



Ministerial Conference on the Action Plan for Education for  
Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean

8-9 December 2016, Nicosia - Cyprus

***“Welcoming message”***

Dear (Mr. Demetris Syllouris,) President of the House of Representatives  
of the Republic,

Dear (Mr. Costas Kadis,) Minister of Education and Culture,

Dear Ministers,

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address such a distinguished audience today, on the occasion of this Ministerial Conference dealing with Education for Sustainable Development in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

I would like to express the personal gratitude of our Secretary General, Ambassador Fathallah Sijilmassi, to the Republic of Cyprus, for its commitment to advancing the common Mediterranean agenda related to Education for Sustainable Development.

Two years and a half ago, the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change of the 43 Members States of the Union for the Mediterranean met in Athens where they endorsed the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.



This Strategy has provided a successful framework for enhancing regional cooperation on issues which are crucial for shaping more inclusive, more prosperous and more sustainable societies in the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development has already yielded positive results at regional level. New innovative multi-stakeholder projects have been developed and labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean.

Tomorrow the Ministers of Education of the region will adopt the Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean. This is an important step taken by the Republic of Cyprus for developing this Strategy further.

I would like to pay tribute to the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean, and its Director, Professor Michael Scoullou, for their sterling preparatory work, and thank the countries for their continuous commitment.

Our region is facing unprecedented challenges shared by countries on both rims of the Mediterranean, making the need for deeper Euro-Mediterranean cooperation more relevant than ever.

Education for Sustainable Development is a real driver of positive change that needs to be further enhanced. It has the potential to help address some of the root causes of current economic, social, and environmental challenges in the region.

On the first of January this year, the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force.



The Ministerial Conference therefore comes particularly timely to examine together, from a Mediterranean perspective, the operational way forward to strengthen regional cooperation on Education for Sustainable Development.

The Action Plan to be adopted tomorrow will generate a further comprehensive set of actions to the benefit of all. This is an important collective achievement for a better common future in the Mediterranean and a strong, positive, meaningful message to send to the Mediterranean Youth.

Increasing synergies, complementarities and impact-oriented coordination in the region amongst all the different institutional players, with full involvement of the various civil society stakeholders, is instrumental to promote human and sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

The mission of the UfM, being the Euro-Mediterranean Intergovernmental Institution, is to enhance regional cooperation, dialogue and the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impact on our citizens, mainly our Youth.

Member States and all stakeholders involved can count on the continuous commitment of the UfM Secretariat in order to work collectively with you towards advancing Education on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean.

And I am looking forward to fruitful exchanges with you during these two days on how we can make the most of regional cooperation in this area.

Thank you very much for your attention.