



**Keynote Remarks by Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi  
UfM Secretary-General  
“Working Days” on the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis  
6 May 2014, Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Distinguished representatives of Governments, Ministries and  
agencies,  
General directors, directors, representatives of the private and  
financial sector, distinguished partners,  
Dear participants,**

- **I am very happy**, along with Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alpogan, **to welcome you all** this morning, here at the Palau de Pedralbes at the premises of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.
- These two **working days** [one day and an half, till Wednesday mid-day] have been planned in the framework of the project concerning the **trans-Maghreb motorway axis**, a section of which (the central section) was, as you well know, **labelled by the 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** on **10 February 2012** as a project of **regional interest**.

I would like to especially thank our colleagues of the **Transport Division** of the UfM Secretariat and of the **Secretariat of the Group of Ministers of Transport of the Western Mediterranean** for the excellent



organization of this work session. CETMO, as Secretariat of GTMO 5+5, really acts as the “engine” of the cooperation in the field of transport in the western-Mediterranean, which is key for the future of our countries and of the one of the broader Euro-Mediterranean region.

I will be very short in introduction of this morning meeting, with **just a couple of remarks:**

- a general one
- and a more operational one on the outcomes to be expected from this working meeting of today and tomorrow.

**1- My first general remark** won't surprise you, we all have it in mind, and people in this room more than anybody else:

**Transport is instrumental for economic growth and socio-economic development. It is so in the Mediterranean, like it is anywhere else in the world,** because of the decisive effect of Transport on the trade sector.

A good transport network provides greater business facilities. The bigger the network, the more opportunities it will offer. In other words, supporting infrastructures and regional cooperation also means supporting economic growth, in our countries and at a regional level.

This is **all the more true for the southern Mediterranean rim** that the Trans-Maghreb Motorway has a **strong potential to attract new traffics thanks to its proximity to the main ports on the Mediterranean and airports of the region.**



Looking at the very **poor level of regional economic integration in the Mediterranean**, which most probably impedes more trade and growth, the mere existence of transport infrastructures is not enough in itself; it is also necessary to work on the **interoperability** of the distinct national networks to make the uninterrupted flow of freight and passengers a reality.

Looking more specifically at **the central-section of the trans-Maghreb motorway axis**: an efficient management of the project obviously calls the need to properly integrate and **coordinate infrastructural and horizontal components**.

It is necessary to ensure that the horizontal component has been sufficiently developed when the entire infrastructure component is completed, in order to ensure an efficient operation of the motorway network.

**Hence your presence today.**

**2- Which leads me to my second remark, regarding today's and tomorrow's meeting.**

- The main objective of the session is to define an **action plan** concerning the key horizontal aspects of the motorway's management, namely **trade facilitation, infrastructure financing and pricing, road safety and integration of the axis into the global transport system of the region.**



This action plan will then act **as a regional platform** building on the **synergies of all member countries and IFIs that are working in the region**. Implementing this action plan **will have a direct regional impact** as the motorway axis will act as a backbone for the movement of people and goods in the Maghreb.

- Such action plan can obviously only be elaborated with the **participation of all parties involved** in transport development on both shores of the Mediterranean.

**The presence of national stakeholders together with International Financial Institutions (IFI) around the table today** for these working days will probably make possible the identification of the main issues (strategic, funding, etc.) in order to look for an effective funding and to strengthen the cooperation between the regional transport stakeholders.

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On this major regional project **like on all other projects labelled by the governments of the UfM**, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean was **mandated** to facilitate and advance work.

It is playing its role as a **platform**, a platform for **institutional convergence** and a platform for the **development of synergies** in close interaction with **all actors**, and in **support of the projects holding the greatest potential for the development of more cooperation and socio-economic development** in the Mediterranean. The Secretariat is an instrument at your disposal.



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**Cooperation is of course crucial between the countries of the region and all actors and stakeholders** in order to be able to pursue **regional benefits in road transport**, based on national actions and/or strategies.

Thank you again for your presence today, for the commitment of your governments, institutions or organizations, as well as for your personal commitment, in support of this goal.

It will help to achieve a stronger and more integrated economy and will offer a qualitative step forward in the development of the Maghreb and the broader Mediterranean region.