



**Contribution to the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
"The effects of Climate Change on Oceans"**

Focus on the Mediterranean Sea

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mediterranean region will be heavily impacted by climate change during the 21st century: climate change could exacerbate existing stresses and inequalities within and among countries. Climate variability and change is becoming increasingly evident; according to observations and studies referenced in recent IPCC reports, in recent decades, summer heat waves' intensity, number, and length have increased alongside extreme precipitation events and soil dryness. Major increases have been observed in warm temperature extremes. The shallow waters of the Mediterranean Sea have already warmed by almost 1°C since the 1980s. Trends of decreasing precipitation and discharge indicate a trend toward increased freshwater deficits. The Mediterranean also exhibits variability regarding the observed sea level rise. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA) some areas show increases of more than 6 mm/year, and decreases of more than -4 mm/year.

The Mediterranean is characterized by natural environments and resources that are already under high pressure from non-climate drivers, such as urbanization, coastward migration of people, tourism, intensive irrigated agriculture, dam building, industries, and port facilities and that climate-induced drivers are likely to increasingly aggravate the existing problems and to create new risks. Mediterranean countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change due in particular to increasing degradation of their water resources (overuse, pollution, salinification, and drop in rainfall) and demand in the agricultural, tourism, urban and energy sectors.

UNEP/MAP has been supporting actions to assess and respond to climate change impacts in the Mediterranean marine and coastal zone since 1992. At their 19th Ordinary Meeting (COP19, Athens, Greece, February 2016), the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) adopted the renewed *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025* (MSSD) and endorsed the *Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas* (RCCAF). The aim of the RCCAF is to provide a regional approach in coordinating and assisting policy makers and stakeholders at all levels across the Mediterranean in order to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal natural and socioeconomic systems to the impacts of climate change by identifying objectives and priority fields for action. The Barcelona Convention's *Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (ICZM), which entered into force in 2011 and to date has been ratified by 9 Mediterranean countries and the EU, contains numerous objectives and commitments of direct relevance to climate change.

