



Remarks by UfMS Secretary General Ahmad Masa'deh,
at the Inauguration Meeting of the UfM Secretariat
Barcelona, 4 March 2010

*Your Excellency Minister Moratinos,
Excellencies co-Presidents Ministers Kouchner and Aboul Gheit
Your Excellency President Montilla,
Excellencies and Honorable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Welcome to the Pedralbes Palace, the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean! At this moment, one can only say that together we have just made history. Today, our dedication culminated in the official launch of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The spirit of our determination and firm belief in the values embodied by this monumental undertaking prevailed. For the peoples of the Mediterranean, a new chapter has just begun. The South and the North are bound to become much closer.

Euro-Mediterranean relations have gone through several developments since the Barcelona Process was launched in 1995. Over the past fifteen years, there have been many successes and also some shortcomings. In 2008, under the leadership of President Nicolas Sarkozy, Euro-Med relations were re-launched under the Union for the Mediterranean as a model for the future of our region.

This region has always been a highway for politics, culture, and commerce; it is the birthplace of many great traditions, great religions and important civilizations. And as such, it has also witnessed many conflicts and instability, some of which continue today.

Indeed, the challenges that we are facing in the Mediterranean and across the world, are more complicated and more interlinked than ever before. And they require cohesive and collaborative solutions. For the Mediterranean, it is not simply a question of making new links, but of reviving old ones as well of re-establishing and strengthening connections that have existed for thousands of years. This is part of what the Union for the Mediterranean represents.

The Union for the Mediterranean embodies the most comprehensive agenda for Euro-Med relations to date. It is a long-term commitment to achieving, and maintaining, security, stability, and prosperity in our region. It was conceived with unprecedented political will



and will continue to be driven by the joint efforts of the partner countries, as well as public and private institutions across the region. Above all, underlining the Union for the Mediterranean is partnership: partnership between countries, between institutions, between sectors, and between people.

Many of the sources of insecurity in our region are tied to tangible issues, and that is why our target projects seek tangible solutions. At the Paris Summit in July 2008, our Heads of State and Government identified six priority areas of cooperation which include environmental protection, transport, civil protection, alternative energy, education and scientific research, and business development. Each initiative is multi-lateral, cross-regional and designed to promote multi-sectoral development. Though each initiative is focused on a particular area of social and economic development, their effects will be much broader.

These projects alone will not solve the region's most serious sources of conflict and instability, but they represent shared goals that will become shared accomplishments, making each member of our Union a stakeholder in the collective security and prosperity of the region. This is a prerequisite for long-term stability and is undoubtedly necessary in this global era. To definitively achieve peace, stability and economic prosperity in the Mediterranean region will take even more political will and leadership, but what we have seen in the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean is a promising start.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

My candidature to occupy the post of Secretary General has gained the full backing of all partners and member states. And allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere personal thanks and profound appreciation, to you Excellencies and dear colleagues, and to all the partners for the trust that was put in my person. This trust I shall carry with pride. For it denotes the full agreement of the Partners to move forward on the basis of values of peace-loving, cooperation, moderation, openness, reconciliation and integrity. In my capacity as Secretary General, I will keep these values close at heart and use them to enrich this position as well as the Secretariat at large.

The structure and composition of the Secretariat, as embodied by the Statutes which we adopted yesterday, lay the ground for smooth sailing in favor of the monumental projects ahead of us. Minister Moratinos, you have played a highly decisive personal role in helping overcome the last stumbling blocks and I wish to thank you most especially for this. I would also like to thank Ministers Koushner and Aboul Gheit for a remarkable performance and great determination and perseverance with a view to reaching an agreement. Over the coming few weeks, I will engage with all partners in order to define



the appropriate structural and financial aspects of the Secretariat. And in this context, I am very happy to see Commissioner Fule with us this evening and very grateful for the support that the European Commission is according to the Secretariat.

And in terms of the Secretariat, I would like to underline its technical nature. We are mandated with delivering technical expertise and results on the ground, as well as finding financial resources for the implementation of future projects. I will make sure that the Secretariat does not lose sight of this nature. But at the same time and while aiming at having a most professional and efficient organization with defined key performance indicators, I would expect also the support of everyone to render eventually an empowered Secretariat capable of meeting its objectives, your objectives. I will lead the Secretariat to aim at making cooperation and exchange the methods for promoting growth and security, and not simply a by-product of these pursuits. The issues we face together must be solved together; and the Union for the Mediterranean embodies this principle in both its structure and its mission.

Excellencies, dear friends,

With this inauguration meeting, the Secretariat is now ready to commence its tasks in the beautiful city of Barcelona; a city that is emerging today as a capital city and a driving force for Mediterranean unity. In this regard, and on behalf of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, I would like to express my utmost gratitude and high appreciation to the Spanish government, the Generalitat of Catalonia (especially President Montilla), the city of Barcelona, and most importantly the great people of Spain for their early and continuous engagement with the Mediterranean noble cause, for their outstanding hospitality and unbeatable generosity accorded so far to the Secretariat. And in return, I assure you all that the Secretariat will act as a new dancer holding hands with other Spanish and Mediterranean hands in the Sardana dance.

Muchas gracias, Moltes gracies!

Thank you.