

2nd Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Action

Cairo, 4 October 2021

DECLARATION

The Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), gathered for their second Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Action in Cairo on 4 October 2021 under the Co-Presidency of H.E. Nabil Masarweh, Minister of Environment for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, H.E. Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal, and H.E. Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries for the European Union (EU), and in the presence of H.E. Mr. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat,

Recalling

- The 2014 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, as well as the other relevant UfM ministerial declarations, in particular the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declarations on Sustainable Blue Economy of 2 February 2021 and Energy of 14 June 2021;
- The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement;
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the ongoing process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
- The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain hazardous Chemicals and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
- The outcomes of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4);
- The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”), its protocols and decisions, including the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- The outcomes of the UN Climate Action Summits of September 2019 and December 2020 and the call for increasing climate ambition;
- The UN Summit on Biodiversity of 30th September 2020;
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;
- The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Reports, UNEP’s report, Making Peace with Nature, and the 5th edition of the UN’s Global Biodiversity Outlook report;
- The commitment of developed countries to the goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020 from a wide variety of sources to support climate action in developing countries.

Acknowledging

1. The summary for policy makers of the **First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1)** by the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) on the risks associated with climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean region as an important

input from the scientific community to inform future climate and environmental actions in the region;

2. The serious **impacts of climate change** in the Mediterranean region, which is warming 20% faster than the global mean temperature, making it one of the world's climate change hotspots, as per the findings of the MAR1;
3. The multiple **challenges to shared environmental assets** in the Mediterranean region, including but not limited to: temperature increases, natural disasters and extreme weather events like floods, heatwaves and droughts, sea level rise and acidification, water scarcity, desertification, land and ecosystem degradation and fragmentation, biodiversity loss, overfishing, invasive alien species, wildlife trafficking, deforestation, wildfires, sand storms, air, water and soil pollution;
4. The significant risks posed by these challenges to ecosystems and their services, human lives and societies, including their cultural heritage, and economies, thus becoming **potential threat multipliers** adding to pre-existing vulnerabilities of the Mediterranean region, significantly impacting security, development and peacebuilding;
5. The need to strengthen the science policy interface at all levels to support and promote science-based sustainable development actions;
6. The **economic benefits and opportunities**, also in terms of job-creation and social inclusion, associated with decisive, immediate and concerted efforts to transition to sustainable, climate-neutral, green, fair, circular and resilient economies, which will outweigh the cost of inaction or delayed action and the investment required.

and highlighting that

7. COVID-19 has shown that **our health and our planet's health** are inextricably intertwined, with climate change and increased human pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems increasing risks for outbreaks of zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential;
8. **Protection, restoration and sustainable management** of biodiversity and ecosystems and tackling climate change in an integrated manner must be an essential part of immediate action with near and mid-term targets, to be coherent with longer-term strategies for the protection of human health and well-being;
9. The full implementation of the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development, the UNFCCC, the **Paris Agreement** and other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, remains crucial to prepare the world for future systemic shocks and uncertainties and represents the global blueprint for sustainable recovery and development;
10. Through its **European Green Deal**, the European Union has stepped up its commitments and set a blueprint to achieve climate neutrality in the EU by 2050 and curb biodiversity loss and pollution while boosting green, sustainable and inclusive growth for resilient societies.

Willing to

1. **Lead by example and reflect the highest possible ambition** by accelerating the **transition towards sustainable, climate-neutral, green, fair, circular and resilient economies**;
2. Contain the rise in temperatures within 1,5°C with respect to pre-industrial levels, in order to avoid the worst consequences of global warming, consistent with the recommendations of the latest IPCC report;
3. Urgently **tackle climate and environmental** challenges through policies, strategies and programmes to increase the region's **adaptation capacity and resilience**;

4. Ensure that the **post-COVID 19 economic recovery and growth** measures respect the “**do no harm**” principle and contribute to the sustainable and inclusive development of the Mediterranean by *building back better* and *leaving no one behind*;
5. **Mainstream** environment and climate action in **policies, national budgets, fiscal measures, domestic and international finance and investments** in all sectors, in particular energy, agriculture, fisheries, transport, manufacturing and tourism including, inter alia, by working with Multilateral Development Banks and relevant Development Finance Institutions and by associating the private sector;
6. Promote **gender-responsive and youth-responsive climate and environment policies** and support women’s and youth engagement in building climate and environment resilience, while paying due attention to the most vulnerable people, places and ecosystems;
7. Strengthen **regional cooperation** and joint action, including - where possible – through transboundary initiatives, to urgently and efficiently address shared environmental and climate challenges, build relevant consensus and exchanges knowledge and best practices;
8. Build **partnerships** between governments and other relevant **stakeholders**, such as regional and local governments, civil society, the scientific community and the private sector.

In the light of these Climate and Environmental emergencies, reflecting common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of countries’ different national circumstances, we *HEREBY INTEND TO* join efforts and step up the implementation of relevant global and regional commitments to achieve a balance between anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and removal as soon as possible during the 2nd half of the century, while promoting fair, resilient and resource-efficient economies, reducing pollution and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems in the Mediterranean region.

This may entail:

- a. **Updating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reflect the highest possible ambition and a progression beyond the current ones**, with clear and transparent targets, and striving to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS). We are preparing more ambitious NDCs and LT-LEDS ahead of COP 26. We are also preparing to contribute towards the achievement of the global goal on adaptation by stepping up our adaptation actions in the context of the Paris Agreement, and to the collective efforts to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- b. Developing ambitious **climate-resilient and nature-positive policies** and **post-COVID 19 sustainable and inclusive recovery and growth plans** aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives and in accordance with national priorities which may cover – inter alia – budgets and green procurement frameworks; progressive reduction of fossil fuels use including through gradual phase-out of inefficient subsidies; accelerated clean, safe and sustainable energy transition; and reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment for sustainable investments and just transition mechanisms;
- c. Increasing **action on adaptation** by taking appropriate measures aimed at enhancing the countries’ capacities to respond to the impacts of climate change and make the Mediterranean region more climate-resilient. Adaptive measures could include ecosystems management and restoration; sustainable water and coastal management solutions; actions targeting land degradation, desertification and coastal erosion; disaster risk reduction including emergency preparedness; climate-proofing infrastructures and investments; and promotion of nature-based solutions;
- d. **Developing and implementing environmental policies and actions** aiming at preventing and reducing air, water, marine and soil pollution, towards achieving the long-term objective of **zero pollution** in order to protect human health and well-being and safeguard the environment,

taking into account, and where appropriate complementing, existing initiatives under the Barcelona Convention and other relevant frameworks. Special attention should be given to plastic pollution, in particular marine litter and the impact of single use plastics;

- e. Developing policies and taking necessary actions for the transition to a **circular, green, inclusive and resource efficient economy** aiming at the sustainable and **integrated management of natural resources**, as well as **sustainable consumption and production patterns**;
- f. Developing policies to protect, manage and restore **biodiversity**, in particular supporting the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and preparations for the adoption of an ambitious **post-2020 global biodiversity framework**. This would include mainstreaming biodiversity into other policy areas, in particular agriculture and fisheries among others, creating an ambitious, ecologically representative, well-managed and well-connected system of protected areas, representing 30% of marine and 30% of terrestrial ecosystems, and implementing **nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches** as a fundamental part of actions addressing climate change;
- g. **Taking steps to reduce air pollution in the region**, in particular the reduction of sulphur oxide (SO_x) emissions, including through the implementation of the December 2019 decision by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;
- h. Developing policies and actions to **ensure food security** through sustainable and resilient **food systems**, contributing to the protection of public health and preserving the affordability of food in line with the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021; with a specific focus on healthy and sustainable nutrition models and diets like the Mediterranean Diet;
- i. **Scaling-up resources** (including finance, trade, capacity building and skills development, technology development and transfer and innovation) **to support the transition towards more resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies**. In particular, investments should promote the clean, safe and sustainable energy transition and sustainable economic activities and projects in sectors such as urban and rural development, green and circular economy, water and waste management, restoration and protection of biodiversity, transport and smart mobility, climate-resilient food systems and value chains, tourism and cultural and natural heritage. To this end, we support the further expansion of the International Platform for Sustainable Finance and the relevant initiatives of the “One Planet Summit”. We also encourage revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and exploring, where relevant and possible, options for the development of carbon pricing schemes;
- j. Enhancing **cooperation and research** in areas of common interest on climate action and environment, fostering **innovation for low greenhouse gases emissions technology development** and transfer and reinforcing the **science-society-policy nexus** for environmental and climate governance, including through a continued support to the MedECC network and other relevant initiatives such as PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean) and the BLUEMED Initiative for Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean region;
- k. Building and **strengthening domestic capacities** to implement the provisions of the Enhanced Transparency framework under the Paris Agreement, including robust and sustainable institutional arrangements for climate relevant data;
- l. Actively **engaging all stakeholders**, including national, regional and local authorities and administrations, civil society, the private sector and the academia in the design, development, implementation and monitoring of climate and environmental policies and actions;
- m. Integrating **gender and youth** considerations into climate and environment policies, actions and investments, taking also into account vulnerable groups, including through tailored gender-responsive and youth-responsive capacity building and awareness measures, and enhanced

participation of women and youth in environment and climate policy making, implementation and monitoring;

- n. Enhancing awareness and understanding of climate change and environmental degradation through appropriate **education programmes**, to accelerate the **civic engagement** as well as **behavioural and lifestyle change** already initiated by younger generations and further promote **consumer awareness**;
- o. Reinforcing **regional cooperation**, through the Union for the Mediterranean and other relevant regional fora, to improve policy coordination, share knowledge and best practices, mobilise means of implementation, identify possible regional solutions for common challenges, foster the green transition in the region;
- p. Continuing to work together to build **consensus** to the extent possible on critical issues under the agendas of the relevant multilateral conventions and agreements on environment and climate, and enhancing cooperation to ensure their effective implementation.

Underlining the role of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as a key forum for political dialogue in the region and a valuable platform to achieve effective regional cooperation, we invite the UfM Environment and Climate Change Working Group to finalise and support the implementation of the UfM Agenda 2030 towards a Greener Mediterranean and UfM Climate Action Roadmap, in line with the objectives of this Declaration, and monitor their progress.

We express our deep gratitude to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for its warm hospitality and to the UfM Secretariat for helping to convene this meeting.

We intend to reconvene in principle in 4 years to discuss the appropriate follow-up.

The present instrument is not intended to create rights or obligations under international or domestic law or to result in binding financial implications.