



DECLARATION

OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ON A GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, SET UP IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN, FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE

Naples, 30 November 2017

We, the Representatives of Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, in the presence of H.E. Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner in charge of Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs for the European Union, of the representative of the Ministry of Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in its functions as Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, and of H.E. Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean.

1. STRESSING the:

- UfM Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy adopted on 17 November 2015,ⁱ in Brussels, which invited the participating countries to explore the added value and feasibility of appropriate maritime strategies at sub-regional level, and build on the experience of the 5+5 Dialogue.
- Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting of Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia on 28 October 2016, which encouraged further work on the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean, and underlined the important role of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in this regard.ⁱⁱ
- European Commission Communication of 19 April 2017 adopting the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean (WestMED),ⁱⁱⁱ its Framework for Action, and the Council conclusions on Blue Growth adopted on 26 June 2017.^{iv}

2. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the Council conclusions on Blue Growth adopted on 26 June 2017:
 - endorse the contents of the Communication on the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean and welcome its accompanying rolling Framework for Action as a broad maritime approach shared with neighbouring countries and aiming to create jobs and growth in this region, by improving safety and security, boosting innovation and skill development and promoting sustainable ocean governance;
 - recognise the need for the Southern partner countries involved to endorse the WestMED Initiative in order to make it a truly shared initiative, work together to set up its governance structure and, notably, to establish its Task Force in a closer link to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) process and invites the countries involved, the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat to take forward the implementation of this initiative in coherence with all the other initiatives which are taking place in the region;
 - stress that the scope of action and potential benefits of the initiative remain open to other partners.
3. **UNDERLINING** that the Initiative is an innovative instrument of cooperation between western Mediterranean countries, regions and people. However, depending on the needs to be addressed and as appropriate, actions will remain open also to partners belonging to other countries in the broader region.
4. **STRESSING** the necessity to move without delay to the implementation phase of the Initiative, in partnership with the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat, **ENDORSE** the content of this Initiative and its Framework for Action.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that governance involves two levels: (i) political leadership and ownership by Ministers, (ii) coordination and implementation by the WestMED Task Force – hereafter named WestMED "Steering Committee" - and that these levels are interrelated, in particular political leadership and ownership being a pre-requisite for effective coordination and implementation; **ENTRUST** the WestMED Steering Committee to lead and monitor the implementation of the Framework for Action and to propose to amend it whenever deemed necessary.
6. **UNDERLINING** that governance is a shared process which describes how and by whom the Initiative is managed and implemented and that its success therefore relies on a collective effort on the part of the participating countries, the European Commission, the UfM Secretariat and other regional organizations/processes (e.g. the Ministerial Declaration Malta "MEDFISH4EVER" adopted on 30 March 2017 on the sustainability of Mediterranean fisheries and the General Commission for Fisheries in the Mediterranean) and the Barcelona Convention, as appropriate.

7. AGREEING accordingly that, for the WestMED Initiative to bring clear impact and deliver practical results, a multi-level governance and management system based on strong political will and effective decision-making is required.
8. WELCOMING the preparatory work done by the national representatives to the WestMED working group - hereafter named "National Coordinators" - the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat.
9. AGREE with the outline of the WestMED governance and management structure as devised in the Annex 1 "Governance of the Initiative for the Sustainable Development of the Blue Economy in the Western Mediterranean" attached to this Declaration, and ENCOURAGE all parties to consider tailoring it further, as appropriate, to implementation requirements as they emerge, taking into account the dynamic nature of the Initiative.
10. AGREE on a North-South co-chairing of the WestMED Steering Committee as described in Annex 1, which will start with countries Algeria and France in 2018, followed by France and Morocco in 2019, Morocco and Italy in 2020, and then it will follow in principle an alphabetical order based on countries' willingness and capacity.
11. ENCOURAGING the European Commission, International Donors, Financial Institutions and Private Investors to pursue efforts in aligning funds and financial instruments, as far as possible, with the priority areas and projects identified by the Steering Committee.
12. COMMIT to:
 - favour the relevant actions at the appropriate level – fully respecting and in the synergy with the legal and institutional framework of each country and the specificities and competences of the administrative structures – aimed at the appointment and empowerment of the relevant key implementers; notably the National Coordinators, members of the WestMED Steering Committee;
 - ensure the political leadership and ownership of the WestMED and provide the relevant means and resources, including institutional and administrative support, taking into account countries' capacity;
 - ensure the coordination with the work of existing regional organizations and encourage the involvement of relevant international, European, national, regional and local private and public stakeholders, including the civil society, in all steps of the Initiative's implementation;
 - coordinate policies and funds at country level, in relation with local, national, EU and regional/international funding and financial instruments to support the implementation of the Initiative and the achievement of its objectives.

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- i http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-11-17-declaration-on-blue-economy_en.pdf
 - ii <http://ufmsecretariat.org/foreign-affairs-ministers-of-the-55-dialogue-discuss-pressing-regional-challenges-and-highlight-the-positive-contribution-of-ufm-activities-to-the-enhancement-of-regional-cooperation/>.
 - iii https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/com-2017-183_en.pdf
 - iv <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/26-council-conclusions-blue-growth/>