



## **UfM Water Expert Group Meeting 9-10 June 2020**

### **Opening remarks UfM Secretary General, Mr. Nasser Kamel**

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear colleagues,

- Water resources management in the Mediterranean remains a quite challenging sector: there are no good news on natural conditions and climate change impacts; our development efforts demand even more water in places it is not available; water governance settings are improving but should be further attuned to needs and emerging challenges; and, there is insufficient public and donor financing, while private sector investments remain limited including due to lack of suitable regulatory frameworks and high risks involved.

- Governments clearly state the need for regional cooperation and raise demand for regional action to assist them tackle these priorities on their national agendas.

UfM is strong in fostering that due to the roles, you, its Member States, have mandated it with and you, the regional institutions, stakeholder organisations and development partners, are engaging with us to deliver results hand-in-hand.

- The COVID-19 crisis proves, as clearly as ever, the inextricable link of health with access to safe water and hygiene, with the WASH agenda being among the centrepiece for responses.

The crisis also proves the risks of water-related inequalities, particularly for the more vulnerable populations.

Implementing water efficiency options and intensifying efforts to improve the good chemical, quantitative and ecological health of all waters, can increase water availability for all uses and contribute to enhancing environmental health.



It is also key for making real sustainable development options and strengthening the resilience of our societies.

Improved water governance and sustainable financing instruments contribute to the same direction creating the enabling environment.

All these should not be undermined in post COVID-19 recovery plans.

On the contrary, they should become central in our strive for sustainable development, peace and security.

It is one of these unique times in history that an unprecedented crisis provides a great opportunity that should not be missed.

- Let us focus therefore on implementation.

We have established strategies and plans.

Maybe we need to revisit them under the circumstances, and every time necessary.

But let's do that with a view of delivering the tangibles we all want for our citizens and environment.

All four Thematic Areas and the Financial Strategy of the UfM Water Agenda can be of assistance.

Particularly the Water-Energy-Food-EcosystemsNexus and the Water-Employment-Migration agendas, including their integration points, as well as the WASH agenda, can contribute for solutions through such upcoming recovery investments, including with a focus on Gender and Youth.

- We call for enhanced operational partnerships to make these happen; today we need this more than ever. First, with our prime beneficiaries, our Member States.



Then with the range of institutions and stakeholders active in the region and its countries.

And, with development partners, like the European Commission, IFIs, GEF, GCF and UN agencies as well as with bilateral agencies like Sida, GIZ, AfD, ADA, and more.

Last, with the private sector that is expected to make the step forward, adding to our common and concerted efforts.

- Let me sincerely thank each and every one for engaging to this on-line consultation gathering.

We have a lot to share and a lot to plan together.

Allow me to particularly thank our co-Presidency, Jordan and the European Commission for their guidance and for co-chairing the event, Sweden/Sida for its continuous and generous support, and the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean for its long-lasting partnership and technical assistance.

Thank you very much for your attention and I wish you a fruitful meeting.