD in this context and **develop public engagement** in the work of the Compliance Committee, thus advancing public participation for a more effective, context-responding and efficient **compliance** at the international and national level. At the same time, cooperation with other Compliance Committees of relevant conventional environmental regimes and gaining from their experience are of guiding importance.

Second, develop the **public trust approach** as an innovative legal and policy platform to address the gap of implementing the sustainability aspects of the Barcelona Convention system (BCS), legally fleshing out the sustainability aspect of the obligations of the governments considered to have *as a unit* a fiduciary legal obligation to the public to protect the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations in an equitable manner. The public trust approach will mobilize the active engagement of stakeholders, promote a high standard of conduct from public servants and influence, more general, behavior

change, thus combining the legal implementation of a “whole-of-society-approach” and a “whole-of-government-approach”.

Third, manage **institutional interlinkages** building relational coherence with relevant global and regional conventional regimes and global processes to improve BCS effectiveness as “relational effectiveness”. This can be carried out by fostering their complementarities in developing their interaction and synergism in specific common areas (biodiversity, marine use and wastes, climate change, emissions control) and in UN contexts (2030 Agenda and SGDs, UNEA Resolutions) streamlined at all levels of governance (regional, national and local). So coordination deficit will be fruitfully managed and the robustness of the BCS will be increased through learning from best practices.

Fourth, build the capacity of the participants in the BCS to “**governance by negotiation and dialogue**”: develop, through education and training, an innovative approach **to creative negotiation for consensus-building** as a genuinely multilateral structured process of governance generating legal, decisional and policy instruments serving international common interest at all levels and stages of development and implementation of the BCS. Also, by implanting **a participatory dialogue platform** between and among all participants for a narrative approach to specific issues (*a talanoa-type dialogue*) embracing the sharing of ideas, skills and experience through story-telling, immensely facilitating transparency and clarification of transformative changes and encouraging informed participation of relevant stakeholders at all levels (local, national, international).

Fifth, continue to promote the **educational implementation of the MID-TERM STRATEGY, especially by developing training and postgraduate programmes**. Especially by developing a broad and comprehensive knowledge of interdisciplinary methodology, process understanding and innovative approaches regarding the *governance and thematic topics of MAP/Barcelona Convention system*. This approach to education should also address the crucial ethical dimension and facilitate collaborative partnerships in education, creating a high quality international network of international organizations expertise, academics and students in this area and, in effect, contributing to the visibility and far-reaching impact of the Barcelona Convention system.

Finally, develop targeted **communication**, mindful of the different contexts for reaching a large, diversified audience, including the largest possible base of population, and of the need to simplify technical language. At the same time, emphasis should be made on opportunities and solutions for the more effective mobilization of a better informed society.

Thank you very much for your attention.