Dear Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain (Alfonso Dastis),

Dear Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan (Ayman Safadi)

Dear Ministers, Your Excellencies,

Let me start by expressing my gratitude for the hospitality of the Government of Spain and by commending this timely Jordanian-Spanish initiative.
I would like to reiterate dear Minister Dastis, how honored we were to have been received yesterday by His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain and for the words of wisdom and encouragement to our work within the framework of this conference he kindly shared with us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A new **Roadmap** for the strengthening of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean was adopted last January during the Second Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean; made possible, dear Ministers Dastis and Safadi, by your leadership and engaged Co-presidency, along with High Representative and Vice-President Mogherini, and the active involvement of UfM Member States present here today; and I take this opportunity to thank you all.
In the Roadmap, the Governments of all UfM Member States acknowledged that there is no development without security and no security without development and that, therefore, it is more important than ever to strengthen the security-development nexus, in order to create the appropriate environment conducive to social and economic development and to address, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, the challenges of the region, including ethnic and religious violence.

It is important to continue engaging with regional and international efforts to address the socio-economic root causes of these phenomena, developing further projects and initiatives of high impact with a special focus on youth employability and women’s empowerment.
To that effect, the UfM Secretariat plays a facilitator role to promote best practices and enhance confidence building measures, contributing to the deconstruction and counter-narrative of the radical discourses and ideologies. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue in the Mediterranean is an essential underlying dimension of all regional cooperation activities of the UfM. And it can only be consolidated by strengthening dialogue, cooperation, networks especially for our Youth.

In this framework for reinforced regional cooperation, please allow me to share with you 2 basic messages on how the UfM could further contribute to addressing the most urgent priorities of the Paris Action Plan:
1/ My first message is that the best way to achieve durable solutions is by addressing the root-causes of the many challenges that affect us, such as migrations, extremism, ethnic and religious violence, and terrorism; and thus by promoting stability, social development and economic growth.

The UfM contributes to these objectives by focusing on 2 main pillars of action: the promotion of human development, and the strengthening of regional integration by supporting sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

A total of 47 regional cooperation projects have been labeled by the UfM Member States and we stand ready to increase our activities and to accelerate and amplify our actions.
For those of us who have had the privilege to participate to the very successful World Economic Forum in Jordan a few days ago dear Minister Safadi, we know that the region also holds very strong potential of brilliant young people eager to work and live together sharing common values and objectives.

2/ My second message concerns the need to further work together, increase synergies, complementarities and coordination. Our strongest will at the UfM is to increase our interactions with key partners to enhance this action-driven positive agenda for the region, in synergy with the Paris Action Plan.

Our key objectives are: Translating into action the political will of the Member States, establishing thematic agendas through intense and
structured dialogue involving governmental and nongovernmental actors, regional and global, resulting in concrete regional cooperation projects with the aim of effectively improving the living conditions and the perspectives of a better future for our citizens, especially our youth.

I would like to highlight in particular, that, in July 2015, at the initiative of Spain and the UfM, a high level conference for a concerted agenda on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean was organized in Barcelona, in partnership among others with the UN Alliance of Civilizations, and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue (KAICIID) whose presidents are here today and I would like to pay
tribute to their activities and to confirm the willingness of the Ufm to take our partnership a step further.

The UfM is also launching a new regional dialogue on Supporting the role of women and young people in promoting peace and preventing extremism, in cooperation with UNDP and UN Women. Its first Technical Expert Meeting will take place at our headquarters in Barcelona on July 18 and 19 and we will make sure to create the appropriate links with the recommendations of this conference.

Dear Ministers, Your Excellencies,

In essence, I come before this Plenary to express the readiness and determination of the Union for the Mediterranean to play its role, putting the capacities of the Secretariat, and our inclusive multi-
partner dialogue and cooperation regional platforms, UfM projects and activities, at the disposal of the Paris Action Plan and the decisions taken in Madrid today.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.