

**Statement of Mediterranean Environmental Civil Society
to the IV Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water
13 April 2010, Barcelona**

Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies Ministers, Presidencies and Stakeholders of the Union for the Mediterranean, let me start by saying that we understand and recognize that the prerequisite for development and application of any strategy are: peace, freedom and absence of fear.

We, representatives of Civil Society in the Mediterranean region, gathered in Barcelona on the 12th of April 2010¹,

1- *welcome and support* the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) to be adopted, hopefully, by the IV Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, hosted by Spain on 13 April 2010 in Barcelona,

2- *thank* for their efforts the Water Expert Group (WEG), supported by the Technical Drafting Group (TDG) and administratively and technical assisted by the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI). Stakeholders, including NGOs, local authorities, river basin organisations and parliamentarians as well as key funding institutions and regional programmes, including the UNEP/MAP-GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems, have also concretely and constructively contributed to this process. In this respect we express the wish the above mentioned mechanism to continue its work for the preparation of the Action Plan.

3- *recall* the Dead Sea Civil Society Statement, addressed to the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water held at the Dead Sea in December 2008, as well as the outcomes of the ‘Civil Society Dialogue on Mediterranean Processes: UfM Ministerial on Environment - Climate Change COP Copenhagen - Long Term Strategy on Water in the Mediterranean’ that took place on the 1st of November 2009 in Cairo, Egypt. The points made in both of them are still valid. (annexed).

4- *reiterate* our commitment, to work in partnership with the governments of the region, as well as with international and intergovernmental organizations and other water stakeholders to promote good practices for the effective implementation of the Strategy. In view of this the appropriate modalities should be in place and followed.

5- *emphasize* the need for enhancing regional cooperation with regard to transboundary water resources. The adoption and application of international law and mechanisms such as the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention would facilitate, among others, transparency and accountability in the implementation and monitoring of the SWM.

6- *call on* the Ministers to ensure the institutional continuity and establish appropriate capacities so as to ensure that the SWM Action Plan be developed soon and include a pragmatic time-frame, an estimation of financial needs, a roadmap for implementation and also indicators of achievement. This will also give a signal to donors and funding institutions about the seriousness of the efforts undertaken. Civil Society’s input will contribute to securing that the time-frame, roadmap and indicators are ambitious yet operational and realistically set. For Civil Society to effectively partake in the design and implementation of actions and the monitoring of achievements, appropriate provisions should be ensured.

¹ A Civil Society Session entitled *Civil Society views and recommendations for a more sustainable water management in the Mediterranean* was organized by MIO-ECSDE jointly with the CdS (EEB, ENDA Maghreb, Greenpeace, MIO-ECSDE, RAED, WWF MEDPO), with the support of the Spanish EU Presidency, during the Open Technical Workshop entitled ‘Water in the Mediterranean countries: problems and solutions’.

7- *stress* the importance of promoting within the SWM and its Action Plan the ecosystem based approach and the due recognition of ecosystem services and natural infrastructures in water resources management.

8- *urge* the Ministers to effectively link the SWM and its Action Plan with comprehensive formal, non-formal and informal Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), training and capacity building at all levels and enhance knowledge sharing, technology transfer and research throughout the Mediterranean region.

9- *urge* the UfM Co-Chairs and the WEG to link the objectives of the SWM with concrete action on the ground and to ensure that the implementation of the SWM Action Plan is appropriately interlinked with all conventions, policies and financing instruments in the region, acting without delay in order to meet the enormous water challenges that the region is facing.

10- *propose* that apart from inviting Civil Society representatives to assist, as observers, in the Water Expert Group (WEG) meetings, a modality should be provided throughout the development and implementation of the Action Plan, for Civil Society comments on the documents produced by the TDG and the WEG to be systematically taken into account. This could be facilitated if the documents are available online and stakeholders are granted reasonable time to submit their comments.

11- *ask* that water-related projects proposed under the UfM are decided based on their proven necessity and selected according to internationally recognized criteria to be elaborated by the UfM Secretariat as well as to sustainability standards (i.e. SEAs, EIAs, etc.), taking into account the environmental context of the region. Stakeholders should be adequately involved in the monitoring of their operation to ensure proper implementation and benefit-sharing of such projects.

12- *appreciate* the hosting of a Civil Society session by the Spanish EU Presidency so as to facilitate the finalization and formal adoption of this statement.