



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Conclusions by the UfM Secretary General

UfM Ministerial Policy Conference “Jobs, Skills and Opportunities for All”

Cascais, 2 April, 2019

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

First of all, please allow me to thank all the panelists and participants to this Conference, which once again confirms that employment is a crucial prerequisite for development in our region, and that skill development and stakeholder mobilization are, undoubtedly indispensable to it.

Job creation in the UfM region remains to be a **cause that has not yet reached its full potential**, and the path ahead is one that would need to pass by the **ports of call** of harmonization, complementarity, innovation and integration.

Despite the ongoing efforts to tackle the full repertoire of challenges associated with unemployment, the **decent work deficit** generated by informal employment and by falling short of generating an inclusive growth remain to be a major impediment to sustainable, inclusive regional development.

This comes at a time when the global business community finds itself increasingly entangled in a **rapidly-shifting digital landscape** and a post-digital rhetoric.

Although the business world has universally adopted instruments for estimating the economic cost of unemployment and exclusion, **endeavors to estimate their social cost lag behind**.

Having said that, and following today's discussions throughout the Conference, I have reasons to feel even more confident about **the UfM Secretariat's Work Programme** in the area of business development and employment.

Just two weeks ago we had a UfM Workshop on Informal Business Integration and the transition from Informal Economy to Informal Employment, and we are currently preparing for a UfM Business Forum in Egypt, as well as conferences on the Future of Work, Digital Skills for the Future, Social Economy, SMEs Development, among other themes that form the core of our efforts in this priority area for the UfM Member States.

Like always, **women and youth form the crux** of human development efforts at the UfM Secretariat, and beyond the usual metrics, I would like to second the messages and the conclusions that today's sessions have yielded: on the conduct of each depends the fate of all in our region.

Leveraging on our multi-stakeholder approach at the UfMS, we will keep on doing what we do best: building meaningful synergies and complementarities between all actors and interlocutors, complementing the ongoing political dialogue with action-oriented projects and initiatives, and promoting replicable and scalable best practices, not to mention integrated, innovative solutions to address the employment challenge in the region.

Thank you very much for your attention./.