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Full Text of HM the King's Message to Participants in 2017 Crans Montana Forum

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HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM

Full Text of HM the King's Message to Participants in 2017 Crans Montana Forum

HM King Mohammed VI addressed a message to the participants in the 2017 edition of the Crans Montana Forum, which kicked off Friday in the southern city of Dakhla.

Here follows the full text of the Royal message, read out by president of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, Ynja Khattat :

"Praise be to God

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

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to say how pleased I am to send a message to the participants in this outstanding international forum, which has been convened for the third time in a row in Dakhla, a city I particularly care about. I look forward to seeing it become a hub for meetings and provide a platform for communication between Morocco and Africa.

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The Dakhla forum has become an important event in the calendar of major intellectual and cultural encounters, given the high caliber and status of the prominent figures from the fields of politics, economics, culture, the media and civil society who participate in it, and also because of the quality of the debates and the importance of the topics and challenges addressed.

Moreover, the forum has contributed to finding practical solutions to a number of issues, as many recommendations adopted here have been translated into tangible initiatives. The forum has become a space for debating ideas and exchanging expertise in various areas of interest to the African continent.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend your judicious choice of topics for this session, particularly those related to identifying the characteristics and features of "A New Africa for the 21st Century", since the continent has been given priority in the Kingdom’s foreign policy.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Morocco believes in Africa’s capacity to rise to the challenges facing it and to ensure sustainable human development for its peoples, thanks to its vast natural and human resources.

Achieving the African renaissance we yearn for hinges, however, on how much belief we have in ourselves, how far we rely on our own capacities and potential, and how well we exploit them, within the framework of mutually-beneficial South-South cooperation and solidarity-based, strategic partnerships.

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I am sure we can rise to these challenges. Today, Africa is governed by a new generation of pragmatic leaders, uninhibited by outdated ideologies. They are working, with a high sense of patriotism and responsibility, to achieve their countries' stability, political openness, economic development and social progress.

We are pleased to work hand in hand with these leaders, who are keen to ensure the unity and progress of Africa, the continent of the future, and to serve the interests of its peoples. We look forward to working together with them to enhance its growing role and the important status it henceforth enjoys at the international level.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South-South cooperation, which is based on the culture of sharing and solidarity, is the mechanism that will enable our countries to exchange their expertise directly and immediately. It will help improve our field experience, make the most of our complementarities and expand our national markets. It will also open up new opportunities for efficient and beneficial investment and achieve effective sustainable human development, while respecting each country's national sovereignty, as well as the principles of mutual esteem and equality.

Over the years, Morocco has established a multidimensional development model encompassing all sectors of the economy: agriculture, industry and energy production, services -which include banking, insurance, transport and logistics - as well as an array of complementary social, cultural, security and religious domains.

In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco pays particular attention to

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human development, both through training and sustainable human development programs which have a positive impact on the living conditions of African citizens.

Morocco is also keen to consolidate security and stability all over the continent, hence its contribution to UN peace-keeping operations and mediation initiatives aimed at finding peaceful solutions to conflicts, as well as its involvement in security cooperation to fight terrorist groups. Morocco also shares with African countries its experience in the religious field, which is based on promoting moderate Islam and fighting radicalism and reclusion.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since last year’s session of your forum, Morocco has been keen to take concrete steps to implement its approach towards sister nations, which is aimed at strengthening cooperation at the bilateral, regional and continental levels simultaneously.

At the bilateral level, I have undertaken a series of tours to all parts of Africa. They have helped open up promising new prospects for our relations with countries with whom we used to have weak ties or no ties at all, in order to serve our peoples’ shared interests.

At the continental level and on the sidelines of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 22) in Marrakesh, I called for the convening of an “Africa Action Summit” to address the climate challenges Africa is facing, in order to achieve the sustainable development that will allow us to protect our natural resources.

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As part of the mandate entrusted to me by the Summit, I have been closely involved in all practical initiatives which can form the basis for our joint action in this regard, namely the ad-hoc committees' ambitious regional projects aimed at developing the Sahel region, particularly Lake Chad and the Congo River Basin, as well as at preserving the special features of insular states. I have also been involved in the constructive initiatives related to strategic sectoral issues, such as food security in Africa and energy.

To meet the growing energy needs of our continent, our countries must succeed in their energy transition and invest in renewable energies, given their huge potential in the areas of solar, wind and hydroelectric power. This will help address the current shortage, boost development and promote peace and stability in Africa.

As far as the energy transition is concerned, Morocco is a model and has managed, in record time and without any fossil fuel sources, to make energy a pillar of South-South cooperation, namely with a number of African sister nations.

At the continental level, the most outstanding event of this year is Morocco's historic return to its natural and legitimate place within the African Union, as an irreversible choice on the path to solidarity, peace and unity between African peoples.

Loyal to its commitment, Morocco will be at the forefront of states which will contribute, with determination and force, to serving the continent's interests and consolidating its peoples' unity and cohesion. Morocco will not, however, give up defending its lofty interests, particularly its national unity and territorial integrity.

At the regional level, I should mention Morocco's request to join the Economic Community of West-African States, with whom we share time-honored human, civilizational and spiritual bonds, as well as

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special relations based on fruitful cooperation and active solidarity.

The project of a gas pipeline between Nigeria and Morocco is an example of regional cooperation that will benefit eleven African countries.

It is a structural project that will not only transport gas between two sister nations, but will also serve as a major source of energy for all countries in the region. It will help promote the region’s economic competiveness and act as a catalyst for its industrial development. Furthermore, it will enable us to organize the energy market efficiently and will have a major impact on regional integration and complementarity.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our sincere African orientation is motivated by a deep belief in Africa’s capacity to address the challenges it faces. It also illustrates our eagerness to contribute, along with our brothers, to developing our continent.

The Moroccan Sahara region, and Dakhla in particular, play a special role in this orientation, as a historic platform connecting Morocco to Africa.

Accordingly, and as part of our Development Model for the Southern Provinces and the projects launched in the region, we have spared no effort to rehabilitate it and provide it with the necessary infrastructure and elected bodies, as well as social and cultural facilities, with a view

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to turning it into an integrated economic hub that will help promote communication and trade with African states.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Jean-Paul Carteron, President of the Crans Montana Forum, as well as to all members of this institution, for the trust they have placed in the Kingdom of Morocco to host this important international meeting.

We are also grateful to them for the interest they take in issues related to Africa and for their endeavors to raise collective awareness to enhance the dynamic witnessed by the continent.

We look forward to seeing you maintain your contribution by adopting constructive recommendations and propositions on the various issues and challenges facing the continent. They will further enhance African integration and complementarity, open up larger prospects for cooperation between African countries, as well as with other regional groupings, while respecting the special features and national values of each country.

Finally, I should like to welcome Morocco’s distinguished guests who are participating in this forum and wish them a pleasant stay in the city of Dakhla, the Pearl of the Moroccan Sahara.

I wish you every success in your endeavors.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh".

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