

**Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Regional Cooperation and
Planning
2 June 2016, Dead Sea, Jordan**

Declaration

The Ministers responsible for **International Cooperation and Planning**, under the Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, H.E. Imad Fakhoury, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and H.E. Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations for the European Union, **meeting for the first time in the Union for the Mediterranean Framework**, at the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 2 June 2016, regarding **their role in promoting and supporting regional cooperation and integration**,

Underlining that their cooperation should be based on solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, mutual accountability and full respect to the interests of all;

Recalling

- the Joint Declaration of the Summit for the Mediterranean held in Paris on 13 July 2008; and the Marseille Declaration of November 2008;
- the UfM High Level Conference held in Barcelona on 26 November 2015;
- the thematic UfM/EuroMed Ministerial Conferences on Water; Employment and Labour; Trade; Women, Urban Development, Transport, Energy, Industrial Cooperation, Blue Economy, Environment and Climate Change, and Digital Economy held since 2008; and the stakeholder conferences and Social Dialogue Forums that took place in connection with some of them;
- the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015, and its outcome document "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"; and the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the third Conference on Financing for Development; and the recent Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action; the 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement, the first High-Level Meeting of the Global



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Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in Mexico City 2014, and the upcoming High-Level Meeting in Nairobi on 30 November – 1 December 2016;

Stressing the important economic potential of the UfM region while continuing to be *deeply concerned* by the difficult **socio-economic situation and challenges facing the UfM members** today, in particular its **youth and women**; especially in a situation of serious climate-related threats facing the region;

Acknowledging that these challenges constitute major concerns, affecting the **living conditions** of current and **future generations**, and affecting **migratory flows**;

Underlining that these challenges are **shared by all the countries in the region**;

Reaffirming therefore that, alongside the domestic focus, addressing common needs and opportunities **requires a strong regional perspective**; and *underlining* that this perspective needs to **translate into strategic and tangible cooperation** on the ground;

Recognising the **need to boost economic integration** among the countries in the region as one of the means to create opportunities for the necessary **inclusive growth and employment**; *highlighting* the crucial role of the UfM to that effect; *supporting* the work of the **Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat** to help facilitate progress in regional cooperation and integration, including by promoting regional projects;

Recognising further the **value and importance of sub-regional or variable geometry initiatives** as milestones on the path towards wider regional integration and cooperation by leading and showcasing practical progress; *welcoming* the work carried out under the Agadir Agreement for an Arab-Mediterranean Free Trade Area, in particular the recent Agadir Ministerial meeting; as well as work taking place under the 5+5 and the Africa-EU Dialogues; *underlining* that sub-regional initiatives should be comprehensive so as to support and enable wider regional cooperation;

Welcoming and supporting the **substantial regional cooperation and integration agenda established** through the ministerial meetings referred to above, *noting* that this agenda covers issues ranging from connectivity and protection of the environment to improved employment opportunities and decent work for young men and women, private sector development, and promotion of women's political and economic empowerment;

Commending the **considerable implementation efforts already underway** across sectors – including regional sectoral policy and technical dialogues; development and implementation of soft and hard cooperation projects; and domestic efforts in support of regionally agreed frameworks; *welcoming* the important support provide *inter alia* by the European Neighbourhood Instrument, including such programmes such as the EU Cross Border Cooperation Programme; *recognising* the Western Balkan countries needs with regard to

technical and investment support across the board of issues dealt with under the regional agendas;

Recognising that in a context of scarce resources, enhanced coordination is an important mean to **achieve more with the available resources**; and *taking note of* EU efforts for strategic investment coordination under the AMICI initiative, including as a means to promote job creation;

Noting with interest the **regional infrastructure investment coordination taking place in some sectors**, whereby EFIs are engaged alongside the UfM Secretariat and other partners in operationalising their shared objectives in the areas of environment, urban development and transport; *recognising* the **potential** of such coordination to **enable efficient use of resources** in the identification and preparation of investment projects **also in other sectors**;

Taking note of successful examples of **broad stakeholder engagement in the regional dialogue efforts**, including private sector, civil society organisations and local authorities, as seen for example in the areas of energy, employment and labour, business and environment; *underlining* the importance of ensuring adequate representation of youth, and women, in these;

Underlining the importance of further engaging civil society as strategic partners in the regional agenda and as a major force in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; *recalling* the relevance of the work of the Anna Lindh Foundation on inter-cultural dialogue in this regard; *stressing* the potential and necessity of further channeling private sector engagement and investment towards regionally agreed priorities; and *recognising* the need for a better business environment that attract greater investment and enable technology transfer, alongside targeted initiatives enhancing private sector interest and capacity to participate in regional business opportunities;

Recognising that the reform of public administrations is a key element in improving the business environment, the investment climate and delivery of services, and *welcoming* discussion on the "Principles of Public Administration, a Framework for ENP countries", in national and regional format to this end;

Stressing the **essential role of Ministries of Planning and International Cooperation** in enabling further regional cooperation and integration in partnership with their sector counterparts;

Welcoming the revised **European Neighbourhood Policy**, including the important attention that it attaches to regional integration and cooperation and to the role of the Union for the Mediterranean in particular;

In view of the above, UfM Ministers for international cooperation and planning,

- Reconfirm their commitment to ensuring **optimal** and sustainable **use of available resources** from European and international financial instruments;
- Encourage continued efforts to **enhance the mobilisation of resources** through innovative strategies to improve the efficiency of tax systems, public finance and governance; to promote partnerships between the public and private sectors; and to develop deeper financial markets;
- Undertake to support their counterparts in thematic ministries who are already integrating a regional dimension in thematic policies, by enabling **due consideration of regional and/or sub-regional priorities**, such as corridors, connections, environmental protection, etc., **in national strategic planning**, by placing this issue on the agenda for inter-ministerial coordination processes;
- Intend to **channel adequate financing** in support of the priorities of the integration agenda mentioned above and to identify relevant instruments and tools to be mobilized for the purpose of regional priorities; undertake to **optimise** the use of existing **donor coordination mechanisms at country level** for this purpose by including discussion on regional commitments and priorities in these, in synergy with activities of the UfM Secretariat; and reconfirm in this context their support for the principles underlying the Busan Partnership Agreement: Ownership of development priorities by developing countries; Focus on results; Inclusive development partnerships; Transparency and accountability;
- As a complement to this, encourage reinforcement of **sector donor coordination at regional level**, in the context of regular UfM/Euro-Med sectoral policy dialogue fora;
- Encourage further, as a support to regional cooperation fora, the **expansion of sectoral coordination for infrastructure investment and SME finance**, building on the experience in environment and transport mentioned above, and aiming to ensure efficient preparation of priority investment projects and subsequent support to their implementation;
- Support the **UfM Secretariat's key role** in facilitating this, alongside the EFIs, IFIs and the UfM co-presidencies; encourage full participation of all relevant national financing institutions therein; and support **reinforced attention to the employment-creation dimension** of this work as well as continued attention to the development of **innovative financing mechanisms**;



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- Undertake to **facilitate** broad **involvement of wider Euro-Med stakeholders** in the definition and implementation of the regional integration agenda: including via a strengthened private sector participation in policy dialogue and investment planning, helping to identify obstacles for job creation and direct investment, and options for removing them; as well as via support for adequate incentives, catalysts and enablers, including SME access to finance and activities such as regional sectoral business fora;
- As regional cooperation requires **mutual investment** at various levels and **interaction** of all kinds, especially in the trade and economic spheres, commit to encouraging actions all across their administrations to **create a conducive environment for cooperation** in these spheres as well as in other sectors to achieve the full potential of the Mediterranean region, including by making progress in the volume and quality of the foreign direct investment directed to UfM Southern Partners;
- Recommend **even closer alignment of the UfM labelling process with the regionally agreed priorities**, and encourage project preparation to take place in close cooperation with all relevant players to further enhance opportunities for subsequent financing;
- Confirm their strong support for the development of the **UfM Secretariat's** activities and their intentions to ensure adequate and predictable **support for its functioning**, while remaining on a voluntary basis;
- Intend to collaborate in the implementation of the principles of the revised **European Neighborhood Policy**, and its priorities, ie economic modernisation and entrepreneurship; employment and employability: focus on youth; partnerships for growth; transport and connectivity; energy security and climate action; security; migration and mobility;
- Suggest exploring the role of the UfM Secretariat as a possible forum suitable to facilitate regional **review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**, as envisaged in the UN Declaration; acknowledging the activities of Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development and needs towards implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- Express their willingness to continue to engage with the UfM process in areas pertaining to their responsibilities; and encourage the UfM Secretariat to explore how they could facilitate this, including possibly within the context of the Annual UfM Regional Forum;
- Across the board of the above recommendations, aim to do their part to ensure a **balanced participation** of men and women;



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- Envisage **reconvening at the level of ministers in two years' time** to review progress and opportunities.

Finally, Ministers would like to express deep gratitude to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for its warm hospitality; and to the UfM Secretariat and the EU Co-presidency for helping to convene this meeting.