



Remarks by UfMS Secretary General Ahmad Masa'deh
at the closing session of the Forum
of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean
Barcelona, 3 May 2010

*Mayors, Presidents, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honor for me to take part in this 2nd Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean. I would like to thank the organizers, particularly the Mayor of Barcelona Mr. Jordi Hereu, to invite me to participate in the closing session of this Forum.

Before I start, I would like to have a word of courage to Mr. Ángel Lossada, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As you all know, Mr. Lossada was supposed to share with me this closing session. During the last months, I have had the opportunity to meet him in some occasions and in this very delicate situation I would like to transmit my support to him and to his relatives.

In June 2008, Local and Regional Authorities met in Marseille some weeks before the Paris summit of Heads of State and Government. That summit was a turning point in the Euro-Mediterranean relations because it launched a new instrument for broader and deeper cooperation in the region: the Union for the Mediterranean.

The Union for the Mediterranean is a long-term commitment which has to face several complex challenges. Above all of them, it aims at contributing the creation of a common space of prosperity, stability and security for the region.

The Secretariat I have the honor to lead will contribute actively to the identification and implementation of concrete projects covering six priority areas of cooperation which are environmental protection, transport, civil protection, alternative energy, education and scientific research, and business development.

Our goal will be putting all efforts together, creating the necessary synergies among different actors, to succeed in our mission of rowing all together the boat of cooperation along the Mediterranean basin.



As I have said in other occasions, the Union for the Mediterranean is about partnership. Partnership between countries, institutions and peoples. And it is also about partnership between regions and local authorities. Local and regional authorities are the closest institutions to citizens, and their contribution is necessary to guarantee the implementation of projects and its direct impact to citizens' daily life.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Mediterranean is a region where economic, cultural, and social exchanges have been performed since the beginning of History. A common birthplace for different civilizations, religions and cultures. This diversity has been the origin of fruitful dialogue and cooperation. At the same time, it has been the place for long and complex disagreements and differences.

The implication of local and regional authorities can contribute to overcome these differences. Their proximity to social and local reality is a plus that can help in understanding them better and to depict new and multilevel solutions.

Today I had the opportunity to apprehend the strong commitment of local and regional authorities with the noble Mediterranean cause. This is undoubtedly a reason for optimism and a clear sign that your engagement is firm and strong. I take note of your will to contribute actively in the construction of a common space of prosperity in the region. As I said, all efforts are needed and all offers for cooperation are welcomed.

Let me thank you all for your contribution in the debates today, and I look forward to continue cooperating with you in the near future.

Muchas gracias, moltes gràcies.