

Union Pour la Méditerranée
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Second Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on Sustainable Urban Development

**“Union for the Mediterranean Urban Agenda”
(Cairo, Egypt, 22 May 2017)**

Declaration

Preamble

The Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in charge of sustainable urban development met at the Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in Cairo, Egypt on 21 and 22 May 2017. The Conference was co-chaired by H.E. Walid Masri, Minister for Municipal Affairs, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Corina Crețu Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy, representing the European Union, in the presence of UfM Secretary General H.E. Fathallah Sijilmassi, and hosted by H.E. Moustafa Madbouly, Minister for Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Arab Republic of Egypt.

Recalling

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Goal 11 –“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”;
- The New Urban Agenda agreed at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito in October 2016;
- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;
- The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the “Barcelona Convention”) adopted in June 1995 , as well as the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) developed by the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), adopted in Athens in February 2005;
- The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change of 13 May 2014;
- The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy of 17 November 2015.

Take note of

- The Cairo Declaration on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development adopted in December 2015;
- The Urban Agenda for the European Union (Pact of Amsterdam) adopted in May 2016;
- The second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments and the recommendation of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Authorities (Quito - Ecuador, October 2016);
- The Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the following UN Climate Change Conference held in Marrakesh in November 2016 (COP22);
- The Barcelona Convention Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Aware that

- The Mediterranean region is characterized by one of the fastest urbanization rates worldwide - almost 60% are already living in urban areas;
- By 2030, urban population would increase by an additional 22.5 million due to the persistence of rural-urban migrations and endogenous urban growth that will generate a strong demand for housing, facilities and urban services and put severe pressure on existing non-resilient infrastructure as well as natural resources;
- The development of the major urban areas has caused a fast decline of many historical city centres, endangering the cultural heritage of Mediterranean civilisations, Mediterranean landscapes and the unique identity of the Mediterranean region;
- The Mediterranean region and its cities are characterised by a high vulnerability to climate change. Impacts such as water scarcity, droughts, heatwaves, forest fires and coastal erosion are increasingly impacting the environment and human activities;
- Urban areas have a central role to play in the transition to sustainable energy economies.
- The definition of a new role for the urban centres, within the rapidly changing urban context, is also a specific major urban problem to be tackled;
- Housing and public services are major elements of people living standards and there is a need to improve basic facilities and infrastructure also for migrants in order to lead decent lives and to have better housing conditions;
- The region and its cities will be impacted by climate change and global warming and their consequences on the environment and thus human activities more than others;
- The Mediterranean region faces multiple challenges affecting the sustainable urban development in its cities;
- Given the crucial role that sustainable urban development will play for the quality of life of people, both within the Mediterranean and beyond, and the growing relevance of the urban dimension at global, regional, national and sub-national levels, it is important for

the Union for the Mediterranean and its Member States to define a shared vision for sustainable urban development and to adopt a comprehensive and operational agenda on this topic;

- The Mediterranean countries are faced with migration and refugee issues causing additional pressure to the urban areas.

Building on

- The First UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development of November 2011 (Strasbourg), which established cooperation on sustainable urban development as a means of developing a genuine urban dimension within the UfM;
- The preparatory work undertaken ahead of the Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development¹ by government representatives of the line Ministries and by key regional partners, with the support of the European Commission, focussing on the specific urban development challenges in the Mediterranean countries;
- The New Urban Agenda agreed at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito in October 2016.

Highlighting

- The common structural challenges for urban development - as well as the required policies, strategies, legislation, implementation, monitoring and review to address them- while acknowledging the diversity and the economic, social, environmental and cultural specificities of each Member State;
- The need to regionally address those common structural challenges through capacities, tools and resources supporting Member States, and their local authorities, involving other relevant stakeholders in line with national policies and legislation, as an efficient mechanism for urban planning and sustainable urban development.

Reaffirming

That regional cooperation adds distinctive value and reinforces national efforts, by facilitating and supporting experience sharing; replication of best practices; cooperation between local authorities; promotion of common approaches after adaptation to local needs; joint pilot projects; valorisation of existing, including traditional, knowledge; innovative practices including through knowledge, best practices and technology transfer; capacity building projects; enhance the investment opportunities and access to sustainable financing; and establish adequate, common and applicable monitoring and reviewing systems in line with those of Member States.

¹ Preparations for the Conference benefited from the outcome documents of two Ad-Hoc SOMs and from the first lessons from the Urban Projects Finance Initiative, an innovative initiative funded by the European Commission and co-managed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), and under the auspices of the UfM.

Inviting

The engagement of donors and international financing institutions that provide substantial support for materializing the UfM Urban Agenda and for promoting regional cooperation on urban-related issues.

We the Ministers, agree that the present Declaration establishes an UfM Urban Agenda as follows:

- Objectives, scope and priorities -

We, the Ministers, with the present **Agenda agree that, in accordance with respective national legislation, strategies, plans and policies:**

- The UfM Urban Agenda aims to realise the full potential and contribution of Urban Areas towards achieving the urban dimension of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda;
- The UfM Urban Agenda strives to establish a more effective integrated and coordinated approach in the Mediterranean countries with regard to policies, legislation and investments with a potential impact on urban areas and hereby contribute to regional and social cohesion by reducing the socioeconomic gaps observed in urban areas and regions and these gaps between urban and rural areas;
- The UfM Urban Agenda seeks to encourage inputs by the Local Authorities, including the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly, in the design and implementation of policies, while respecting national administrative structures and policies, which have a significant impact on urban areas, and to strengthen the urban dimension in these policies. The UfM Urban Agenda aims to enable Urban Authorities to work in a more systematic and coherent way towards achieving overarching goals.

Ensure that

The UfM Urban Agenda is based on a holistic, integrated, place-based and long term approach to sustainable urban development, necessary to promote well-managed, economically prosperous, gender and socially inclusive, just, safe, healthy, accessible and resilient, as well as resource-efficient and low-carbon environmentally sustainable cities. The recognition of the central role of a rich and diverse culture, the preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage and effective urban planning and management, alongside the availability of public space which is a fundamental condition for participation and ownership of all for the achievement of these objectives, are part of this approach. This integrated approach would enable Member States to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the UfM Urban Agenda.

Reaffirm the following overarching principles

- Long-term sustainability can only be achieved if all the dimensions of sustainability – social, environmental, economic and cultural – are addressed simultaneously;
- Sustainable urban development is paramount in social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- Sustainable urban development is underpinned by a rights based approach;
- Sustainable urban development takes into account the diversity of cities and their wider territorial context and promotes urban-rural linkages in partnership with rural development and agricultural policy in view of strengthening territorial cohesion;
- A place-based approach to sustainable urban development is necessary as there is no one-size-fits-all solution for cities and urban areas of all sizes – including small and medium-sized cities and urban areas – depending on their population size and dynamics, history, identity and location, economic opportunities as well as their national, regional, or international position;
- That an integrated sustainable urban development approach simultaneously takes into account all concerns and interests relevant to urban development in a fair manner and results from a process in which the spatial, sectorial and temporal aspects are co-ordinated;
- The effectiveness of sustainable urban development plans can only be achieved if accompanied by a sustainable rural development strategy that balances the attractiveness of cities through mobility between rural and urban areas through a modern, clean, regular and cost-effective transport system, while encouraging sustainable investment in rural areas to create the necessary services such as health, education and employment;
- The important role of local authorities as well as stakeholders in the design of policies impacting urban areas as well as their crucial role for its future implementation including, monitoring and review processes, where applicable;
- That the UfM Urban Agenda, will need to be implemented through a mix of interventions: sustaining and implementing policy environment; developing capacity to deliver; improving capacity in order to provide efficient public services; mobilising and making effective use of domestic and international public finance; enabling spatial and land use planning, mobilising the domestic and international private sector; stimulating trade and investments; fostering science, technology and innovation and vocational education;
- Support the effective engagement of local authorities, in line with national policies and legislation, in the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda including through their access to all public and private sources of financing as set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including to adequate flows of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and frameworks that facilitate blending ODA with other forms of finance/ grants;

- Our engagement to develop and implement the UfM Urban Agenda in accordance with national policies and regulations with the active involvement of local authorities and their associations, and civil society, including multi-actor institutional arrangements and partnerships, non-governmental organisations, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders within transparent processes;
- Sustainable urban development also takes into account the common security challenges and threats posed to urban safety.

Highlight our engagement to

- Further strengthen the capacity of local authorities through capacity building programmes and exchange of best practices in order to ensure the implementation of urban projects. In this regard we take note of the URBACT programme and encourage Member States and the European Commission to foster this initiative for the Mediterranean countries taking into account the specificities of Member States;
- Provide and facilitate the provision of technical assistance and the transfer of technology for innovative and sustainable solutions, building on the Urban Project Finance Initiative's (UPFI) best practices with the objective of increasing its socio-economic impact on the ground;
- Strengthen the access to finance through the enhancement of blending mechanisms and the involvement of the private sector including through public-private partnerships, while supporting those countries and cities hosting migrants and refugees;
- Continue working to resolve conflicts that have generated migration flows by encouraging constructive and inclusive dialogue through a comprehensive approach to migration that addresses the security dimension, development cooperation and the respect to human dignity while striving to eradicate the root causes of irregular migration.

Stress the need to focus our work on the following common priorities:

Urban rules and regulations

- Promote the role of urban planning, the development of land use policies and instruments, urban rules and legislation, and tools to effectively ensure their implementation.

Balanced urban and territorial development

- Polycentric urban development;
- Integrated territorial development approach and sustainable rural-urban linkages;
- Relation between rapidly urbanized coastal area and rural hinterland affected by depopulation;
- Compact city design.

Environment

- Sustainable resource management with focus on water and waste;
- Energy and food as part of sustainable integrated resource management;
- Sustainable coastal development and protection;
- Sustainable use of land and ecosystems;
- Protection and expansion of urban green spaces and urban biodiversity, and reduction/prevention of urban sprawl;
- Disaster risk reduction and resilient urban infrastructure;
- Landscape protection, planning and management;
- Sustainable planning and management of tourism activities.

Climate

- Enhanced urban resilience through integrating climate change adaptation across sectors and areas;
- Focus on Green Infrastructure, nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches that bring co-benefits and are less costly;
- Contributing to increased knowledge, in particular, through promoting identification of risks and vulnerabilities, deployment of climate services (downscaled projections, improved forecasts) for urban needs; developing monitoring systems and indicators.

Habitat

- Integrated approaches to sustainable, affordable and adequate housing;
- Basic urban services (water, sanitation, waste management, electricity);
- Urban regeneration and quality public space;
- Put into focus the regeneration of historical centres, industrial and harbour areas;
- Urban upgrading of informal residential developments;
- Cultural heritage;
- The preservation of the traditions of solidarity and sharing;
- Support the creation of neighbourhood committees working to preserve the built and natural environments;
- Sustainable buildings and constructions;
- Mixed use and socially diversified neighbourhoods.

Transport and Mobility

- Sustainable urban mobility, especially expressed through integrated, inclusive and affordable public transport as well as safe non-motorized transport;
- Intermodal Transportation Solutions;

- Promote the use of smart and innovative solutions;
- Coordination between urban and mobility planning.

Migration

- Strengthen the capacity and basic services of cities hosting migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Deal with increased influx from rural to urban areas;
- Enhancing cooperation between different levels of governance dealing with migration issues including at the international level.

Means of implementation

- Capacity building
 - o Technical assistance to Local authorities, including through training;
 - o Development of local urban planning and implementation capacities;
 - o City-to-city cooperation.
- Financing
 - o Strengthened access to finance;
 - o Building capacities for the enhancement of blending mechanisms;
 - o Support improvement of municipal finances and fiscal systems;
 - o Enhancing international cooperation and the provision of adequate sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, technology transfer and capacity building.
- Data
 - o Support to statistical national offices and development of data and GIS;
 - o Development of indicators of sustainability, wellbeing and vulnerability to enable the comparability of current state and trends both in national and international;
 - o Encourage the development of the harmonized definition of cities developed by the European Commission, OECD and the World Bank.

- Operational Framework -

We, Ministers agree:

- That the UfM Urban Agenda is a coherent set of actions of its Members States in coordination with other Mediterranean key actors. It is a form of multilevel cooperation where Member States' representatives in charge of urban matters, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the Union's Advisory Bodies (CoR, EESC), the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly, the EIB, EBRD and other relevant institutions work in thematic working groups in the context of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development;
- That the actions ensuing from the UfM Urban Agenda will promote:
 - The identification of common thematic priorities. With this purpose the UfM Urban Agenda will focus on a number of priority themes;
 - Effective coordination through multilevel and cross-sectoral (horizontal and vertical) cooperation to deliver more effective solutions to urban challenges and ensure a more integrated approach at the level of urban areas. The thematic working groups are instrumental for this purpose;
 - The exchange of knowledge and experiences to develop and improve the content of the UfM Urban Agenda;
 - When considered relevant by Member States, the participation of governments and their local authorities as well as relevant stakeholders in existing initiatives accompanying multilateral agreements and strengthening sustainable urban development;
 - The exchange of knowledge and experiences with relevant Partnerships under the Urban Agenda for EU.

We, Ministers

Agree on the establishment of a UfM Regional Platform on sustainable urban development to be comprised of working groups to implement the UfM Urban Agenda²:

- The working groups are to develop an integrated and holistic approach in an open and transparent way in order to achieve the previously stated objectives of the UfM Urban Agenda and based on a strong involvement of practitioners from the respective authorities in charge of urban-development;

² The criteria for setting up of working groups will have in mind geographical and stakeholders' balance. Also it is important to describe their duties, working mode, timeframe and financial sources needed.

- To ensure focus and real impact on the ground, working groups should have a bottom-up approach analysing, inter alia, concrete cases in Urban Areas which exemplify bottlenecks and potentials;
- Working groups will formulate concrete proposals for improving knowledge, foster innovative and sustainable solutions, enhance accessibility to funding for projects related to the theme of the working groups.

We, Ministers agree

That the governance of the UfM Urban Agenda will work as follows:

- The activities of the UfM will be coordinated by the Ad-Hoc SOM meetings on sustainable urban development. The Ad-Hoc SOM meetings on sustainable urban development will:
 - Ensure that the actions are organised in such a way that they are conceived with and supported by representatives of Member States in charge of urban matters the European Commission, and other UfM partners, mutually reinforcing and having the most effective impact on UfM and policy making, activities and financial schemes;
 - Report to the meeting of Ministers responsible for sustainable urban development;
 - Provide feedback on the deliverables of the working groups and progress on the actions of the UfM Urban Agenda;
 - Give informal guidelines for future developments of the UfM Urban Agenda;
 - Evaluate the current and future set of actions of the UfM Urban Agenda at the latest by 2020.

We mandate the UfM Secretariat to

- Create and coordinate a UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development composed of thematic working groups focused on the previously mentioned common priorities bringing together Member's representatives in charge of urban matters, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the Union's Advisory Bodies (CoR, EESC), the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly, the EIB, EBRD, as well as key partners and other relevant institutions, with a view to discussing the operational steps to be taken to implement the UfM Urban Agenda, fostering innovative and sustainable solutions, promoting better knowledge and best practices on common urban development priorities, and identifying new projects that would be replicated in the region;

- Organize UfM – IFIs Urban Development Project Committee Meetings, bringing together key partners of the UfM region, IFIs and donors, with the objective of exchanging views on the financial scheme of the labelled and future projects;
- The outcomes of the above-mentioned meetings will be presented for review and endorsement by the Senior Official Meetings (SOM), as well as discussed and examined at future Ad-Hoc SOM meetings on sustainable urban development to assess and review the progress achieved in implementing the UfM urban agenda and propose the future set of actions.

Finally, we, Ministers,

Call on the UfM Secretariat to continue its active contribution to improving the urban development situation in the region to promote projects further in line with sustainable urban development priorities and to take into account in all sectorial meetings the specificity of urban and territorial integrated approach.

Agree to reconvene, in principle, in two years to review progress on the development of the UfM Urban Agenda.

Express gratitude to the Government of Egypt for hosting the second Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development.