

UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy
Rome
1 December 2016
Speech by Fathallah Sijilmassi, UfM Secretary General

Dear Ministers,

Dear UfM Co-Presidents,

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here in Italy today on the occasion of this 2nd ministerial conference dealing with Energy in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Let me express my personal gratitude to Italy our host country, for its warm

welcome and for its strong involvement to facilitate the holding of this ministerial and more broadly in Mediterranean affairs.

I would like to thank as well our **UfM Co-Presidency**. Minister Saif, Commissioner Cañete. Thank you for your strong commitment. As with all UfM fields of activity, the leadership of the co-presidency has proven instrumental to advance our work and enhance regional cooperation efforts. As you know, 10 UfM Ministerial meetings have taken place in the course of the last years on other key areas of activity and several new ministerial meetings are already foreseen.

I want to pay tribute to the excellent work done by the UfM High Level Working Groups for Energy Platforms, and to thank the Member States Representatives in SOM and Ad-hoc SOM, as well as the European Commission, DG Energy, for their continuous commitment. I also value the exchange which took place with the Euro-Mediterranean Stakeholders and their recommendations.

Ministers,
Excellencies,

Today's ministerial meeting consolidates a structured policy dialogue and **strengthens regional cooperation in one of the most strategic sectors for the region's future** in the light of the challenges ahead.

I would like to recall the important **milestones that led us to today's UfM Energy Ministerial** and to the set-up of this structured policy dialogue in the Energy sector:

- The previous 2013 UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy of course
- The UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, in Athens, on May 2014

- The High-Level Conference on Euro-Mediterranean Energy Cooperation, already in Rome, in November 2014 with the recommendation for the UfM to create high-level energy platforms
- The Decision of the UFM Senior Officials regarding regional energy cooperation, in Brussels, on March 2015 giving to UfM Secretariat the mandate to build this structured cooperation.
- And let's not forget the UfM Ministerial meeting on Regional Cooperation and Planning, in June 2016 in Jordan, which stressed the importance of building strong energy cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region through a shared vision and common priorities.

The **ministerial declaration** today will allow to step up regional cooperation on energy in order to deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply, a major factor for stability and shared prosperity in the Mediterranean region.

We are deciding a **coherent regional and inclusive approach** through the three Energy Platforms, namely the UfM Gas Platform, the UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform and the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform.

The **UfM energy platforms** are flexible and effective structures which, under the coordination of the Co-Presidency, will organise and support systematic dialogue among UfM Members, financial institutions, regional organisations, industrial enterprises and experts. They will allow to identify specific targets and encourage strong coordination between work in the context of each Platform and work at country level.

As we are all just coming back from the very successful Marrakech COP22, we know that the global agenda of **climate change** plays a major role in our regional energy cooperation with regard to the Paris Agreement and to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Governments, communities, civil

society organizations, businesses, international and intergovernmental organizations: we are all mobilized for the challenges that face us.

An enhanced regional dialogue leading to better response to the challenges in the Mediterranean region is the “raison d’être” of the UfM. In the strategic Energy field, the scope of regional cooperation needs to cover key challenges as the promotion and development of renewable energies and energy efficiency, the further development of the gas market, including reliable supply transportation and transit of natural gas, and the progressive integration of electricity markets.

The UfM platforms are established to structure this policy dialogue, with a view to identifying concrete partnership actions and following up on their implementation. As such, they will play a central role in taking energy cooperation in the Mediterranean region forward.

The UfM Secretariat will also connect the platforms' inputs with the UfM **Private Sector Strategy** and with all activities aiming to reinforce the role of the private sector in the region's socio-economic growth and sustainable development. I would mention as an example the launching by the UfM Secretariat and the EBRD in the framework of COP22 of the UfM-labelled project "SEMED Private Renewable Energy Framework (SPREF)" which aims to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. Through this project, EBRD will provide financing of up to €227.5 million and will mobilize further investment from other parties of up to €834 million. As well, it is foreseen to organize a UfM Energy and Climate Change Business Forum in 2017, potentially back-to-back with the annual meeting of the three UfM Energy Platforms and in line with the UfM Strategy for the private sector.

Our declaration also foresees to explore the possibilities to better coordinate ongoing and future efforts by **local authorities** in promoting and deploying renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in addressing the adaptation challenges that a changing climate poses.

Excellencies,

Cooperation in the energy sector is a major element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. A secure, sustainable and competitive energy supply is a priority for all our countries.

Today's meeting demonstrates the common will of UfM countries to work together in the areas of energy and climate action.

This positive support and involvement of governments, partners and all the parties involved will most probably send a confident signal to market players regarding the feasibility of investments and our region's economic potential.

We are endorsing today the **two-year work programmes** established for the three UfM Energy Platforms. The UfM Energy Platforms will report **to the UfM Senior Officials** on the progress of their work annually – with the first report to be given by the end of 2017.

Member States and all stakeholders involved can count on the continuous commitment of **the UfM Secretariat** to work collectively towards achieving our common objectives.

Thank you for your attention.

