



**Address by HE Mr Nasser Kamel,
Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean,
to the “Third UfM Regional Forum:
10 years building together the future of regional cooperation”
(Barcelona, Monday, 8th October, 2018)**

A renewed commitment for regional cooperation and prosperity

Dear Co-Presidents,
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Dear Ambassadors,
Excellencies,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Spanish Government, and more specifically, HE Mr Josep Borrell, whose resolute commitment to the mission and role of the UfM was indispensable for the success of our gathering today.

I would like to thank the Co-Presidents of the UfM, HE Ms Federica Mogherini, and HE Mr Ayman El Safadi, along with their capable senior officials. Their tireless efforts have supported our activities and guided our path towards more tangible achievements.

The Commission’s European Neighbourhood Policy was instrumental in underpinning and sustaining our work, under the leadership of Commissioner Hahn, who honoured us by inaugurating our Med4Jobs Stakeholders’ Dialogue early this morning.

I am also grateful to the Member States for supporting the Secretariat through tireless efforts of their Line Ministers and Senior Officials. We shall always count on your continuous support and active engagement to meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples in the region.

This year, our Regional Forum coincides with the 10th Anniversary of the Paris Agreement” that led to the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean. Ten years down the path of regional cooperation and integration, this Forum shows our collective commitment to regional dialogue, convergence and integration in the UfM area of action. The strategic link between Europe and the Mediterranean as well as our Roadmap provide a firm basis for progress in achieving our common goals. The Forum gives us the perfect opportunity to take stock of our achievements and present a forward-looking vision for crossing yet another threshold.

The UfM Roadmap for Action is our coessential frame of reference. And we, at the Secretariat, are fully committed to honour the mandate in the Roadmap. It gives us a strengthened sense of orientation, with a focus on enhancing political dialogue, ensuring the contribution of our activities to human and sustainable development, consolidating regional integration, and on reinforcing the UfM capacity for action.

We are faced with a multitude of challenges to, and opportunities for, sustainable development. Challenges include environmental degradation, climate change adaptation,



elevated unemployment, socio-economic disparities, forced displacement and extremism. The list is long. National policies alone cannot deal with these challenges timely and effectively. We need a coordinated regional approach that links the global and national policy frameworks at the nexus of implementation.

The UfM facilitates the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals by linking related global and regional policy frameworks in the Euro-Mediterranean region. We stimulate political dialogue, while promoting gradual, but steady convergence and integration towards higher standards through UfM-brokered implementation. Our unique institutional architecture and working methodology allows us to deliver concrete projects, programs and initiatives, with tangible impact on the ground. So, it would not be an exaggeration to state that, if the UfM did not exist, it would have to be created, sooner or later.

We have a broad base to capitalize upon, as we expand the spectrum of our activities, create new synergies and partnerships, and consolidate our role as a platform of regional dialogue and integration. With the ongoing support of the Co-Presidency and Member States, new milestones are within our reach.

Taking Stock of Progress

We have made notable progress towards achieving the objectives of our Roadmap.

Firstly, we have “strengthened the emphasis on human development, especially through the empowerment of youth and women”.

To this end:

-We are convening our flagship Women’s Conference in the Mediterranean, in Lisbon, the day after tomorrow. It will be a showcase of effective implementation of our Ministers’ renewed pledge to enhance the role of women in Euro-Mediterranean societies;

-We coordinated regional efforts within the “Med4Jobs Framework Initiative”. In fact, the first Stakeholders’ Dialogue of this Initiative is being held on the margins of our Forum, today;

-We extended the “Forming Responsible Citizens” project to new countries, following its success in other Member States;

-We launched a Euro-Mediterranean network of experts for the prevention of violent extremism.

Secondly, we "furthered regional economic integration through higher levels of direct investment, trade facilitation and better market access, as well as the development of infrastructure networks and connectivity."

In this context:



-We convened the “Tenth UfM Trade Ministerial Meeting” last March to promote trade and investment. Our Trade Ministers agreed to work on modernizing rules of origin to enhance trade flows in the region. They also agreed to launch a “UfM Business Forum” in 2019;

-We organized the first “Energy and Climate Business Forum” last October. In the aftermath of the Forum, we inaugurated an initiative on the Euro-Mediterranean Federation of energy-related business associations;

-Last May, we convoked the “UfM Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics”. There, we launched the ‘TransLogMed project’, which aims to support regional integration in the transport and logistics sector. We also finalized a study on the formulation of a Euro-Mediterranean strategy for the connectivity of transport networks.

These are just a few examples of what has been done to translate the UfM Roadmap into actions on the ground.

Today, we would also like to present a vision that emphasizes three key pathways for a more actively engaged and impact oriented Secretariat. The proposed pathways are, the ‘Enhanced Value Proposition’, ‘Enhanced Outreach’, and the ‘Enhanced Learning Capacity’. Please allow me to elaborate on this.

First> Enhanced Value Proposition

The Secretariat delivers on its mandate and co-creates value with other constituent parties of its extended ecosystem. It works with global and regional organizations, Governments, IFIs, Private and Public Sectors, Civil Society Organizations, and Academia. It functions as a facilitator of regional cooperation on the global value chain, adding value on many levels. The regional integration indicators study, which is already underway, testifies to this role. This study will help quantify the opportunity cost of the untapped potential for economic integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

In addition, the Secretariat plays a crucial role in brokering pragmatic solutions within complex political contexts. The Donors’ Conference for the Gaza Desalination Facility, held last March, is a case in point.

The action-driven UfM Working Methodology emphasizes the importance of political forums, regional policy platforms for consensus-building, and projects with regional impact.

We also need a new conceptual layer to guide the operational compass of the Secretariat. This layer comprises a holistic approach, which emphasizes connecting the dots between our thematic priorities. The Water-Energy-Food nexus is a classic example. But, so are many of the relatively new cross-sectoral areas, like the Blue Economy.

We engage and liaise with key cooperation actors within our extended ecosystem, including the League of Arab States, the 5+5 Dialogue and the Agadir Agreement trade framework, just to name a few. In addition to interaction at global and regional levels, the Secretariat has been



active on South-to-South and Triangular Cooperation modalities. As such, the UfM is indeed a regional chapter on the Global Agenda.

Second> Enhanced Outreach

As the UfM builds its credibility as an action-oriented organization, the Secretariat forges key alliances and partnerships, such as with the BMZ in Germany, S.I.D.A. in Sweden, and also with Norway, in addition to the valuable conventional contributions of the European Commission and the Member States.

I believe we all need to showcase those activities. We should reach out to potential beneficiaries and ultimate stakeholders of our work, that is to say our citizens at large.

I would appeal to the Member States to support the Secretariat in its outreach and external communication activities. We should work together, to convey to wider audiences, the UfM message of enhancing Euro-Mediterranean integration through political dialogue, policy platforms and projects with a regional impact.

The UfM is still young. But, it has a story to tell, a story that will be expanding and enriching. This story deserves to be spread, celebrated and scaled-up in order to inspire and promote positive change.

Third> Enhanced Learning Capacity

The Union for the Mediterranean is still evolving towards maturity, but it is definitely getting there as it moves up the learning curve. The Secretariat punches above its weight, in terms of its operational and technical carrying capacities. The UfM pursues optimal capacity utilization, while revamping its project-labelling concept, streamlining its operations and amplifying its ecosystem. The Secretariat's cognitive capacity also warrants attention as new technologies are progressively changing the working landscape. This calls for a learning organization model that fosters talent, while cultivating new skills as the organization improves its performance. Change management, resilience and complex problem solving are basic skills needed, for both the present, and the future. Equipping our human capital with these skills is an impact oriented investment in our major asset. This vision is meant to deliver on our Roadmap's call for strengthening the UfM capacity for Action.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my full dedication and resolute commitment to the goals of the UfM as well as to its cause, which perfectly capture and reflect the common vision of its Member States.

A better future is possible for the Euro-Mediterranean region. We shall all assume our responsibility towards this end, today, and every other day.

Thank you, Excellencies.