

MENA Civil Society Position Paper for the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy, 11th December 2013, Brussels

Great progress has been made...

Acknowledging that according to the latest scientific data on the convergence of rising energy demands and the incremental depletion of fossil energy resources, energy insecurity is becoming a severe challenge in many MENA countries;

Noting that the lack of socio-economic progress and the quest for jobs and economic opportunities have been at the roots of the democratic aspirations expressed through the transformational changes in many MENA countries;

Paying tribute to the demands of the people in the MENA region calling for a political transition to a more inclusive, democratic and sustainable development paradigm (new social contract) that focuses on a fair sharing of resources, opportunities and the fruits of growth and furthermore guarantees the right of all people to equitably participate in decisions that shape the future of their societies;

Recognizing that water scarcity is already a severe problem throughout the Mediterranean and the wider Arab region and will intensify due to the impacts of climate change;

Recalling the worrying IPCC scenarios for North Africa and the Middle East and thus the urgent need to turn the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC - "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system" – into reality;

Acknowledging also the dramatic environmental damages and the life threatening impacts on human health of fossil fuel production including shale gas;

Recalling also that in view of the Fukushima disaster, nuclear power cannot be part of a trajectory towards sustainable and peaceful development due to critical safety issues, proliferation, geopolitical risks and exorbitant economic costs;

The signing civil society stakeholders:

Welcome the main objectives of the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP) under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to create enabling environments for a sustainable low-carbon energy future throughout the Mediterranean region by tapping into the region's huge potential in solar and wind energy as well as energy efficiency as an important step towards sustainable low-carbon development, including addressing climate change;

Note with satisfaction that energy is highlighted as a key area of deeper regional cooperation and integration in the "new partnership", as access to sustainable modern energy services for all plays a critical role to achieve the Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals in the MENA countries of the Mediterranean region;

Support the efforts to develop new policies, regulatory reforms and low-carbon strategies that aim at the decarbonization and diversification of the energy sector and at the same time enable durable prosperity and broad-based participation for local populations, including joint efforts to promote technological and industrial cooperation, knowledge transfer and capacity building;

But there is still some way to go....

From a civil society perspective, however, scaling-up low-carbon technologies and achieving a fair partnership for a sustainable power system across the Mediterranean is both an economic and a social challenge. Turning this challenge into opportunities will require combined efforts from all relevant stakeholders to bring about sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Therefore, the MSP should be accompanied by additional efforts and policy measures in order to meet the original objective of the UfM, namely to effectively develop a "zone of peace, security and shared prosperity" throughout the Mediterranean region. This objective can only be achieved by the MSP if investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency are promoted through a sound framework which conceives the MSP as an instrument for the socio-economic development of the societies on both sides of the Mediterranean Basin supporting social justice and equitable welfare.

This would also be in line with several communications of the European Commission, namely:

- *"A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"*¹
- *"A new response to a changing neighbourhood"*²
- *"Soutenir le renforcement de la coopération et de l'intégration régionale au Maghreb: Algérie, Libye, Mauritanie, Maroc et Tunisie"*³
- *"Instrument Européen de Voisinage Stratégie Régional pour la Méditerranée Sud 2014-2020"*⁴

As highlighted by the 2013 Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils at the headquarters of the UfM in November 2013, *"there can be no successful union between North and South of the Mediterranean without the involvement of civil society (...)"*. Thus, and in line with Pedro Narro, chair of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) EUROMED stating that *"such involvement should start as an input to the UfM ministerial conferences"*, the 23 undersigned civil society stakeholders provide 14 key recommendations to the participants of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy taking place on the 11th of December 2013 in Brussels.

14 Recommendations

The Master Plan for the MSP and other EU-supported initiatives aiming to pave the way for its implementation should:

- 1** Develop a sound framework for a meaningful, inclusive and participatory dialogue with civil society that enables the active engagement of all relevant civil society actors from within and outside the MENA region in order for their demands and proposals to be embodied directly in the decision-making process of the MSP at all levels (EU, national policies);
- 2** Embed the realization of the MSP into a new and inspiring narrative that links global climate change, low-carbon development, the over-exploitation of fossil fuels, energy security and equitable socio-economic opportunities as well as regional security to the objectives of the MSP by ensuring an open and transparent consultation of civil society on the MSP in order to increase public awareness and enable social ownership;
- 3** Reflect the energy and development needs of MENA societies, which include energy sovereignty, energy justice and increased energy access of marginalized regions and populations;

¹ COM(2011) 200 final of 8/3/2011

² COM(2011) 303 of 25/5/2011

³ Ref. Ares(2013)3220208 of 10/10/2013

⁴ Ref. Ares(2013) 3403994 of 04/11/2013

- 4** Play an active role in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as behavioural change in the field of energy through policy instruments, education and public awareness measures involving public administration, NGOs and the private sector;
- 5** Promote the South-South collaboration towards a regional energy market through both decentralized and centralized renewable energy options and ensure their integration into the grid through specific regulatory measures;
- 6** Foster the design and implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency action plans according to the template developed by RCREEE as a powerful tool to identify common priorities as well as cooperation within actors and stakeholders;
- 7** Further the use of careful desalination and wastewater treatment technologies to overcome the deficits of affordable freshwater by interregional cooperation and the combination of coupled renewable energy, desalination and wastewater treatment systems;
- 8** Strive for more coherence between climate and energy objectives by linking renewable energy and energy efficiency policies/targets (in TWh or in % of consumption instead of GW) to specific climate and low-carbon development policies/targets for MENA countries within the MSP strategy;
- 9** Establish systematic participatory consultation processes allowing free and informed consent prior to the approval of any infrastructure project affecting local communities and their lands as well as other natural and social resources, with special attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- 10** Make sustainability a guiding principle of the MSP by incorporating social and environmental safeguards based on international conventions, national laws and strategic impact assessments for the utility-scale deployment of renewable energy technologies to accentuate their contribution to equitable human development and environmental protection at the project-level;
- 11** Implement mechanisms for technology transfer that promote true cooperative action on technology diffusion, innovation and development to build-up local skills and competencies, include domestic industries, services and public utilities as well as further sustainable business and employment opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small-scale competitors in the European Neighbourhood of the Mediterranean Sea;
- 12** Foster South-South, South-North and triangular collaboration among universities, research institutions, training centres, the private sector, governments, civil society organizations and local communities to develop effective capacity building programmes – especially addressing youth unemployment – on renewable energy and energy efficiency and by that increase absorption and implementation capacities at both the industrial and educational level;
- 13** Establish a sound sustainability framework for a potential trans-Mediterranean electricity transfer under Article 9 of the EU Directive 2009/28 to (a) promote economic growth, social development and environmental protection in the exporting Southern Mediterranean countries, (b) aid European import countries in achieving their climate and energy targets cost-effectively and (c) guarantee that new interconnections only transfer traceable green electricity;
- 14** Urge the European Union to demonstrate to the international community that it is prepared to lead by example as a forerunner of an ambitious global deal to tackle climate change at the 21st UNFCCC COP in Paris 2015 by unilaterally increasing its climate and renewable energy/energy efficiency targets for 2030.

23 Signing organizations



indyACT



L'Association Draa des Énergies
Renouvelables



GREENPEACE
MEDITERRANEAN



Association Eau et
Energie pour Tous
Témara



Association Energies Renouvelables
Développement Durable et Solidarités



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والأرض بالمغرب



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Mediterranean Information Office for Environment,
Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSD E)



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POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT



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