

EF.DEL/16/04/Corr.1
2 June 2004

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco, Vienna

**STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO
IN VIENNA, AT THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM**

**Working Group A
“Political Commitment for Institutional Development and Reform”**

Prague, 2 June 2004

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first of all on behalf of my delegation and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to present our heartiest congratulations to the Bulgarian Chairmanship for the organization of the Twelfth Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum and for the apt choice of its main focus, namely new challenges for building up institutional and human capacity for economic development and co-operation.

I am convinced that the high quality of the speakers and issues discussed during this meeting will help to make this Forum an important platform for consideration of the increasingly tangible relationship that exists between economic and environmental issues and security and political stability at both the regional and international level.

The recently adopted OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension highlights the capital importance of the economic and environmental dimension in the OSCE concept of comprehensive security and co-operation and the Organization's role in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The new challenges to regional security have become more acute at the start of this new millennium. They relate to the emergence of extremism and fanaticism, the growth of mass emigration and trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms, and organized international crime. These new challenges, which destabilize national and regional policies and are detrimental to co-operation between States, often stem from socio-economic and environmental problems that nourish and underpin them.

Globalization, liberalization and technological progress offer new possibilities for trade, growth and development, but not all States have benefited from them to the same extent. Thus, the widening gap in development on the two shores of the Mediterranean represents a serious cause of frustration and a permanent source of tension for Euro-Mediterranean security.

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For this reason, we would like the dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, which have taken an important turn since the Ministerial Council in Maastricht, to concentrate more on the economic, environmental, human and cultural dimensions.

We would welcome it if the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension were more explicit in its call for intensified co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, most of which also need assistance in carrying through the economic reforms required for integration into the global economy.

In this context, we are aware that political commitments for the development of democratic institutions and the implementation of reforms to strengthen the rule of law and good governance are necessary conditions and fundamental measures in the progress towards consolidating economic security and reducing social and environmental deficits that threaten security and stability.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which in many respects represents an open democratic model of society that has defined peace and tolerance, the rule of law and economic freedom as its essential values, reiterates its commitment to strengthen its democratic assets and to continue its progress towards institutional and environmental reforms so as to promote sustainable development, particularly in the human and socio-economic spheres, and to promote its gradual integration into the Euro-Mediterranean regional space.

It is for this reason that His Majesty King Mohammed VI has implemented a number of measures aimed at establishing favourable conditions for economic and social development as the best defence against the ideology of fanaticism, and the spread of obscurantist words of hate. Eradication of poverty, assistance to disadvantaged sectors of society, the promotion of community associations, the revitalization of the private sector and the modernization of small and medium-sized enterprises are also at the centre of the reform process, which aims, among other things, at:

- Providing the basis for responsible civil political action by strengthening transparency, good governance and the fight against corruption;
- Speeding up radical reform of the education system, which has become a national priority since it is through education that the people of the Mediterranean will become better acquainted with each other, learn to accept each other and be tolerant of differences;
- Establishing a new family code that removes guardianship and gives women the same rights and responsibilities as men;
- Reforming and renewing the judiciary, in particular through the establishment of regional commercial courts;
- Implementing a programme to privatize and liberalize trade and a policy that supports the private sector and provides incentives for investment.

Moreover, being extremely aware of the importance of its economic and strategic partnership with Europe, Morocco has endeavoured to bring its legislation into line with the

European *acquis*. Through its firm ambition to establish itself, at the gates of Europe, as an attractive and efficient regional platform for investment, production and trade at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa, the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco has introduced a wide range of projects and reforms extending from the modernization of its production systems to the liberalization of key economic sectors and also including improvements in investment procedures, renewal of the banking and financial system and modernization of the judiciary.

It is with this in mind that Morocco has also signed a number of free trade agreements, with the European Union, the Member States of the European Free Trade Association, the United States of America and Turkey, and also with the other members of the "Agadir Four", namely Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. All these measures emphatically confirm the desire of my country to bring itself into line with regional and international economic trends.

In spite of the concerns caused by the enlargement of the European Union, Morocco is firmly committed to pursuing its policy of macro-economic stabilization and economic and industrial modernization with a view to confronting the challenges of competitiveness and reducing the harmful effects of commercial competition.

On the other hand, environmental issues have been a growing source of concern in my country during recent years in view of the fact that the deterioration of the environment and the unrestrained use of natural resources, not to mention poor waste management, have a negative effect on health, welfare, the environment and security and stability.

Although it has been pointed out on several occasions that the OSCE is not an economic financial aid organization or an environmental protection organization, it nevertheless remains a regional security and co-operation organization of prime importance with a manifest political influence. Its added value is to be found in its role as an inter-institutional bridge, a catalyst for international energies and resources and a promoter of regional transfrontier co-operation.

It should be recalled in this context that the OSCE is one of the institutions called upon to play a role in defining the reference criteria for the new neighbourhood policy of the European Union.

In our opinion, the OSCE's contribution should be aimed at providing a platform for discussion and assistance with a view to reducing economic and commercial imbalances that affect the countries of the southern Mediterranean as a result in particular of the uncontrollable consequences of globalization and the fierce competition that accompanies it.

We agree with the Organization that economic co-operation remains an essential component of its work. We remain convinced that the OSCE can contribute, through its vast network of relations with international organizations and institutions, to the initiation of multilateral co-operation activities that will help to respond to the concerns of its Mediterranean partners in the economic and environmental spheres.

I should like to take this opportunity to repeat my country's willingness to make an active contribution to these efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.