

**TUNIS DECLARATION OF THE
5TH MEDITERRANEAN WATER FORUM –
TOWARDS THE 10TH WORLD WATER FORUM
« TOGETHER FOR SHARED WATER SOBRIETY »**

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation gathered in Tunis, on February 5, 2024, on the occasion of our participation in the ministerial segment of the 5th Mediterranean Water Forum, driven by a common vision formulated by the slogan “Together for water sobriety shared”,

Recognize that:

1. Water is a cross cutting element in sustaining life, ecosystems, and economic activities.
2. There is a need for immediate and coordinated action to secure a water-sustainable future for our region.
- 2.bis. Water is a human and social right and not primarily an economic good and that reliable access to safe water sufficient to meet the vital human needs of drinking and food is the most basic human right and a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.
3. Providing people with access to the vital human needs of water, including drinking water, food-water, i.e water needed for food production, and water needed for sanitation is an integral component of human development and public health and sanitation.
4. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing the right of individuals to water and sanitation and yet today more than 180 million people in the Mediterranean region are still living in water poverty (less than 1,000 m³ of water) and 63 million have less than 500 m³ of water per capita per year (considered “shortage” threshold).
5. The Mediterranean region is considered as the hotspot of water scarcity which is exacerbated by the effects of climate change.
6. The severe impact of climate change on the Mediterranean region is exacerbating water scarcity and is contributing to extreme weather events.

7. The increased frequency and intensity of droughts and floods in the region are posing significant threats to water security and livelihoods.
8. There is a growing need to address water as a key to climate change adaptation and resilience and to find ways to ensure sufficient funding for coordinated & agreed water infrastructure from the climate funds.
9. Despite its key role in ensuring the climate resilience of the national economy, water remains underfinanced.
10. The effects of climate change significantly increase the costs of water security in the Mediterranean region.
11. The transition to a sustainable blue economy is of paramount importance in the Mediterranean region,
12. The integrated, inclusive, and sustainable management of water resources is crucial to meeting the water needs of different socio-economic sectors.
13. There is a need to conceptualize and concretely implement cross-sectoral approaches, including the Water Energy Food Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus, to address the socio-economic and environmental challenges facing water, energy, food security and ecosystems protection as part of a holistic and coordinated approach, as all these sectors are inextricably linked. In this framework, we acknowledge the benefits provided by communities of Practice, as well as the access to cost-benefit innovative technologies and tools, especially within the energy sector.
14. The use of the non-conventional water resources in the Mediterranean is increasingly being considered as an alternative solution for particular uses to alleviate the pressure on the already existing natural water resources and to address global water scarcity.
15. The Union for the Mediterranean Policy Framework for Actions 2030 composed of the UfM Water Agenda and its Financial Strategy is a major component of the Euro-Mediterranean framework for addressing the challenges of climate change and water management.
16. The role of women and youth in water management and decision-making processes and their unique perspectives in addressing water challenges is invaluable and should be given more attention.
17. The Mediterranean Water Forum, since its first convening in Marrakesh, in 2011, has contributed to bringing together the main

actors of the Mediterranean water community, and has created a conducive environment for discussions to develop strategies for sustainable management of water resources in the Mediterranean while making water a political priority at global, regional, and national level.

We welcome,

18. The 2023 United Nations Water Conference which concluded with the adoption of the Water Action Plan which remains a “historic” document containing more than 700 commitments aimed at driving the transformation towards a secure world in water resources.
19. The International Decade of Action on “Water and Sustainable Development” which began on March 22, 2018, and will end on March 22, 2028, with a view to strengthening cooperation and establishing partnerships at the international level in order to contribute, among others, to achieving the SDGs and water targets.
20. The initiative of the COP27 Egyptian presidency titled “Action on Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARe)”, in partnership with many international organizations, with the aim of addressing the challenges posed by climate change through effective water management solutions.
21. Develop comprehensive strategies for the prevention and management of droughts and floods based on effective early warning systems and response mechanisms, such as the “UN EARLY WARNING FOR ALL” initiative led by the world meteorological organization or the international drought resilience alliance, within the framework of the UNCCD.
22. The regional initiatives and partnerships aiming at addressing water challenges such as the establishment of an Observatory for Non-Conventional Water Resources and Renewable Energies in the Mediterranean region- as a pilot area in order to share experiences and to achieve the desired sobriety.
- 22bis The capacity development initiative on water led by UNESCO and UNDESA and 5+5 Capacity Development and Knowledge Transfer Program, which contribute to enforce capacity development and knowledge transfer at regional level for accelerating access to sustainable water and sanitation.

23. The International Drought Resilience Alliance “IDRA”, which constitutes a collaborative platform to catalyze political momentum and mobilize resources for targeted actions to improve drought resilience in countries, cities, and communities especially Mediterranean Countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. This leads to the importance to integrate Mediterranean priorities into the 6 thematic areas of the 10th World Water Forum to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation in water management, including digitalization and new solutions for rational water use.
24. The commitment of the different organizations around the Mediterranean to promote and foster cooperation and dialogue to ensure equitable access to water resources among Mediterranean countries while avoiding causing harm to any of them.
25. The efforts of the Union for the Mediterranean and its member states to forge the path towards a new political revitalization of the ministerial declaration on water planned in the first quarter of 2025.

We call for the need of a tangible action on water and we urge to:

26. Mobilize efforts to implement adaptive measures and building resilience to ensure the availability of water resources for current and future generations in the context of climate conditions
27. Develop comprehensive strategies for droughts and floods mitigation and management based on effective early warning systems and response mechanisms.
28. Support strategic planning and policy implementation to improve water resources governance, particularly demand management, to strike a balance to meet needs and resist water scarcity and natural disasters resulting from increasing temperatures in the Mediterranean region.
29. Explore innovative and sustainable financing models, mechanisms, partnerships, and investments to support the implementation of water-related initiatives and to address the funding gap for agreed water infrastructure and projects while committing to the principles of cooperation, mutual benefit, and no harm.

30. Ban the weaponization of water in the region and to provide the population and civil institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories with access to safe and affordable water.
31. Promote cross-border cooperation and hydro-diplomacy in managing shared water resources, preventing conflicts, and promoting regional stability in accordance with the applicable principles of international law, including the principles of “no harm” and “prior notification”.
32. Encourage knowledge exchange and collaboration to harness the benefits of emerging technologies for the optimization of water resources and their management, through the use of digitalization.
33. Promote inclusive approaches throughout the preparation and implementation of strategies, policies, plans, and projects to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, including women and youth. Additionally, prioritize incorporating gender mainstreaming throughout these processes.
34. Strengthen between the North-South and South-South cooperation mechanisms in the Mediterranean through continued support in terms of financing, technology transfer and capacity building.
35. At a time when the world is reeling from an unprecedented number of crises, we will strive more than ever to cooperate closely in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and mainly SDG6. We are counting on the results of the Bali World Water Forum to find adequate solutions to deal with water scarcity and mobilize the necessary financing.
36. We extend our profound gratitude to the Republic of Tunisia and all partners for organizing the Forum.

Adopted in Tunis, Tunisia, on 5th February 2024, at the Ministerial segment of the 5th Mediterranean Water Forum.