

*The Permanent Mission
of the Kingdom of Morocco
to the United Nations*



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the United Nations**

**Statement of His Excellency Mohamed Benaïssa
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the
Kingdom of Morocco**

New York, October 1st 2007

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Dr. Srgjan Kerim for his election as President of the current session of the United Nations General Assembly and my best wishes for success during his tenure.

I would also like to thank Her Highness, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for the constructive efforts she made during her remarkable presidency of the previous session, which honors all Arab and Islamic countries.

I seize the opportunity of this first session taking place under our newly elected Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, to reiterate, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, our trust and support for the credible efforts he is making to enable the United Nations to fulfill its crucial goals and meet the needs of all nations. It is our hope that, at the dawn of the third millennium, a more just and effective world system can emerge, enabling nations to achieve peace and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Our session takes place at the eve of the celebration of the 60th Anniversary, by the United Nations Organization, of two important historical events that have marked its activities, forged its identity and proven its added value as well as its outstanding contribution in the reinforcement of international cooperation, the protection and preservation of human dignity and the consolidation of world peace and security.

These events are namely the adoption, in 1948, by the General Assembly, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the deployment of the first UN peacekeeping operation.

In this context, it is appropriate to make an assessment of what has been done in these two vital areas, and to outline the work objectives of our Organization in order to develop and optimize our common assets within a complex international context.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has laid the foundations of international consensus regarding universal values, and contributed to the international efforts for the codification, protection and respect of cultural, social, economic and political rights. To this effect, the international community is invited, through the United Nations, to take concrete measures to implement the provisions of this Declaration and to concretely confirm its political and legal values.

Within this framework, His Majesty King Mohammed VI expressed in a Royal Address on December 10, 1999 : ***“There is no doubt that among the appropriate means to ensure the respect of Human rights is the commitment in favor of the relevant International Conventions and the setting up of mechanisms for respecting and safeguarding these rights. These legal and institutional instruments will remain, however, insufficient if the respect of Human rights is not part of the constant behavior at all levels, or if it did not become a shared culture”.***

The Kingdom of Morocco has embarked, under the leadership of His Majesty, on a thorough and ambitious process of political liberalization, human development and social modernization. In parallel, it equally strives to contribute to international efforts aiming at establishing world consensus on human rights concepts, so that they no longer constitute a source of conflict and clash but rather a motive for cooperation and consultation. These concepts should not remain simple universal values but should become a reality taking into consideration the diversity and indivisibility of Human rights.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco has proposed, last March, to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the adoption of a Universal Declaration on Training and Education on the culture of Human rights whose objective is to consolidate the values, principles and concepts of human rights through its adoption by all social components so that they become a daily preoccupation and a responsible practice.

Morocco thus hopes that this proposal will be supported by all States so that it may constitute a valuable contribution to the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human rights.

Mr. President;

Peacekeeping operations are a key element to the UN activities, embodying the collective defence principle as one of the pillars of the UN Charter. Thanks to this mechanism, the UN has displayed a great capacity of adaptation to the changes and has been able to participate in a direct and effective manner to the reinforcement of international peace.

The importance of these operations has increased due to the evolution of this traditional concept and through the multiplicity of its tasks which are no longer limited to the peacekeeping aspect. These tasks have broadened in scope to also encompass assistance to States in reconstruction as well as in the implementation of transitional justice and the consolidation of Human Rights protection, as well as good governance.

The Kingdom of Morocco was among the pioneers to contribute to UN peacekeeping efforts, by participating since 1960 with more than 50.000 blue helmets in 13 peacekeeping operations across four continents. Thanks to their sacrifice and determination to uphold UN principles, the Royal Armed Forces helped contribute, along with the other peacekeeping troops, to the double recognition awarded to the UN by the Nobel Peace prize.

Taking into account its experience and field expertise, the Kingdom of Morocco believes that is high time to proceed to the examination of the ways and means to reinforce the legal basis and the organisational framework of peacekeeping operation, while taking into consideration the changes underwent by this UN mechanism, as well as the need for improvement of deployment conditions and the work of its members.

As such, the Kingdom of Morocco proposes the organization, next year, of a high level segment in order to examine this issue in all its aspects so as to adopt recommendations relevant to the elaboration of new norms and mechanisms. Such an examination will aim to guarantee the success of peacekeeping operations, widening its participation rules, and to avoid some of the tragic events related to civilian protection during armed conflicts or certain immoral and isolated practices.

Mr. President;

Despite the efforts deployed, Africa still faces major security challenges and significant difficulties in improving the health and living conditions of African citizens.

Due to its entrenched African identity and its profound historical, human and religious ties with African States, the Kingdom of Morocco has made its relations with the Continent one of the priorities of its foreign policy. These relations are based on the principles of mutual respect, active solidarity, fruitful cooperation, and constructive adhesion to the regional initiatives and international strategies related to the Continent.

Alongside the development programs that aim to revitalize South-South cooperation, and the numerous solidarity actions undertaken towards African States victim to natural disasters, the First African Conference on Human Development - held last April 2007 in Rabat, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program - aimed to establish a complementary strategy that may help satisfy the

particular needs of Africa in the perspective of achieving the UN millennium development goals.

In this regard, the Rabat Declaration, the action plan and the resolutions of this Conference, constitute a framework of reference for the holding, next year, of a High level segment, proposed by Morocco, on Africa and development. Likewise, the conclusions of this Conference could contribute usefully to the undertakings of the World Summit on the Millennium Goals, following a proposal made by the British Prime Minister.

To this effect, Morocco expresses the wish that the Secretary General's next report on "the causes of conflicts and the promotion of peace and development in Africa", will contain practical recommendations and a clear political vision, aiming at the reinforcement of stability, peace, and security in the Continent, consolidation of democracy and human rights, respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the African States, as well as pacific settlement of disputes based on a good neighbourhood policy.

Mr President;

The Moroccan Sahara issue, one of the longest regional disputes in Africa, is witnessing a historical turning point as a result of the launch of the Manhasset negotiations between the parties to this dispute, held under UN auspices. This turning point results from the dynamic created by the Moroccan Initiative on a Statute of Autonomy. This initiative has opened promising perspectives for overcoming the stalemate this issue faces at the UN level. It offers the fundamental elements necessary for a realistic, applicable and final political solution to a regional dispute that hinders the construction of a strong and homogeneous Maghreb, interacting with its geopolitical environment.

This initiative, which answers the calls of the Security Council since 2004 about the need for finding a political solution to this dispute, is in conformity with International Law. It is the result of vast international consultations and a broad national process of

deliberations involving inhabitants of the region through the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs.

In light of this positive dynamic, the Security Council adopted resolution 1754, which represented a break with former approaches and proposals in the treatment of this issue, since it called for negotiations, while taking into account the recent developments, in particular the Moroccan initiative and the efforts of the Kingdom which were qualified by the Security Council as “serious and credible”.

The Kingdom of Morocco, having taken part in these negotiations, in good faith and with a constructive attitude, reiterates its commitment to move forward in this process, in order to reach a final solution to this dispute within the framework of its national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as on the basis of the Autonomy Initiative, as the ultimate objective of the negotiation process and as an open, flexible and indivisible offer.

Mr President,

The difficult circumstances in the Middle East require the mobilization of intense efforts in order to put an end to a lengthy and difficult conflict, causing the suffering of the people of the region for more than half a century.

From this honourable tribune, the Kingdom of Morocco, which follows closely all these evolutions, reiterates once again the pressing need to reactivate the peace process in the Middle East, according to a comprehensive approach and on the basis of agreements signed by the parties including the Roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative. The latter represents a strategic choice, translating the sincere will of the Arab States for the search for a fair and lasting peace in the Middle East; one guaranteeing the national rights of the Palestinian people including its right to establish its independent State with Al Qods Asharif as its capital and withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, in order to allow the States and the people of the region to live in peace and stability.

Moreover, the Kingdom of Morocco, which chairs the Al Qods Committee in the person of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, insists once more on the need to respect the particular status of the Holy City of Al Qods and to preserve its civilizational and spiritual identity.

In this respect, His Majesty King Mohammed VI has always been keen to draw the attention of the United Nations and influential actors, by requesting their good offices to put an end to the illegal archaeological excavations around the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque.

The Kingdom of Morocco follows with great concern the difficult situation in the brotherly country of Iraq, and calls upon the various movements and factions to allow the virtues of wisdom, perspicacity, dialogue and national reconciliation to prevail with the aim of preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and put an end to the violent cycle threatening its safety and stability.

Mister President,

The world is undergoing considerable changes and is confronted with numerous challenges characterized by their intensity and their global nature. Thus emerges the need for efficient multilateral institutions that are able to establish an effective co-operation, to coordinate between States and to promote coherence and synergy among the various national and regional initiatives.

Accordingly, the crucial importance of a stronger United Nations appears. Our organization enjoys the confidence and the commitment of the Member States and their support in order to make a success of its reform program. The organization will gain in credibility by harmonizing the UN agenda with our crucial priorities and with the need to ensure a better future for mankind in the framework of more balanced and interdependent international relations.