



**Speech by H.E. Nasser Kamel, the UfM Secretary General  
Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions  
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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

First of all, let me start by congratulating Ms Christa Schweng for her appointment as President of the European Economic and Social Committee and wish her and her team all the best in this new endeavor.

Ladies and gentleman, thank you for the opportunity to be part of this crucial debate regarding the sustainable development and challenges spawned by Covid19 across the Mediterranean region.

The Covid19 pandemic has led to far-reaching global disruptions of value-chains, contraction of trade and investment flows, huge fiscal deficits, and is bound to accelerate the expansion of the informal economy, migration with in turn could lead to more radicalization, violence and political unrest.

The Mediterranean region existing elements of fragility – most notably the high levels of socio-economic inequality and the pressing climate change emergency – are indeed set to become more aggravated as a result of the pandemic. Those with preexisting socio-economic vulnerabilities tend to be unequally affected by this crisis. Youth, women, low-skilled workers, part-time or temporary workers, and the self-employed are unevenly affected.

Ahead of us, we have a labour market dominated by uncertainty and fragility, and the end of the tunnel is not exactly in sight yet. The whole world is striving for answers and looking for promising sectors and opportunities for a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

At the UfM we are aware of the magnitude of the challenges ahead, but we are also firmly convinced that there are reasons for hope, and there are opportunities in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Since day one of the current global pandemic, the UfM Secretariat has acted immediately and diligently to adapt its work priorities and mobilize its capacities in order to contribute meaningfully to post-pandemic recovery, always through a multi-stakeholder approach.

In times like this, structured dialogue and the ability to deploy the lessons learned into concrete actions become the very currency of building resilience. The path to a sustainable recovery is one that starts with reflection and dialogue, and ends with



inclusion, transparency and mutual trust. The UfM Secretariat is no stranger to these values, which form the essence of our organizational culture.

We have managed to give a huge momentum to trade and investment as vehicles of sustainable and inclusive job creation in the region. This month we had a UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade, and two days later, we had the UfM Trade and Investment Forum. We have also given a new push to creative, social and digital economy in the Region through a series of activities and partnerships, and we are studying the outcomes of the 2nd edition of the UfM Med4Jobs Stakeholders Dialogue in order to implement the recommendations received on promoting employability, skill development, and SME support in the region. The UfM Secretariat has further engaged with the Social Partners and will organize a new round of Social Dialogue in 2021, along with further emphasis on Green Recovery, Blue Economy, and Skill Development for the Future.

As coronavirus leaves parts of the world more fragile and vulnerable, it also precipitates the need to work together and reinvigorate partnerships. We will overcome the challenges posed by the Covid19 pandemic but it is essential that we do it together.

Please allow me to end my intervention by thanking the European Economic and Social Committee for holding this event and to assure to all partners of the full engagement of the UfM in promoting and supporting your projects and initiatives in the Mediterranean region.

Thank you very much and have an excellent meeting