

## 3<sup>rd</sup> UfM Environment Task Force Meeting

9 April 2019, Brussels

### AGREED CONCLUSIONS

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the UfM Task Force on Environment took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by the European and Jordan Co-Presidency, with the support of the UfM Secretariat.

The meeting gathered country representatives and regional stakeholders to discuss the following issues:

1. *(MORNING SESSION) the draft concept note for a future post 2020 environment initiative/framework for action based on the work undertaken by a dedicated online working group of member states and partner organisations between January and March 2019, following the decision of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change in November 2018;*
2. *(AFTERNOON SESSION) latest updates on:*
  - *plastics and marine litter as specific areas of focus, including the EU Directive on “Single Use Plastics and Fishing Gear Directive” as well as recently launched/to be launched/ just financed relevant programmes and projects;*
  - *newly launched or to-be-launched programmes and projects associated and/or of relevance to the UfM environment agenda;*
  - *existing UfM labelled projects providing opportunities for countries to join due to recently approved/additional funding;*
  - *other projects interested in partnering/contributing to the UfM environment agenda.*

The TF on Environment:

- Reiterated the decision taken at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Environment and Climate Change working group to develop a joint initiative/ framework for action in line with Scenario 2 and 3 of the external evaluation<sup>1</sup>.
- Discussed the first proposal for a Post 2020 Initiative/framework for action concept note, developed based on the consolidated comments of countries and organizations during two rounds of consultations held between January and March 2019. The three main axes of the joint Initiative/ framework for action were reformulated as follows:
  - *Support the transition to a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions;*

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<sup>1</sup> Scenario 2: High-level political commitment and priority setting, mandate for a road map and concept for joint initiative/ Scenario 3: High-level political commitment and priority setting, agreed road map and concept for a joint initiative

- *Prevent and reduce pollution on land, sea and air;*
- *Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine and coastal.*

Accordingly, the main objective is to be reformulated as follows:

- *The core objective of the post 2020 environment Initiative is to set the framework to coordinate, streamline and promote the efforts in the Mediterranean region - involving UFM member countries and other relevant stakeholders, including regional partners and local authorities, through a participatory approach,*
  - *1) to foster the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy,*
  - *2) to prevent and reduce pollution on land, air and sea as well as*
  - *3) Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine and coastal*
- Reiterated that a new “post 2020” initiative/framework for action is meant as a tool for regional integration and collaboration. As such it acts as a framework for existing and emerging initiatives (as those presented during the afternoon session) to work towards a common goal.
- Decided that the final version of the joint initiative/framework for action shall include:
  - the main themes for action of a Post 2020 Initiative/framework for action will be finalized after approval of the main themes of action by the Meeting of UfM Senior Officials.
  - The Initiative/framework for action would include a first calendar of milestones; a more detailed work/action plan would be worked out after Ministerial endorsement.
  - Title of the initiative/framework for action - A reduced number of possible titles were shared with the Task Force for comments and validation, with the objective to define a final name for the “Post 2020” Initiative/ framework for action before the UfM Senior Officials Meeting of June 2019. Among the proposed titles, Circular MED; Advancing Circular Economy in the Mediterranean (ACEM); Towards a Sustainable, Inclusive and Circular Economy in the MED (SIC MED)...

Further proposals for names can be submitted to the UfM Secretariat.
- Agreed on the calendar of intermediate steps towards a 2nd potential Ministerial, starting with the official request for a 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change to be presented to UfM Senior Officials Meeting in June 2019.

- In this context, the question of replacing the current UfM Environment Task Force with a regular UfM Expert Group on Environment, similarly to the existing Expert Group on Climate Change, was raised. Given the need to maintain close links between environment and climate change, the key objective would be to ensure that representatives dealing with environment and representatives dealing with climate issues will continue to work together and report under the overall guidance of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change to enable close cooperation on cross-cutting issues. Further discussion on the precise structure of the working groups is needed;
- Welcomed the participation of the country delegates, representatives of partner organizations and other stakeholders, and appreciated the overall willingness to contribute and participate proactively in building a common post 2020 agenda;
- Agreed that any further comment can be provided to the UfM Secretariat in writing by May 17<sup>th</sup> 2019.