



VIII meeting of the PAM Standing Committees

VIII PAM Plenary Session

Villa Méditerranée, Marseilles, France

20-22 January 2014

Executive Report

20 January:

Opening ceremony

Address by **H.E. Michel Vauzelle**, PAM Vice President and President of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) Regional Council

In his opening address, President Hon. Vauzelle welcomed the President of the National Assembly and the Senate as well as the Presidents of the PAM parliaments and the delegates attending the VIII Plenary Session. He spoke of the urgent challenges facing the region, making particular reference to the conflict in Syria and the Middle East Peace Process, as well as the issue of high unemployment, especially among young people, throughout the region.

Address by **H.E. Sen. Francesco Amoruso**, PAM President

Sen. Amoruso thanked the PACA region, the National Assembly and the Senate for their generous and impeccable hospitality in hosting the VIII Plenary Session in Marseille. President Amoruso stated that the Arab Spring had permanently transformed the Mediterranean region. He informed the Standing Committees of the exceptional reception given by the UNSG Ban Ki-moon to the PAM delegation that had visited New York on 5 December 2013, and of the trust the UN placed in PAM in asking it to take an active role in the resumption of interparliamentary dialogue between Syria and its neighbouring States, with a view to building bridges for the achievement of a peaceful solution to the Syrian civil war. President Amoruso was also optimistic that further progress towards a peaceful settlement between Palestine and Israel was now in sight. He also referred to the tragic loss of

human lives in migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and called for a common policy on migrants as well as harmonized legislation to combat human trafficking.

Sen. Amoruso also anticipated that the specific work of the First Standing Committee, chaired by Sen. Halaiqah (Jordan), would focus on the Syrian crisis, the 5+5 Parliamentary Diplomacy dimension, the situation of Israel and Palestine, the Western Sahara and new relations with the Russian Parliament. The work of the Second Standing Committee, chaired by Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh, would be dedicated to the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean, and the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean. Finally, the Third Standing Committee, chaired by Hon. Maria Da Conceição Pereira, would be discussing the role of women in the Arab Spring and the access of people with disabilities to the labour market.

Sen. Amoruso stated that the debates and approval of the respective reports and resolutions of the Standing Committees were to be considered as tantamount to adoption before the Plenary. This would allow the Plenary to dedicate more time to debating issues at the heart of Mediterranean interests.

Address by **H.E. Claude Bartolone**, President of the French National Assembly

H.E. Claude Bartolone informed the Standing Committees that he and his colleague, Jean Pierre Bel, had decided by their participation to send a strong message out that the Mediterranean was important not just to the region but that it had a geopolitical vocation which affected the lives of Europeans, Africans, Arabs and Asians alike. Since the Arab Spring, new aspirations had been born in terms of democracy, peace, social justice, the environment and unemployment, but at the same time those revolutions had given rise to uncertainty and instability. He called on PAM to be ambitious in overcoming the obstacles to achieving democracy.

Address by **H.E. Jean-Pierre Bel**, President of the French Senate

H.E. Jean-Pierre Bel extolled the virtues of the city of Marseille, which had been steeped in Mediterranean history since the times of the Phoenicians. Many difficult obstacles stood in the way of peace building, security and prosperity for the entire Mediterranean, but it was important to remember that the Arab Spring represented a ray of hope for many and a promise of democracy. As Mediterraneans, Hon. President Bel stated that we all shared a common heritage and a common destiny, and that PAM opened the ideal channel through which to work together at improving regional integration.

Message from **H.H. Pope Francis**

H.E. Monsignor Jean-Marc Aveline, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Marseille, conveyed the message from H.H. Pope Francis, in which he called for dialogue to rediscover its prophetic dimension to strengthen the fraternity at the basis of humanity itself, and by

promoting an ethic of solidarity in the knowledge that we were all bound together as one family and share the same destiny on Earth. The moral force of love must prevail over the material force of arms! He praised PAM for its efforts and reiterated that the Holy See would continue to offer its support and assistance to PAM so that Mediterranean peoples could live peaceably aside one another

Message from **H.E. Ban Ki-moon**, Secretary General of the United Nations

The PAM Secretary General read the message addressed to the Assembly by the UN Secretary General H.E. Ban Ki-moon, who reiterated the importance of promoting dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in the Mediterranean. Parliamentarians of the Mediterranean region had an important responsibility in nurturing the hopes and expectations of those people. In particular, PAM had a key role to play in paving the way for peace in the Middle East by building mutual trust and confidence. There could be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. Parliamentarians therefore had a pivotal role to play in contributing to the peace in the region.

Address by **Sen. Andrey Klimov**, Deputy Head of the International Cooperation Committee of the Russian Federation Council

Despite being outside the region, but with 3 million Russian tourists to the Mediterranean each year, in addition to its historical economic and political interests in the region, the Russian Federation carefully followed the PAM agenda to see what constructive contributions it could bring. Sen. Klimov stated that Russia was committed to achieving a peaceful outcome to the Syrian crisis and the Russian people were deeply concerned about the murders of civilians in the civil war. He also spoke of 2014 being an important year for Russia as it would be chairing the 2014 G8 and hosting the Winter Olympics in February in Sochi.

Address by **Mrs. Omnia Taha**, Director of the European Affairs and Euro-Arab Cooperation Department of the League of Arab States.

Mrs. Taha reiterated that PAM constituted an important pillar in the cooperation process between Mediterranean, European and Arab countries. She commented on the enormous changes underway in the Arab world today, referring to the problems of security, the building of individual freedoms, democracy and social justice. She then referred to the Middle East peace process, the Syrian conflict and the democratic transitions following the Arab Spring and called on all Mediterranean States to unite in their efforts to achieving a region of peace and prosperity.

Standing Committees

1st Standing Committee (Political and Security-related Cooperation), chaired by Sen. Dr. Mohammad Halaiqah (Jordan), PAM Vice President

Sen. Halaiqah presented an overview of the activities of the First Standing Committee on Political and Security-related Cooperation.

In the wake of the Syrian crisis, PAM sent a high level delegation to Syria and Lebanon from 28 June to 2 July 2013, where the PAM delegation stressed to all concerned the need to focus on the delicate issues of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian aid delivery and confidence building measures. The PAM report on this mission had been shared also with, inter alia, the UN Security Council. In October 2013, the PAM Secretary General welcomed a high-level delegation from the Russian DUMA and the Council of the Federation, which reaffirmed their intention to become a PAM Associate Member. In October, PAM also attended the meetings of the Parliamentary Assemblies of NATO, in Dubrovnik, and OCSE, in Montenegro. On both occasions, discussions focused on the Syrian crisis, and PAM delegates highlighted the need for close collaboration among actors concerned. In November 2013, a PAM delegation visited Amman, Ramallah and Jerusalem to discuss, among others, the cross border impact of the Syrian conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process with the Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli authorities. In December, a PAM High Level mission visited the UN Headquarters in New York, and was received by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who underlined PAM's complementary role in supporting the UN action plan in the Middle East and the Mediterranean area. The PAM Secretariat, which is responsible for servicing the parliamentary dimension of the 5+5 Dialogue, organized the 4th high-level parliamentary meeting of the Western Mediterranean Forum on 15 April 2013, hosted by the National Assembly of Mauritania in Nouakchott. To strengthen cooperation between PAM and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), a meeting took place between PAM Secretary-General, Amb. Sergio Piazzi, and UfM Secretary-General, Amb. Fathallah Sijilmassi, in Barcelona on April 2013. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on that occasion. In 2013, following to a decision of the previous year, PAM had appointed three Permanent Observers to the United Nations Offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna, namely, Ambassadors Anton Tabone, Gerhard Putman-Cramer and Peter Schatzer, respectively.

Statement by **H.E. Karim Ghellab**, President of the House of Representatives of Morocco

H.E. Ghellab stated that while the Mediterranean region had undergone drastic changes in recent times, Morocco had undertaken the visionary reforms of its King and had successfully brought about wide-sweeping democratic changes to improve its governance and modernize its democratic status and freedoms. At the regional level, the main obstacle to be overcome was the Middle East conflict, where the Palestinian question had been protracted for more than 60 years, and Syria was in the throes of a civil war that had brought violence and killing to more than 100,000 civilians and untold pain and suffering to thousands more. H.E. Ghellab also emphasized the important role to be played by PAM not only in monitoring and guiding

the new architecture of Egypt, but also by using the instruments of parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy to galvanise the democracy-building processes underway in the Arab Spring States.

Intervention by **Mr. Stylianos Gavriil**, Consul-General of Greece in Marseilles, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece (EU Presidency)

H.E. Gavriil spoke of the Greek priorities for its 2014 Presidency of the European Council. Despite a restricted budget, its priorities remained a return to growth and job creation, as well as deepening the reform process of the public administration in the direction of eliminating corruption and incorporating practices of good governance.

Intervention by **Amb. Yousef Bataineh**, Chair for European Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan

Amb. Bataineh spoke of the Syrian crisis which was now entering into its fourth year, where, by the end of 2014 it was expected that an additional 1.7 million people would have fled making a total refugee population of 4.4 million, i.e. the largest refugee population in the world. He sent out an urgent appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to support Syrian refugees and to help Jordan cope with the burden of so many exiled Syrians.

Intervention by **Hon. Fadia Dib**, President of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Syrian Parliament

Hon. Dib paid homage to PAM's role in encouraging international diplomacy in the region. She gave an account of events in Syria that differed greatly from those commonly portrayed by the international media, explaining that while Syria was ruled by Assad's regime, it was now besieged by terrorist forces who had capitalized on the protracted conflict to join arms with the rebels. She called for an end to the Western economic boycott of Syria and for the Western governments to unite forces to wipe out terrorism in the region.

Presentation, debate and vote on PAM draft report and resolution on: "*Political developments in the Middle East and North Africa*", Rapporteur: **Hon. Justyne Caruana** (Malta), presented by Hon. **Pedro Roque** (Portugal)

This report focused on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, adding an overview of the present post-Arab Spring situation. In particular, it traced events in the Middle East peace process during 2012-2013, referring in particular to PAM's participation at the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Rome in February 2013 and the PAM high-level delegation visit to Amman, Ramallah and Jerusalem to meet with Government and Parliamentary authorities, and discuss the Middle East peace process, the ongoing crisis in Syria, as well as the Iranian nuclear negotiations. Secondly, it summarized the democratic transition process in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Thirdly, the report referred to the legal reforms undertaken in the Kingdoms of Morocco and Jordan, respectively. Fourthly, the

report analysed the humanitarian situation in Syria and gave detail of the efforts made by the international community and PAM to facilitate humanitarian assistance through cross-border operations (based on UN Resolution 46/182), as well as efforts to resolve the crisis through dialogue.

In the debate that followed, **Jordan** called for all the UN resolutions related to the Middle East peace process to be applied and respected, and solicited informal assistance to cope with the enormous number of refugees. **Turkey** stated that it had increased its humanitarian aid to assist Syrian refugees crossing its borders and currently hosted 700,000 refugees.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

Draft Report and resolution on “Strategies to combat public sector corruption in the Mediterranean”, Rapporteur: **Hon. Giorgio Girgis Sorial** (Italy)

The report described corruption as a worldwide phenomenon, which is prevalent in the Mediterranean, and referred to the World Bank definition of corruption as the “misuse of public authority for personal gain, or to benefit family and friends”. The report also analyzed the Mediterranean situation, dividing the Mediterranean into South West Europe, South East Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa, respectively. Finally, the report examined the measures that could be undertaken to combat corruption throughout the area, calling for the adoption of international conventions relating thereto. Moreover, the report suggested that strict laws were required to eradicate the informal laws and practices created by cultural values that lead corruption to be an accepted phenomenon throughout society, and especially prevalent in some North African countries. Finally, he stated that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) had requested the cooperation of PAM to tackle this issue jointly.

In the debate that followed, **Greece** informed about the steps taken by the Hellenic Parliament to combat corruption, including the establishment of the figure of the national coordinator on corruption. **Lebanon** stated that this figure had also been adopted in their country, and shared a document recently adopted by his Parliament.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

2nd Standing Committee (Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation), chaired by Sen. Lhou Lmarbough (Morocco), PAM Vice President

Sen. Lmarbough stated that the 2nd Standing Committee had been particularly active in the economic sector of the PAM Panel. The Panel had met in Rabat on 3 May 2013 to discuss energy-related matters. In Geneva, in May 2013, a major conference had been jointly organized by PAM, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development* (UNCTAD) and attended by more than 200 delegates, to examine questions relating to trade facilitation, growth, job creation and access

to credit. Moreover, on the sidelines of the Geneva Conference, the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and PAM signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation in the Mediterranean. PAM also participated in the presentation of the EBRD Energy Strategy in Rome, where it was represented by Eng. Alessandro Ortis, Co-Chair of the Panel. A PAM high-level delegation also contributed to the “International Conference on Productive Work for Youth in Tunisia and the MENA Region”, jointly organized with UNIDO, during which PAM organized a parliamentary debate on “The Role of Parliaments in Support of the Economic Process”. The 2nd Standing Committee also participated in PAM meetings at the high-level segments of the United Nations General Assembly dealing with Migration. With regard to Environment, PAM participated at the Conference of Parties (COP 19) on Climate Change in Warsaw in November 2013.

In 2014, a major event of the PAM Panel will be held in Caserta in Italy in cooperation with Confindustria to address the issue of “Waste Management in the Mediterranean”. Moreover, on 22-24 March 2014, in Florence, PAM will co-sponsor the European Commission Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Creativity, Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights in the Textile and Clothing Industry in the Euro-Mediterranean Area. Furthermore, PAM will soon meet the President of the EBRD in London and sign a second operational MoU. Further still, PAM and EBRD will also conduct a joint mission to Libya in the coming weeks, at the request of the Government in Tripoli.

Sen. Lmarbough stated that during 2013, the reports and resolutions of the Second Standing Committee had focused on the activities of the PAM Trade Panel in the context of youth unemployment and job creation, and the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean.

Statement by **H.E. Ilir Meta**, President of the Parliament of Albania

The Albanian President, H.E. Meta, stated that, despite the fact that his country was growing closer to Europe as a region, this had not lessened the social, economic political and environmental challenges. He called for commitment from all PAM members to overcome the current economic crisis, facilitate a common policy on migration, and promote a united stance against extreme political movements. Albania was also committed to protecting its fragile coastal ecosystem of the Mediterranean and building waste water management systems. The President concluded his speech by offering to host the PAM Plenary Session in 2016, in Tirana. The offer was welcomed by PAM delegates.

Statement by **H.E. Laurent Novion**, President of the Parliament of Monaco

The President of the Monegasque Parliament spoke of the Mediterranean as a common identity, common heritage and common destiny, which was why events of the Middle East and Syria in particular were the responsibility of every Mediterranean today. In particular, he spoke of Monaco’s priority areas for the Mediterranean, which included water resource management programmes, sustainable development and environment. The President concluded by offering to host the 2015 PAM Plenary Session in Monaco. The offer was warmly received by PAM delegates.

Intervention by **Mrs. Teresa Ribeiro**, Deputy Secretary General for Energy of the Union for the Mediterranean

Mrs. Ribeiro gave an overview of the institutions and functioning of the UfM before going on to explain its specific activities in the energy sector. In the energy sector, the UfM was currently involved in a pipeline construction project in Jordan, financed by private funding.

Intervention by **Mr. Emmanuel Noutary**, General Delegate of ANIMA Investment Network

Mr. Noutary gave a brief overview of the ANIMA Investment Network, which was created in 2002 by the National Investment Agencies of 22 countries to set up a platform for synergies in the economic cooperation between countries in the south of the Mediterranean. ANIMA's main challenge was to boost FDI in the South Mediterranean, which had fallen between 2010 and 2013 (from 45% to 20%). The return to political stability in the South East Mediterranean was essential for the FDI in the area as confidence remained low at present. PAM and ANIMA Investment Network will jointly organize an event on Diaspora in 2014.

Intervention by **Mr. Michelangelo Celozzi**, Secretary General of Med-TSO, Member of the Energy Group of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean

Mr. Celozzi stated that the mission of Med-TSO was to increase cooperation among TSOs (Transmission System Operators) in the Mediterranean region, as well as between them and MEDREG and ENTSO-E (European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity), and to bring about the integration of Mediterranean electricity systems. Mr. Celozzi reminded the members that risks could not be borne by industrial operators alone, and therefore a regional project for Mediterranean electricity integration required an enormous commitment at the political level. PAM members should play a pioneering role in its achievement.

Intervention by **Mr. Carlo Crea**, Director of International Affairs of Terna S.p.A., Member of the Energy Group of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean

Mr. Crea informed the delegates of the activities of Terna S.p.A. in the Mediterranean. It was unique in that it had five interconnections with other countries in the Mediterranean (Greece, Montenegro and Malta, including two under construction with Tunisia and Algeria). This offered enormous potential for integration of both European and African energy. He continued to offer Terna's support to PAM events, as in the past.

Presentation, debate and vote on PAM draft report and resolution on “*Activities of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean - 2013*”, Rapporteur: **Hon. Nevena Stojanovic** (Serbia)

The report follows the current organizational structure of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean, namely: (I) Sustainable Development (SD): Energy,

Water, Environment; (II) Trade Facilitation (TF): Rules, Logistics, Transport, Infrastructures; (III) Production Initiatives and Job Creation (PJ): Industry, M/SMEs, Services, Food Production, Vocational Training; (IV) Investments and Finance (IF): Facilitating legislative and regulatory frameworks. More specifically, the report analyzed the question of job creation in the Mediterranean with specific reference to youth unemployment and young women, and concluded by suggesting several priority topics to be dealt with under each sectoral area.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

Draft Report and Resolution on “Climate Change: Perspectives for the Mediterranean after Doha and Warsaw”; Rapporteur: **Hon. Renato Sampaio** (Portugal)

The report explained how the perception of climate change had changed since the 1970s, before examining the growing consciousness of its effects, notably, in terms of human health, heat waves and extreme weather events, agriculture and food security, the economy, rising sea levels, and drinking water. The report then analyzed the decisions taken at the UN Climate Change Conferences in Doha 2012 (COP18) and in Warsaw 2013 (COP19) and explained what Mediterranean countries could do to implement those decisions. The report also provided an overview of the effects of climate change in the MENA region, and concluded that the Mediterranean region was particularly vulnerable to climate change. Hon. Sampaio stressed the need for PAM to focus its efforts on the adoption of a common position (including with other regional parliaments) at the World Conference on Climate Change to take place in Paris in 2015.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

Intervention by **Ms. Marion Denantes**, Climate Parliament (NGO)

Ms. Denantes informed the PAM Standing Committees that the future scenario for the Mediterranean region was considered to be dramatic as - in addition to the rising sea and air temperatures - there would be an increase in extreme phenomena such as heat waves, extreme meteorological events, as well as their consequences on agriculture, food security and water availability. The Climate Parliament, an NGO, therefore wanted to develop a report to present at the 2015 Climate Conference, which would deal with the issues of the reduction of green house gases, and deforestation, in particular.

In the debate that followed, among others, **President Sen. Lmarbouh** informed the members that **Syria** and some other delegations had requested a new item to be included on the 2nd Standing Committee working agenda for 2014, namely, the impact of armed conflict on the environment. Mr. **Alessandro Ortis, PAM Panel Co-President**, stated that the whole issue of how to tackle and mitigate CO₂ emissions needed to be rethought and greenhouse gas emissions ought to be tackled globally, perhaps through trade-based agreements rather than relying on national States adhesion to multilateral emission reductions agreements.

21 January

3rd Standing Committee (Dialogue among Civilizations and Human Rights), chaired by Hon. Maria da Conceição Pereira (Portugal), PAM Vice President

The 3rd Standing Committee had actively represented PAM on the occasion of the PAM high level mission to the 68th UNGA in New York, where the issue of guaranteeing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian population had been discussed. On that occasion, the PAM representative had also addressed the UNGA on migration and disabilities. On Intercultural Dialogue, PAM had also been an active member of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, which had adopted a Ministerial Declaration with a PAM proposal stressing the role of national parliaments in applying soft diplomacy as an instrument for both regional and global affairs, and recognizing the value of the PAM “Fez Programme”. PAM intended to collaborate with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) promoting a programme of Mediterranean students’ mobility based on the experience of the European Erasmus and Socrates programmes. Moreover, H.E. Jorge Sampaio, the former President of Portugal, and former High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) had requested PAM’s assistance in supporting an initiative to set up a Global Platform of partners and establishing an Exchange Program for Syrian Students, for the academic year 2013-2014. PAM delegates also took part in the “Women in Parliament Global Forum” held on 27 November 2013, at the European Parliament in Brussels and the OSCE Mediterranean Conference 2013 in Monaco, which discussed the role of women in public, political and economic life.

On the question of exclusion and discrimination against women and other marginalized groups in our region, in 2014, PAM intends to organize a meeting with the Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Foundation. Furthermore, a special PAM team is currently working on a project proposal by the Observatoire Oceanologique de Villefranche-sur-Mer of the University Paris-VI "Pierre et Marie Curie" UPMC - Sorbonne Universities, to possibly host a PAM Summer School in France. PAM is also working on a conference to be hosted by the University of Catania (Sicily, Italy), to facilitate the cooperation between the academic community and parliamentary diplomacy. A MoU was signed with the Rector of the University of Catania to formalize cooperation.

Finally, Hon. Pereira stated that in 2013 the 3rd Standing Committee had produced two reports and resolutions on “The role of Women in the Arab Spring” and “Access of people with disabilities to the labour market in the Mediterranean”.

Statement by **H.E. Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah**, President of the House of Councillors of Morocco

The President advocated the existences of a new world order where power was no longer monopolized by a handful of States. The changes leading to this new world order had generated new crises and instability, especially in parts of the Mediterranean region, such as Syria, where the transition process to democracy had now become extremely complex.

Similar contexts existed in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya too. In Morocco, the situation was somewhat distinct but similar to Jordan, as, in both Kingdoms, the respective monarchs had undertaken sweeping social reforms. The President stated that Moroccans had benefitted from openness, freedom, dialogue and understanding fomented in the region by the Barcelona Process and that PAM was essential to continuing that process in the interests of achieving democracy and social justice for the entire region.

Intervention by **Mr. José Angel Oropeza**, Director of the Coordinating Office for the Mediterranean, International Organization for Migration

Mr. Oropeza spoke of the need to manage migration effectively both nationally and regionally, which was a key challenge for policy-makers and law-makers as many North African countries were countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants, and, given the high level of youth unemployment, the demographic push northwards intensifying. The IOM also called for increased dialogue between EU and countries of the region, but also to improve preparedness of countries of arrival. It was also essential to raise awareness about dangers of trafficking and smuggling. Mr. Oropeza stated that the IOM was willing to assist and advise PAM on developing policies at the Mediterranean level to manage migration, which should be considered as a primary source of economic, social and cultural integration of the region, and which therefore needed common rules and procedures for identification and protection of victims, as well as common policies for their repatriation and the fight against trafficking.

Intervention by **Mr. Geoffroy d'Aspremont**, Responsible of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA) (NGO)

Mr. d'Aspremont outlined the role of the MCA as a citizens' process dating back to 2008, which had established a network to favour the emergence of common actions within the context of citizens' solidarity, and contribute to the construction of a sustainable Mediterranean area of peace, development, solidarity, and shared prosperity. He suggested establishing a permanent link with PAM in relation to which it would contribute to PAM debates, as well as to the preparation of reports and resolutions.

Presentation, debate and vote on PAM draft report and resolution on “The role of Women in the Arab Spring”; Rapporteur: **Hon. Najat Abu Baker** (Palestine), presented by **Hon. Bilal Kasem** (Palestine)

The report analyzed the role of women from the Southern Mediterranean in the Arab Spring revolutions, and put forward the main challenges facing those women aspiring for equal status and rights in society. The report commented that following the Arab Spring, women's rights had taken a step backwards towards a “dark autumn” and focused on the post-revolution obstacles that stood in the way of gender equality, such as the rise of political Islam, and the media portrayal of women's rights in MENA. The report also referred to the forced marriages of young women in Syria and stated that so-called “Jihadist weddings” were

now taking place, calling on women in some Arab countries to offer themselves for Jihad marriage to support the rebel cause in Syria.

In the debate that followed, it was suggested that rapid demographic growth had had a negative impact on women's rights and the necessary social services to guarantee women's freedoms were simply not available. It was thought that the report could have given more emphasis on the question of quotas, albeit by no means an ideal instrument, was certainly a useful tool in empowering women in the exercise of their democratic rights.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

Draft Report and Resolution on “Access of people with disabilities to the labour market in the Mediterranean”; Rapporteur: **Hon. Justyne Caruana** (Malta), presented by **Hon. Maria da Conceição Pereira** (Portugal)

The report explained that the right of disabled persons to work was not only a fundamental human right but one which had considerable social and economic implications as poverty and social exclusion were closely related. The report then discussed the barriers for disabled people to entering the labour market in PAM States, and observed that unemployment rates remained alarmingly high even in countries such as France and Italy. The report called for the implementation of disability protection provisions in all PAM States, the promotion of social inclusion through employment of persons with disability, including with assistance to employers. The report also stressed the importance of promoting awareness and changing attitudes towards people with disabilities. The issue of disabilities as a result of armed conflicts was raised as well.

In the debate that followed, several PAM Member States commented on how their governments had enacted legislation to favour the entry into the labour market of persons with disabilities.

The draft report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the **University of Catania**

The PAM Secretary General, **Amb. Sergio Piazzì**, explained that parliamentarians needed a regional interface with the academic sector in order to benefit from their unique knowledge, which was the reason why the Rector of the University of Catania, Professor Giacomo Pignataro, had come to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with PAM. **Professor Pignataro** stated that the Euro-Mediterranean area urgently needed to develop its education and research potential to compete with the world's giants such as China, India and the USA. The University of Catania will host a major PAM meeting on cooperation between PAM and the universities from the Euro-Mediterranean and Arab region in Fall 2014.

VIII PAM Plenary Session

22 January:

Opening of the session

Address by **H.E. Sen. Francesco Amoroso**, PAM President

In opening the VIII Plenary proceedings, the PAM President, **H.E. Sen. Francesco Amoroso**, spoke of the challenges facing the Mediterranean people today and called on his fellow members and colleagues to build trust and faith within their institutions and insisted on the imperatives of good governance and responsibility.

Intervention by **Amb. Shamel Nasser**, Assistant Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Mr. Nasser gave the members an update of latest developments in Egypt following the ousting and subsequent arrest of President Mohamed Morsi. He welcomed the role of PAM, which was invited to visit Cairo for high level bilateral meetings and assist Egypt in the electoral process and called for PAM's role to be further strengthened in relation to monitoring the new constitution and the elections that will take place in summer 2014.

Presentation by **H.E. Margareta Wahlström**, UN Assistant-Secretary General and Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

Mrs. Wahlström stated that the effects of climate change were becoming increasingly acute and disaster risk reduction (DRR) was essential for our society as it protected our achievements and our assets. The main challenge, however, remained that of mainstreaming DRR into the private sector, which was painfully slow. She invited PAM to host, together with Malta and UNISDR, an international meeting, modelled on the one which adopted the Malta Declaration for COP15, to prepare for Paris in 2015.

Intervention by **Mr. David Saganalidze**, Vice President of PABSEC

PABSEC played an important role in promoting values of democracy and rule of law in open societies and in ensuring respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. He then awarded the PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzini, with the PABSEC Medal for his efforts and as symbol of mutual respect and friendship.

Intervention by **H.E. Samia Hassan Seid Ahmed**, First Deputy President of the Arab Parliament

H.E. Samia Hassan Seid Ahmed commented on how the region was suffering from instability and called for common action with PAM to achieve peace and stability, which required mutual solidarity if the democratization process were to stabilize and advance. More importantly, H.E. Seid Ahmed stated that PAM could play an essential role in strengthening relations between the Arab world and the Mediterranean region, by promoting and supporting peace in all our countries. She stated that the Arab Parliament would continue to support the work of PAM and invited PAM to sign a MoU with the Arab Parliament.

Intervention by **Mr. Christian Blondin**, Director of the Cabinet of the Secretary General and the External Relations Department of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Mr. Blondin stated that if fossil fuels consumption continued at the same rate for another century, the world temperature could increase by another 4°C. He then spoke of the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean over the past 40 years, ranging from droughts, heat waves, cold waves, as well as intense climate events, and stated how PAM could contribute to foster regional cooperation in research and information.

Intervention by **H.E. Alberto di Luca**, Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to the Republic of Serbia

Ambassador di Luca explained the work of the Order of Malta, which is one of the oldest Christian missions at the service of the poor and sick. As a subject of international law recognized by more than 100 States, its charity work spanned 120 countries with 13,500 members, 18,000 trained volunteers and 25,000 trained medical staff. The Order was proud of its cooperation with PAM.

Intervention by **Mr. Luciano Morelli**, President of Confindustria Caserta

Mr. Morelli, a senior member of the PAM Panel, referred to the important work carried out by the PAM Panel, which continued to promote the establishment of a Free Trade Area in the Mediterranean and had taken important steps to setting up a financing mechanism for SMEs through its collaboration with the EBRD, which would contribute to job creation, as well as its work on trade facilitation and the development of an energy strategy for the Mediterranean. He then spoke of the benefits of effective waste management for the entire region, and, on behalf of Confindustria, invited the next PAM Panel in Caserta in Italy to specifically deal with the subject of “Waste Management in the Mediterranean”. The delegates welcomed the offer, and PAM Secretariat will coordinate with the national delegations in order to associate all national governments, the European Commission and relevant international organisations.

Intervention by **Mr. Andre Buttigieg**, Vice Chair of the Institutional Working Group of MEDREG

Mr. Buttigieg briefly stated that all Euro-Mediterranean States needed to adopt their energy national grid structures to develop interconnections at regional levels, which required

international cooperation structures and financing. MEDREG would also contribute to the development of the Mediterranean link to the European grid thus creating a regional super-grid structure, and strength the need of receiving PAM full support in this endeavour.

Intervention by **Mr. Cesare Sacerdoti**, CEO of CSE-Crescendo

Mr. Sacerdoti, member of the Steering Committee of the PAM Panel, addressed the Plenary on the theme of the Milan EXPO 2015 - feeding the planet - energy for life, which embraced technology, innovation culture and creativity and how this relates to food and diets in the context of new emerging global scenarios. He suggested PAM could set up a working group to identify a common theme for its participation at the EXPO 2015 representing the unique Mediterranean Sea and civilization. The proposal was approved by PAM delegates.

Future work plan of the Standing Committees (Presentations by the Presidents of the three Standing Committees and debate)

Sen. Halaiqah, President of the First Standing Committee, informed the Plenary that his Committee had adopted two reports on corruption and the ongoing conflicts in the MENA region as a threat to peace and stability in the region, respectively. He asked what lessons could be learnt from those reports and suggested that we need to value the PAM Strategic Plan 2013-2017, which expressed the PAM core values. He called on PAM to become more active, not only monitoring, but also assisting in the democratic process.

In the debate that followed, **Palestine** called for the 1st Standing Committee to continue to focus its attention on the Middle East. Further, he stated that the militia forces fighting the regime in Syria were a threat to the peace and stability of the region, and that Jordan required international assistance in shouldering the burden of refugee outpourings. He also called on the members to support the democratic process in Egypt. **Syria** asked for support from PAM in allowing Syria to choose its own destiny. Syria also asked for greater attention to be given to the question of nuclear weapons in Israel. **Former PAM President Mohammed Abou el Enein (Egypt)** declared that the will of the Egyptian people had been consecrated through the new Constitution embodying gender equality and religious freedoms. **Greece** spoke of the measures it had adopted to fight corruption and punish corrupt practices regardless of their perpetrators. A national anti-corruption coordinator had been established. **Morocco** spoke of wide-sweeping reforms it had adopted and suggested its example could be followed by other Mediterranean countries. **Jordan** asked for the PAM President to visit again Palestine and Syria, as well as Israeli prisons to see what their real situation was. **President Halaiqah** stated that the purpose of dialogue was to create bridges between us and that our focus had to remain not on our differences but on finding solutions. He reiterated that PAM championed respect for human rights and was contrary to the colonization of Palestine. At the same time, it stood as an independent organization to build dialogue. He highlighted that PAM was not the UN, but that it supported its principles and operations. **Cyprus** added that it was always

important to respect the sovereignty and dignity of peoples in resolving disputes and that implied dialogue.

Sen. Lmarbough, President of the Second Standing Committee, informed the members that his Committee had adopted two reports and resolutions, relating namely, to the activities of the PAM Panel on Trade and the group on Climate Change in the Mediterranean, respectively. He considered further north-south and south-south integration was needed to face the economic and environmental challenges that were besetting the region and that job creation was a pan-Mediterranean issue. The Second Standing Committee continued to advocate the establishment of a Mediterranean Free Trade Area.

In the debate that followed, **Jordan** informed the Plenary that it had finalised its legislation on renewable energy with substantial developments planned, using wind power and solar power. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** stated that political stability underlay any form of economic agreement and asked for a PAM delegation to visit B&H again and help overcome the stagnation and political deadlock caused by the six antagonistic political leaders holding the country to ransom. The **PAM Secretary General** stated that a specific report had already been drafted on the matter and that PAM was again ready to organise a meeting on how to facilitate dialogue. **Portugal** was mindful of the great problem of unemployment - especially youth unemployment - and of the need to strengthen cooperation with social partners, education and other stakeholders to promote education and training for the unemployed. **Morocco** thought it worthwhile considering increment to PAM's budget through an increase in membership fees. **President Lmarbough** reminded the members that every delegate had a duty to take action of PAM resolutions and raise the issues we reported on before the respective national parliaments.

President Maria Da Conceição Pereira, Third Standing Committee, stated that the Third Standing Committee had adopted two reports on women in the Arab Spring and disability, and that in 2014 it would continue to address key challenges in the region, with particular attention to interreligious and intercultural dialogue and networking among the peoples of the Mediterranean, including through the PAM "Fez Programme". Moreover, it would continue to be committed to cooperation in youth education, media, tourism and gender equality. On the question of education, PAM would continue its work for the recognition of qualifications and promote free movement of students throughout the Mediterranean. The Committee needed to further develop its outreach activities, and this year a conference would be held at the University of Catania (Italy) on the role of parliamentary diplomacy in education. Moreover, PAM now collaborated with the Anna Lindh Foundation.

In the debate that followed, **Turkey** offered to host the next meeting of the Third Standing Committee. **Cyprus** stated that today in our society the right to work was no longer considered a fundamental human right, and that unemployment often led to domestic violence and discrimination against women. **President Pereira** agreed that domestic violence needed to be addressed as part of the bigger picture of the fight against the discrimination against women in society regardless of wealth, education and social status.

PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzi invited the PAM Permanent Observers to the UN in Geneva to take the floor. **Mr. Gerhard Putman-Kramer** reported on the latest news relating to the humanitarian situation caused by the Syrian conflict, and confirmed that in Syria there were now 9.3 million people who urgently required humanitarian assistance, two thirds of hospitals were damaged or destroyed, and one fifth of schools were destroyed.

Report on the activities and financial situation of PAM

PAM Secretary General, Mr. Sergio Piazzi, as to the current PAM financial situation, recalled that in 2009, in Istanbul, at the PAM 4th Plenary Session, the members of the Assembly had discussed and agreed to adopt an operational annual budget of Euro 910,000. This would have allowed PAM to create a reserve fund of Euro 150,000 to be used in case of emergency or as bridging mechanism to cover expenses from one year to the next, pending receipt of national annual contributions. However, due to the global economic and financial crisis, the budgets of many PAM national parliaments were cut, hence the Assembly had agreed to reduce its budget to a minimum that would guarantee the operational functioning of PAM. The creation of the nascent reserve fund was postponed to a future date and the indispensable operational budget became Euro 750,000. This situation was subsequently further exacerbated by events of the Arab Spring Revolution with several parliaments temporarily not contributing to the PAM budget. Due to the ensuing additional budgetary shortfall, two years ago it had been agreed that the Standing Committees would be held jointly with the Plenary Session to reduce costs. In 2013, the Secretariat received only Euro 590,000, some Euro 100,000 less than the absolute minimum operating budget. This gap was bridged, as in previous years, thanks to the payment of some arrears and VAT refunds. The annual audit was due to take place in February 2014. A detailed report and tables will be included in the annual report as per PAM statutes. The 2014 PAM cost-plan will be the same as that of 2013. The PAM Representatives in New York, Geneva and Vienna, who assist the Assembly on voluntary basis, had become a major asset for the activities of PAM and had contributed to the consolidation of its role at the global level.

With reference to the PAM Secretariat headquarters in Malta, the Government was generously completing the restoration of Palazzo Spinola, for which PAM was very grateful. In 2013, the Headquarters Agreement between PAM and Malta, signed in 2007, had also expired, and negotiations were being held to renew the treaty at the original conditions.

In the debate that followed, **Palestine** questioned whether or not any decision had been taken by the Bureau to appoint PAM Ambassadors to the UN offices in Geneva, New York and Vienna. **Malta** explained that the government had embarked on an extensive programme to restore the PAM headquarters and suggested that it would be appropriate to conduct a review of PAM achievements in view of its growing importance in the international community. Moreover, it was felt that the activities of PAM should, in addition to the three day statutory

programme conducted at the Plenary Session held once a year, include additional events. Sen. Abdouh and Sen. Lmarbouh of Morocco suggested that, eight years after its establishment, it would be useful to conduct a mid-term review, and that they intended to make a written proposal to the Secretariat in this respect. Furthermore, the PAM Secretariat informed the Plenary that it was already conducting the second evaluation of its performance in view of the PAM SGs meeting in Athens on 5 May. The Secretary General stated that he would consolidate all proposals before submitting them to the Bureau for approval and implementation, as soon as all the elements were available.

President of PAM, Francesco Amoruso stated that the decision to appoint PAM Ambassadors to the UN had been taken at the Palermo Plenary in 2011. Their role was to maintain regular and structured contacts throughout the year of the UN system and other international organisations. In reply to a query as to whether PAM procedures had been correctly followed in relation to an amendment to the Instruments, the President replied that this had been done in accordance with PAM Statutes (Article 25.3), which allowed for the amendment of procedures in the case of "sudden and unforeseen need linked to the administrative functioning of the Assembly", and in the case in point, it had been necessary to safeguard the legal status and the financial resources made available by Member States to the Assembly for VAT exemption and refunds are concerned, as well as for cases when a national parliament should vote a withdrawal from / suspension of activities with PAM. He added that PAM could be truly proud of its actions with such a limited budget and every member of PAM had to be really committed by transmitting PAM's message to their respective national parliaments and governments. With reference to the proposal from Malta and Morocco, the **PAM Secretary General** reiterated that any activities to improve the functioning and methods of PAM were always appreciated. The Secretariat would therefore consolidate the proposals received together with the internal evaluation to review the work carried out by the Secretariat, and it would make a proposal to the Bureau on a coherent approach in due time. The Assembly adopted the report of the Secretary General.

“2013 PAM Prize” laureates Award ceremony

Hon. EDGARD MAALOUF (Lebanon)

Head of the delegation of the Lebanese Parliament, General Maalouf, for his personal commitment and for the support and advice extended by the Lebanese Parliament to the PAM High Level mission in Syria held in June 2013.

SEN. BENEDETTO ADRAGNA (Italy)

For having inspired the Declaration of Agrigento for Peace and Friendship among the people of the Mediterranean, signed by the Italian Parliament and PAM on the occasion of the 6th Plenary Session of Palermo in 2011.

ISODORA ŽEBELJAN (Serbia)

Ms. ŽEBELJAN, a culture award made under the 3rd Standing Committee, for her contribution to the promotion of cultural and musical exchanges throughout the Mediterranean region, proposed by the Serbian delegation.

NOUREDDINE BOUTARFA (Algeria), President of MED-TSO

Mr. BOUTARFA, for the hard work done by Med-Tso, in particular for their vision in developing the energy sector and for its project for an integrated energy system in the Mediterranean region (prize received by **MICHELANGELO CELOZZI from Terna**).

Closing ceremony

PAM President Francesco Amoruso again thanked the French Presidents of the National Assembly and Senate and the work of PAM Vice President Hon. Vauzelle, also President of the PACA Region. All the reports and resolutions were adopted unanimously. He also stated that the only solution to the Syrian crisis was political and highlighted the importance of the Italian MFA initiative, planned on 3 February, which would host a high-level meeting on the humanitarian challenges of the Syrian crisis, jointly organized with the UN. PAM would continue to follow events very closely in the Arab World. As members of PAM, all States were on an equal footing as a forum for debate and discussion. PAM had received invitations for the 9th Plenary in 2015 in Monaco, and Albania had offered to host the 10th Plenary in 2016. The 3rd biennial meeting of Secretary Generals would be held in Athens this year. He concluded by thanking Egypt, Russia and the Arab Parliament for the invitations to visit respectively their governments and parliaments.

There being no further matters to debate, the Plenary was declared closed.