

President,

Good morning, Ladies and gentlemen

The two shores of the Mediterranean share common challenges in terms of environment, energy, climate change and sustainable development.

We urgently need a common plan to tackle issues such as the protection of the marine environment, the preservation of biodiversity, the improvement of air quality in urban regions, the availability and quality of water, the management of waste, the fight against climate change and the enhancement of energy security.

During this Assembly we have considered three excellent reports on the protection of the marine environment, biodiversity and waste management. These reports advocated reinforced partnerships between the Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean in order to

promote better environmental conditions in the region and hence the promotion of sustainable development, economic growth and jobs.

In the immediate future two issues will be of utmost urgency: energy and climate change.

In the energy area, diversification is the *key word*. On both sides of the Mediterranean, we need to diversify our sources of energy and this area has a huge potential for renewable energy. Joint initiatives to promote innovative projects for the production of clean energy together with the establishment of a true Mediterranean energy market with energy interconnections - north south but also south south - will improve energy security and create new sources of economic growth.

In the area of Climate change, 2011 will be a crucial year. We are approaching the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and there

should be a new international agreement (**will be ...**) The Mediterranean region will be one of the most affected in the world by the climate change phenomena. This will see an increase of the extension of the deserted areas with all the attendant adverse effects. Urgent action is required in terms of mitigation, adaptation, transfer of technology, capacity building of public administration, civil society and NGOs but also in terms of education, collaboration in research projects and creating networks between Universities.

In terms of international negotiations, Europe has led the fight against Climate Change. But in this battle, we need allies. I call for a common baseline for negotiation from the two shores of the Mediterranean in order to build a sustainable world for the future generations.