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TITRE : Medays Forum kicks off in Tangier to foster Mediterranean dialog  
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The event is organized by the Institut Amadeus under the banner "Forum of the South for a New Mediterranean". It aims at bringing in different views and recommendations from the regions' officials and decision-makers on political, strategic, economic, environmental and socio-cultural issues.

The forum is meant to stimulate a better understanding of issues relating to the different political and economic processes in the Mediterranean to draft a new concept of the region.

Speaking at the opening session, Moroccan Foreign Minister, Taib Fassi Fihri underscored the importance of the timing and of the topics to be discussed in the Forum, which takes place just a few months from the founding summit of the Union for the Mediterranean (UPM).

The Medays, he said, would place this ambitious project properly on the rails to enable it to shape a new development vision of the Mediterranean, and a better cooperation under the aegis of an institutions managed by countries from the two sides of the Mediterranean.

The minister noted that, based on a common agreement, the Arab League would take part in the meetings of the UPM.

He also raised the issue of the Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia), launching an "urgent call" on all parties to endeavor to re-launch the Union, which is facing a stalemate since its inception in the late 80s.

The absence of the Maghreb Union equals the waste of large development opportunities in the region, he said. "It risks to be a substantial waste for the UMP."

For his part, Spanish FM, Miguel Angel Moratinos stressed the importance of Medays, describing it as "an excellent initiative" to think about the future of the UPM, and to revive wills for a better adherence to this project.

He noted that the "Union for the Mediterranean necessarily requires the concretization of the Maghreb Union, and a lasting and durable peace in the middle east," describing the Tangier meeting as a "commendable initiative to think and act in a spirit of community."

Reflecting a similar view, French State Secretary for Public Policies, Eric Besson said the UPM, whose founding speech was delivered in Tangier, represents a number of stakes for the Mediterranean region, and requires pooling efforts to take up the challenges relating to environment, water, education and the economy.

Speaking at the opening, Egyptian ambassador to Paris, stressed the need to trigger the flow of European investments towards the southern shore of the Mediterranean. He regretted that only 2% of

European investments go to this regions, while in Asia 20% of Japanese investments are directed to the countries of the region.

The Union for the Mediterranean is co-chaired by France and Egypt. It musters all the EU members with the countries bordering the southern shores of the Mediterranean.