

# Final Agreed Conclusions on the Way Forward

– 1st UfM WG on Environment and Climate Change (WG on ENV and CC) -  
15th March 2017

Following the recommendations of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change (hereinafter the Declaration) adopted in Athens on 13 May 2014, calling for a specific monitoring mechanism in the implementation of the Declaration ( “Ministers invite high level experts and officials to meet regularly, at least every two years, and where appropriate in synergy with other regional meetings dealing with environment or climate issues, as long as such meetings remain relevant, in the form of a UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (hereinafter the UfM Working Group) to follow-up on this Declaration and assess the progress made...” ), the first UfM Working Group on ENV and CC met in Barcelona on 14-15th March 2017.

The WG on ENV and CC discussed progress in the implementation and the future activities in relation to the 2014 UfM Ministerial Declaration on ENV and CC in terms of:

1. Key highlights and major issues to be tackled, and
2. Main priorities and actions for post-2020 and the possibility of a future UfM Ministerial Meeting.

The following suggestions on the way forward emerged and the WG agrees to:

- Establish priorities for action on environment and climate change in the Mediterranean region after 2020, to be the basis for a possible future Ministerial Meeting;
- Launch an external evaluation of the implementation of the Declaration. This evaluation will contribute towards defining priorities, operational modalities and the work programme post-2020;
- Set up a Task Force on Environment (TF on ENV) to facilitate the transition towards the post 2020 agenda on environmental action in the Mediterranean region and identify the regional priorities ahead. The TF will meet on an annual basis, possibly back to back with the H2020 steering committee;
- Convene the WG on ENV and CC in 2018 to take stock of the work of the TF on ENV and the CC Expert Group and to look towards a potential Ministerial Meeting in 2019 or 2020;
- Reinforce coordination at regional and national level between complementary actions implementing the objectives of the Declaration with a view to enhancing implementation where possible;
- Ensure that programs fully cover the whole region to enable the full participation of all Mediterranean countries in the programs;
- Reinforce the package of actions [define] in support of the Mediterranean green/circular economy/low emission agenda; in line with the relevant SDGs, better integrate, socio-economic aspects with emphasis on job creation dimension, youth, women;

- Consider the importance of reintroducing the ‘Horizon 2020 Coordination Mechanism’ (to ensure consolidation of results; stronger coordination; overall communication and visibility)
- Synchronize as far as possible the components of the H2020 initiative;
- Ensuring as far as possible no funding gap of the h2020 components during the implementation of the H2020 initiative;
- Further support the operationalisation of an effective regional information system based on solid national information system and promote integrated environmental approaches;
- Better link the H2020 initiative as well with research initiatives (H2020 R+I, Bluemed, PRIMA....)
- Promote the long-term development of the existing PRPI Road Map with IFIs; Ensure the full involvement of partner institutions and donors for the work of the PRPI group to be efficient; accelerate advancing/launching/operationalising of the H2020 investment flagship projects;
- Promote as much as possible the alignment of existing/new facilities and programs with the revised National Action Plans for depollution priorities for project development and financing;
- Urge countries to better coordinate at national level and engage all relevant ministries and institutions
- Ensure geographical balance of flagship projects within the Mediterranean region.

#### **SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP)**

- Ensure maximum support to the full implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and of the National Action Plans in countries that have already adopted them; promote the elaboration and adoption of National Action Plans in the remaining countries;
- Building on the successful results of the ongoing regional programmes, consider the importance of having adequate financial resources beyond 2018 to keep up the momentum created at regional level by the SwitchMed Programme; scale up thematically and geographically the existing efforts into a set of longer term expanded actions, including access to financing and facilitation of SCP/RE related investments, so as to consolidate the critical mass of regional and local capacities necessary to support the move toward SCP and green/circular economy models;
- Accelerate implementation of activities under the DRIVE Fund in the Western Balkans; Promote establishment of new, similar donor funds to facilitate access to financing for SMEs and green entrepreneurs adopting SCP practices in the entire Med.
- Link with broader policies of support to business development, employment and SMEs

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE (CC)**

Following the assessment of the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, the UfM Co-Presidency took note of the following comments expressed during the First Working Group on Environment and Climate Change:

1. UfM Member States recalled the importance of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group for climate policy dialogue in the region.
2. Within the mandate given by the 2014 Ministerial Declaration, UfM Member States assessed the work of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group, in particular in the context of the Paris Agreement and the challenge of its implementation.
3. In order to deliver more tangible outcomes and improve its effectiveness, UfM Member States agreed to revise the operational modalities of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group.
4. UfM Member States took note of the proposed revised operational modalities and work program 2017-2022 prepared by the UfM Secretariat upon request by the UfM Co-presidencies and after written consultation of UfM Member States. They provided in particular the following recommendations:
  - a) They underlined the need to clarify the composition of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group, improve its effectiveness and strengthen the continuity of its action.
  - b) They underlined the need for meetings focusing on precise issues, in order to mobilise relevant experts and produce tangible outcomes. However these should remain ad hoc meetings and no new permanent committees or sub-groups should be created.
  - c) The UfM Secretariat will submit to the 5th meeting of the Climate Change Expert Group a revised version of the draft operational modalities and Work Programme.

*- On the science-policy interface*

UfM Member States welcomed the willingness of the scientists gathered within the MedECC network to contribute to the vulnerability assessment of the Mediterranean regarding climate and environmental impacts on relevant sectors.

Given the cross-sectoral nature of the MedECC project and its strong environmental dimension, any possible UfM contribution to the MedCC activities shall be elaborated in an inclusive way, by involving jointly the Environment and Climate Change representatives of the UfM Member States and in coordination with all relevant UfM structures. The project should report back to the WG on Environment and Climate Change.

*- On environment and climate investments:*

UfM Member States welcomed the work of the Regional Finance Cooperation Committee for Climate Action and invited international financial institutions and donors to work together towards a better identification of climate finance gaps and needs in the region (and explore how to facilitate access to climate finance).

**OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

***Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)***

- Promote the creation of new MPAs, including in the open seas, where possible to reach the established Aichi target 11;

- Support more effective, equitable and efficient management of existing MPAs by 2020 through more financial and human means available for MPAs as well as through long-term capacity-building and networking at Mediterranean level;
- Further support the establishment of the MPAs Trust Fund (call for more countries to join), building on the lessons learned from other well-established regional conservation trust fund delivering conservation to marine areas around the world;
- Strengthen and develop the role of MPAs as a marine spatial management tool in supporting ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

#### ***Bern Convention in particular Larnaka and Tunis Action Plan***

Ensure adequate country engagement in actions under the intergovernmental task force on illegal killing of birds;

#### ***Integrated Maritime Policy/Blue Economy***

- Contribute to the preparation of the possible 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy,;
- Optimize and fully operationalize the existing Virtual Knowledge Centre as a stakeholder register and networking platform;
- Contribute to the Initiative on Sustainable Development of the Blue Economy in the Western Mediterranean as well as to the other relevant initiative on blue economy;
- Expand the Bluemed Initiative to other Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries willing to join;
- Further promote maritime spatial planning /integrated coastal zone management as governance and management tool (ensuring sea land interaction);
- Maximize the involvement of relevant stakeholders (including in the organisation of the 1st Regional Stakeholders Conference)

#### ***Eco-cities***

- Welcome and support the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in 2017
- Promote the upcoming edition of the Jordan-led Eco Cities Forum as a regional platform

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**

- At regional level, progress on the adoption of multi stakeholders/participatory approaches (NGOs, academia, private sector, etc.), progressively extending to local authorities;
- Increased coordination among funding programs around common/shared priorities (e.g. environment and climate funding; cooperation among EU funding programs; etc)

## **INCREASED AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

- Stress the importance of working to increase awareness and education on environmental and CC issues, including by supporting the implementation of the Action Plan of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development;

## **ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION OF REQUIRED ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE INVESTMENTS**

- Better integrate newly established IFIs green and climate funds to serve environmental de-pollution and pollution prevention investments;
- Activate the newly established UfM Regional Finance Cooperation Committee for Climate Action (RFCCCA);
- Address environment and climate investments through the closer involvement of all concerned national authorities, including the Ministries of Finance/Economy/Planning

## **PROPOSAL FOR EMERGING DOSSIERS TO BE FURTHER INTEGRATED IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND WORK OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

Take note of the potential for:

- Integration/association of the overall Mediterranean Forestry/Silva Mediterranean frameworks to address desertification, water, biodiversity, sustainable land management, climate mitigation/adaptation as well as contribute to promoting SCP business models, job creation and green investments;
- to promote closer involvement of local and regional coastal administrations through the Bologna Charter (the charter of the Regions for the promotion of a common framework for strategic actions aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Mediterranean coastal areas). The Bologna Charter is open to more Southern & Eastern coastal administrations of the Mediterranean to join on a voluntary basis.

### **Final general point**

Countries are requested to provide the Secretariat with indications on the national progress in the implementation of the Declaration as well as recommendations for the post 2020 agenda in written briefings by the end of March 2017.