

Speech by H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Saif
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Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Good morning,

I am pleased to be here with you today at the beautiful City of Rome, at this high level conference of the Energy Ministers at the UfM Platform, with the aim to utilize this platform for an in-depth discussion of the Mediterranean perspective on Energy challenges including Climate Change, that will hopefully set common principles and visions for our collective efforts and cooperation between the UfM countries as drafted in the newly established Platforms on Gas, Electricity and Renewable Energy.

Before I embark on delivering my remarks, allow me first to extend my sincere thanks to the Italian Government for hosting the ministerial conference today, and the European Commission and UfM Secretariat for their great efforts and remarkable role in organizing this event and preparing the required documentations.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Jordan as a Co-Presidency (for the last 4 years) reflected its strong political will to build new bridges of cooperation and coordination

between the 43 countries as it has successfully supported and co-organized many operational and ad-hoc meetings in addition to the ten ministerial meetings on various fields and sectors.

The UfM Co-presidency is preparing now for the second UfM Regional Forum in Barcelona on the 23rd of January 2017, bringing together the UfM Foreign Ministers and their representatives under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, and the High Representative of the EU and Vice President of the European Commission. In this Ministerial Forum, the UfM partner countries will adopt a new UfM Roadmap which aims at strengthening the role of the UfM towards an enhanced regional cooperation and integration in the Mediterranean.

The Jordanian Co-presidency together with its EU partner Co-presidency shall invest in this roadmap to build on all the successes and achievements of the UfM so far. Jordan, as a southern Co-presidency is fully aware of the accelerating turmoil and turbulences in the region. Thus Jordan is closely cooperating and working with partner countries and the international community as a whole to bring about stability and security.

The work of the UfM is directly related to handling our common challenges and threats including terrorism, radicalization, migration and security.

The subject of our meeting today, energy, is also one of the crucial fields that the Mediterranean needs. Providing energy to the peoples of the Mediterranean shall to a great extent contribute to the prosperity and healthy economy which in turn functions as a major tool of fighting radicalization in general.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Energy is an issue of strategic importance from the point of view of stability and development. It is essential that we identify the best energy solutions for our countries which enhance security of supply, reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, reduce our carbon footprint and, of course, minimize costs for all consumers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you are aware, Jordan is overwhelmingly reliant on energy imports. This has a negative impact on our economy and social development. Approximately 97% of the country's total energy demand is imported. In fact, energy imports cost accounted nearly 14% of the GDP in 2015.

Moreover, Jordan is destined to receive influxes of Refugees from neighboring countries, lastly from Syria, currently about 1.3 Million entered Jordan amounting to an increase of almost 21% of the population, and sharing their energy and water resources, education, health and housing schemes with the Jordanians.

Due to the above situation, Jordan is currently undergoing a paradigm shift in terms of energy policy planning.

To fulfill His Majesty king Abdullah II vision on Energy, Jordan is working actively on implementing its national energy strategy and Vision for 2025. The strategy has suggested a robust package of legislative, administrative and technological innovations aiming to steer the country into more reliable, sustainable and environmentally friendly energy resources.

In the medium to long term, we believe Jordan is on track to reduce its energy import dependence through the use of local energy resources from renewables, a segment that has seen a surge of interest, and introduction of oil shale and the nuclear option. Jordan is also moving to diversify its

energy imports, both as regards routes and energy suppliers. Moreover, the construction of LNG and LPG terminals opens new venues of imports. These options will reduce our reliance on energy imports to reach about 60% by 2025 as compared to the current 97% according to the National Energy Strategy.

Excellencies

Most of the South Mediterranean countries, the Arab countries in particular, have made great efforts to meet their energy demand and developed their Energy Strategies accordingly. An important challenge for these countries is securing a sustainable and affordable energy supply by developing modern technologies and emerging an effective energy mix of renewable and conventional energies. This offers tremendous business potential for the UfM countries cooperation.

Taking the large investment projects in the Arab world and the EU expertise into account, this will open mutual cooperation and build strategic partnerships in the energy sector based on mutual benefit and win-win situation among the UfM countries.

The Mediterranean region as a whole and the European Union (EU) will face major energy and climate challenges in the coming decades. Energy demand will rise significantly, while fossil fuel prices will most likely continue to follow an unstable and most likely rising trend. To address these challenges, the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean will have to intensify their efforts to develop adequate policies in the field of sustainable energy, in order to enhance energy security and diversify the supply resources.

The Mediterranean region has an enormous, and largely untapped, potential in the energy field (Gas, Electricity Networks and Renewable Energy). There is an opportunity for cooperation among all interested

parties, because the benefits of the necessary investments can be shared in an equitable way.

I could say that, after passing about (8) years on the establishment of the UfM, slight progress has been achieved and the cooperation among the UfM countries is still marginal. More intensified work is urgently needed on the following Schemes:

- Develop electricity grid interconnections on local and regional scope in order to allow for electricity trade in the UfM Region.
- Foster and encourage the transfer of know-how and technology,
- Support the setting up of an adequate legal, regulatory, economic, institutional and organisational environment to enable the development of joint energy projects and activities.
- Increase efforts aiming at minimizing the growth of energy demand, by improving energy efficiency and energy savings,
- Promote Electricity generation from renewable sources of energy.

Excellencies,

In order to keep the momentum and the aims of the UfM could be recognized by member states especially southern the Mediterranean;

Jordan from its side as a Co-Presidency, would like to urge all member states of the UfM to intensify the work and collaborate with the UfM Secretariat, in order to agree on a Road Map with clear milestone and timetable to achieve the activities listed in the Work Programs of the three Platforms on Gas, Electricity and Renewable Energy as presented in front of you at this conference.

Finally, I believe that the Southern group of the UfM is well prepared to join all the efforts to enhance the UfM regional cooperation in the energy field. Jordan as a Co-presidency, strategic Platform and hub country, can play a major role linking electricity and gas networks among the region.

Thank you