

Statement of the Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN)
(on behalf of CaMPAM, MedPAN, NAMPAN and RAMPAN)

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This statement is being made by the Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN) on behalf of four Regional networks of MPA managers: CaMPAM from Caribbean, MedPAN from the Mediterranean, NAMPAN from North America and RAMPAN from West Africa. We have been thrilled this week to hear of the announcements of commitments to establish new MPAs to protect key ocean areas. But by themselves, new MPAs will not get us to the healthy ocean we need – we must have strong, effectively managed MPAs. This is where regional MPA networks play a key role.

Regional human networks of MPA managers are successful in contributing to sharing knowledge and best management practices through effective communication and capacity building. Exchanges of managers with similar issues but different local contexts generate creativity, problem solving and resource sharing. MPA networks also develop strong collaborations with Regional Seas Conventions and other institutions to build long-term partnerships.

MPA managers' networks are recognised as a cornerstone of MPA performance. They build "regional MPA communities" by connecting marine area planners and managers, decision-makers, scientists as well as many other stakeholders, working towards the same overall goal of a healthy, sustainable ocean.

Working toward the shared goal of effective MPA management, regional MPA networks also have great potential to champion the current marine conservation challenges, such as the CBD Aichi Target 11, the SDG14 and climate-ocean linkages. Through a bottom-up approach, those networks team up to keep our global and regional MPA agendas moving forward.

The four networks began to exchange ideas during the 3rd International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) held in Marseille in 2013, and the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii. This collaboration is currently reinforced thanks to the European Union project, Cooperation with Northern and Southern Transatlantic Dimension through MPAs, which aims to support MPA management effectiveness.

The four regional MPA networks are developing a joint strategy to share experiences and tools to improve their capacities, as well as exploring options for long-term financing to ensure networking sustainability at regional and national levels; a very critical challenge. We welcome the involvement of other regional MPA networks in this effort.

Strong MPA networks of managers offer a great opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 agenda for the Ocean. We are glad to invite all of you-- countries, donors, scientists and any other key actor-- to support the existing networks of MPA managers, or to create new ones in your countries or regions.

Join us in this exciting challenge to ensure the best management of our marine protected areas.

Thank you very much