

**1st Meeting of Environmental
Journalists from News Agencies in the Mediterranean**

Malaga, 17-18 December 2015

**Speech by AMAN Secretary General and
CNA Acting Director/Editor-in-Chief Mr. George Penintaex**

Dear Mr. Mayor, Dear Vice Minister
Dear guests and participants

It is my pleasure to be here with you today, representing the Mediterranean Alliance of News Agencies (AMAN).

The first step towards this cooperation was taken by my dear friend Juan Maria Calvo, who wrote to me a letter some months ago, suggesting a connection between IUCN and AMAN.

The matter was raised at the AMAN General Assembly which was held in October in Sharm El Sheikh, hosted by the Middle East News Agency (MENA).

Juan was invited at the AMAN General Assembly and had the chance to explain in detail the whole project and the idea to involve AMAN. A unanimous decision was taken by the General Assembly and here we are.

Almost all member-agencies of AMAN are represented in this meeting. I am here too, as AMAN Secretary General, to show that the Mediterranean national news agencies take seriously this initiative and are willing to make their contribution. The national news agencies are the best tool and means to disseminate information because they have the best network at home and they can influence the public opinion and the decision-makers.

At the same time, I can admit that environment is not the first -and sometimes not the last- concern of the news agencies in the region.

The Mediterranean basin is a mosaic of nations, cultures, civilizations, languages, religions and mentalities. The history of this turbulent region is full of wars and hatred.

Someone could say that under the current situation in some parts of the Mediterranean the issue of the environment is actually a non-issue. It is luxury even to think about it. They pay little or no attention to this issue or the attention they pay is on the opposite direction. They destroy it.

The IUCN initiative comes at the right moment, trying to reverse the trend I described before.

We need to make many efforts, joint and concerted efforts, and overcome inabilities, inactions and lack of interest.

I consider this meeting very important, hoping that it will lay the foundation to take action, to pass from words to deeds.

I hope that the Malaga meeting will come out with a declaration that could be a road map for all of us, urging all factors to play their role and make their contribution to a better and sustainable environment in the Mediterranean.

The participants of this meeting most of whom are journalists specializing on environmental issues, could act as ambassadors of this campaign.

We aspire to see this effort yielding concrete results to the benefit of our countries and the future generations in this vulnerable area.

You may consider AMAN as a good partner of this campaign.

We are open to suggestions and proposals on how AMAN, collectively, and the AMAN member agencies, individually, could contribute towards a better, protected and sustainable environment in the Mediterranean region.

I would like to express sincere thanks to the Mayor, the Vice Minister, the IUCN and EFE for the excellent organization of this meeting and the warm hospitality extended to all of us.

I wish every success in your deliberations.

/GP