MOROCCAN YOUTH COUNCIL FOR DIPLOMATIC
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Full Text of HM the King's Message to 'Ibrahim Governance Weekend' Forum

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HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM

Full Text of HM the King's Message to 'Ibrahim Governance Weekend' Forum

Here is the full text of the Royal Message, which was read Friday by HM the King's Advisor André Azoulay.

"Praise be to God

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Mr. Mo Ibrahim, Chairman of the Foundation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to send this message to your assembly, which is meeting as part of the "Ibrahim Governance Weekend", and which has chosen to celebrate its tenth anniversary on Moroccan soil.

I welcome this initiative, especially as it is giving many eminent figures from different backgrounds an opportunity to debate, in

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Marrakech, governance and leadership issues in Africa. Your conference is helping to set out the practical modalities needed to build a prosperous future for African peoples.

I should like to congratulate Mr. Mo Ibrahim on his efforts towards improved governance in Africa. I also wish to pay tribute to his Foundation for holding this Forum: over the years, it has become an awaited, flagship event.

I was keen to grant my patronage to your conference given the special interest I take in the preservation of our citizens’ security and fundamental rights as well as in human and sustainable development in Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In no way does Africa constitute a threat to anyone – not to itself, and not to others.

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Quite the opposite: it provides a space for sustainable development that is both promising and open to all partnerships.

Needless to say, the continent’s tremendous resources are still largely untapped and not properly harnessed. Seen from that perspective, the mainstreaming of good governance in the functioning of our institutions, in our economies and in our societies is, by and large, not yet fully achieved.

Is this really an inevitable fate that explains the still prevailing "afro-pessimism"?

Far from it!

Firstly, awareness of deficiencies and gaps in governance is a widely shared perception in Africa.

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Secondly, strong, genuine will is guiding new African elites: in political, economic and civil society areas; those elites have grown ever more attentive to the legitimate expectations of the population.

Finally, several actions have already been carried out: new rules of conduct have been introduced, through action not only by governments, but also by local authorities and civil society representatives.

This irrevocable phenomenon is set to expand at all levels: local, national, regional and continental.

It is now important to build it around the principles of coherence and synergy. And it is just as important to showcase success stories so they may be replicated.

Ladies and gentlemen,

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African States are committed to universal values.Nevertheless, governance models developed elsewhere cannot be imported or imposed as they are because they are the productof a particular historical process and of specific paths.

Nevertheless, these models could be adapted and adjusted to the African context to make sure they are operational and are readily accepted and endorsed by the public.

Moreover, there are typical means and instruments of solidarity in Africaas well astime-honored practices which it would be unfair to discard. They simply need to be modernized and adapted.

Today, Africa is capable of imagining, through its own means and for itself, rules of conduct as well as innovative organizational methods.

Thus, an optimal governance system for our continent should be the result of a successful, coherent combination of revisited external experiences, renewed internal operating processes and innovative practices at continental level.

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The important Moroccan initiatives that have been carried out attest to the successful outcome of such an approach. I can mention, for instance, the far-reaching reform of advanced regionalization that was launched in recent years; the development of innovative financing schemes for the achievement of flagship projects; the creation of a sovereign wealth fund, which now allows for the direct participation of international sovereign investment institutions in national development strategies and, finally, proactive civic engagement by a number of major public enterprises to combine economic development with achievements that have high social and local impacts.

The benefits of South-South cooperation are undeniable. Indeed, when experiences are shared, this builds the capacities of everyone, the more so as the efforts undertaken at the national level are enhanced when they are pooled through regional and continental cooperation platforms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your conference is being held in the wake of the Kingdom’s historic return to its institutional family, the African Union, and of Morocco’s request -with encouragement by its partners - to join the Economic

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Community of West African States, ECOWAS.

With those two developments in mind, I want to share with you some deeply-held beliefs concerning Africa’s collective march towards progress.

Firstly, any temptation to play a leadership role in Africa is doomed to failure. Any such drive must be abandoned once and for all because what matters is the promotion of shared interests, collective endeavors and "win-win" partnerships.

Secondly, while it is true that African realities differ according to the regions, climates and resources involved, the challenges we face and the ambitions we nurture are the same.

If we are united and uphold solidarity, we shall win the battle of achieving inclusive development. Failing that, we would continue to actwith varying degrees of success within our national borders, without ever being able to riseto the challenges that we might otherwise successfully address - without ever benefiting from the additional, much-needed dividends of sustainable co-emergence.

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If we want to give intra-African cooperation the means to accomplish such a strategic objective, we must share our experiences and our know-how, and we must make the most of our complementarities.

Over the last several years, this has been the very essence of the Kingdom’s action as far as cooperation with its many African partners is concerned. Attesting to this are the numerous cooperation agreements signed, the ever growing access by African students to Moroccan universities and training institutes, and the implementation of important bilateral and regional initiatives, including in the areas of food security, energy, production and service-related infrastructure as well as human development.

Promoting regional and continental value chains supported by new investment, and clearly defining priorities and designing creative financial engineering as well as appropriate accompanying measures are the order of the day. Indeed, project selection, design, impact assessment and implementation, together with the mobilization of local savings, are all ingredients for turningour ambition for Africa into reality.

Just as important is the need to ensure transparency and good governance throughout the process, in addition to public support and

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endorsement.

Finally, efforts, across the board, should focus on education, training and capacity building for the benefit of our future generations.

Our youths deserve our full, undivided attention. It is for them - and through them - that we act so that they may benefit from effective governance in the future, enjoy their rights in full and be in charge oftheir fulfilment in political, economic and associativelife.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A well-organized, united Africa that builds on efficient governance mechanisms is likely to offer the political, economic and social benefits African citizens legitimately yearn for.

Being a visionary is no longer enough to successfully achieve Africa’s

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transformation. Resourcefulness and dedication will also be needed, in addition to capitalizing on tangible progress through proactive political action.

Political leaders, government officials, elected representatives, the business community and committed civil society organizations all have a role to play in a coherent global policy. I hope that you will have a fruitful exchange of views and ideas and that you will, above all, come up with pertinent, practical recommendations.

I also hope those recommendations will lead to concrete action in order to fulfil the aspirations of a generation of Africans - men and women alike - who yearn for shared progress.

Thank you.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh".

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MAP 07 April 2017