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HM the King Sends Message to 33rd International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Full Text

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HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM

HM the King Sends Message to 33rd International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Full Text

HM King Mohammed VI sent a message to participants in the 33rd International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement which opened on Tuesday in Marrakesh.

Here follows the full text of the royal message, read out by Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research Saaïd Amzazi:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to send this message to the Thirty-Third International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement. I have granted my patronage to your Congress because I attach special importance to its main theme, which concerns education and teaching, and their role in empowering young people to contribute effectively to sustainable development.

I commend the organizers of this Congress for the lofty objectives they have set for this session as well as the noble goals your institution has sought to accomplish since its foundation. These goals are aimed at achieving fairness and improving education and school effectiveness throughout the world.

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I wish to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests and to say how delighted we are that this international event is taking place in the Kingdom of Morocco. It is the first time this international Congress is being held in an Arab or African country; all previous congresses have taken place in Europe, the Americas or Asia. This attests to Morocco's credibility in the eyes of various international organizations and institutions, sister countries and partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference embodies the will of education practitioners throughout the world to strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation with respect to developing schools and education systems. Because of its universal character, education is a basic human right. In this regard, SDG4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was agreed by the international community and which governments have pledged to implement, aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning for all.

This conference is an opportunity to highlight the pioneering role African countries - with their abundant young human resources - can play to promote a debate on enhancing the quality of education and training, and to consider the best avenues for fulfilling the main expectations of education systems in developing countries. The latter are seeking to develop their education systems to match those of developed countries.

Just as we want to ensure the educational and development objectives of this Congress are met, we are keen to see that this opportunity is seized to enhance cooperation and promote closer ties between countries – a goal to which Morocco is committed at the local, Arab, African and international levels. This policy is in line with our strong desire, in Morocco, to consolidate brotherly bonds based on friendship, cooperation, constructive partnerships and shared progress – a policy which is consistent with the values of openness,

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moderation, tolerance and dialogue between all cultures and civilizations. They are the human values to which Morocco is committed and which are enshrined in the Kingdom’s Constitution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Congress is important for a number of reasons. First, it is being attended by participants from a large number of countries - almost seventy, from all parts of the world - who have come with a wide range of rich experiences and diverse approaches, thus offering vast opportunities for cooperation as well as many possibilities for promising partnerships.

What makes this gathering even more important are the topical issues which it will be addressing and which mirror the main concerns of the majority of education systems. For this reason, your Congress is a suitable opportunity for collective reflection, thorough debate and an exchange of ideas, experiences, best practices and successful experiments. It provides a chance to see how to improve the performance of educational institutions - in all participating countries - as platforms for education and training, be it in public schools, vocational education institutions or universities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recent years, my country has launched a thorough reform of the Moroccan education system. I was keen to set the broad lines of that reform as well as its main priorities in order to achieve a qualitative leap forward regarding training methods and objectives. The aim is to introduce a new education system which promotes learner interaction, develops the capabilities of learners and hones their critical thinking skills. Another goal is to provide students with opportunities for creativity and innovation and to consolidate value systems.

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I asked that learners be given the chance to acquire skills and learn foreign languages in order to open up to the world. I also requested that we train young people to be good citizens, integrate youths into the development process, open up to other cultures and be fully involved in the knowledge and communication-based world.

To ensure sound, practical implementation of this education project, Morocco has sought to include these guiding principles in an integrated framework law that governs the various stages and policies of the education and scientific research system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On many occasions, I have stressed the special importance I attach to the promotion of education, given my firm belief in the decisive role it plays as a catalyst for the achievement of sustainable development in the various social, economic, cultural and environmental sectors. Education is the main instrument for the development of human resources. It turns people into powerful levers that contribute effectively to creating wealth, enhancing awareness and promoting innovative, creative thinking. It forms citizens who are keen to exercise their rights and discharge their duties in all good conscience - citizens who uphold universal values, who believe in the unity of humankind as much as in their rich yet varied identity, and who are committed to coexisting with others while being immune to extremism and reclusiveness.

Keeping in mind the above lofty objectives, the effectiveness of our schools should be essentially measured in light of the extent to which they respond to the basic needs and concerns of young people, who are the driving force in society. Young people should therefore be provided with the knowledge, competencies, skills, values, languages and culture that help them develop their personality, enhance their independence, improve their qualifications, achieve self-fulfilment, and increase their chances for social and professional integration. This is something I have always seen as a right, and not a privilege.

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School effectiveness can also be measured by the ability to guarantee education and care during early childhood, and to ensure school enrolment for children from all segments of society, in keeping with the principles of equal opportunities, social justice and regional equity. This is particularly true for rural areas and deprived regions, for girls in villages and hamlets, for vulnerable children and for youngsters in difficult situations. The same applies to the children of migrants and refugees, who are also entitled to an education that responds to their basic needs in terms of upbringing and integration, both in the host countries and in the countries of origin.

I commend you on the relevant choice of themes to be debated at this Congress. I am sure your discussions will help you come up with practical, innovative answers to various challenges faced in this field. The proposals, decisions and recommendations you will make will hopefully open up fresh prospects for joint action to enable our education systems to provide inclusive, equitable and quality education to all children, offering them opportunities for lifelong learning in order to ensure their own fulfilment as well as the wellbeing of their communities.

I am sure this Congress will achieve excellent results, given the qualifications and experience of the participating academics, education experts, renowned researchers and representatives of government institutions and non-governmental organizations involved in education, training and scientific research.

I wish your Congress every success.

Thank you.

MAP 07 January 2020

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