



**HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM**



HM the King Delivers Speech on Occasion of Parliament Opening (Full Text)

HM King Mohammed VI, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan and HRH Prince Moulay Rachid, delivered, on Friday from Rabat Royal Palace, a speech to the parliament on occasion of the opening of the 1st session of the 5th legislative year of the 10th legislature.

Here follows the full text of the speech, aired live inside the parliament:

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished Members of Parliament,

The opening of this session of Parliament is different from previous ones and is taking place in exceptional circumstances.

This is a time replete with challenges due, in particular, to the repercussions of the health crisis Morocco and the rest of the world are currently faced with.

What is more, it is the final year of the current parliamentary term. It therefore requires further efforts on your part, both to complete your mission in the best possible conditions and to ponder the outcome of your work, which will be assessed by voters.

As you know, the current crisis, with its health, economic, social and psychological repercussions, is not yet over.

What matters most, at this stage, is to be vigilant, commit to preserving the health and safety of citizens, continue supporting the health sector and keep up efforts to boost the economy and enhance social protection.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

This crisis has shone a spotlight on a number of inadequacies and deficiencies. Moreover, it has had an adverse impact on our economy and on the job market.

Consequently, I have launched an ambitious economic stimulus plan as well as a major project to achieve universal social protection. I have stressed, in this regard, the need to comply with the

principles of good governance and to upgrade public sector institutions.

These major projects can help us overcome the effects of the crisis while creating the right conditions for the implementation of the development model we yearn for.

At this stage, the economic stimulus plan is our foremost priority.

It is meant to support productive sectors - especially small and medium-sized enterprises - and to increase their ability to invest. It is also designed to create jobs and to preserve sources of income.

I have insisted that the plan should be implemented as part of a constructive national contract involving the State and economic and social partners. The aim is to lay the groundwork for the plan's success, based on the connection between rights and duties.

As part of efforts to support enterprises, more than 20,000 Moroccan businesses have benefited from state-guaranteed loans, amounting to approximately MAD 26.1 bn.

This mechanism has enabled beneficiaries to withstand the impact of the crisis, mitigate its effects and preserve jobs.

Efforts in this area - those of the banking sector, the Central Guarantee Fund, businesses and professional associations - should continue.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

The economic stimulus plan is based on the strategic investment fund, which I have asked to be set up and which I have decided to call the "Mohammed VI Investment Fund".

I expect this fund to play a pivotal role in promoting investment and boosting our economy. In this regard, it will support productive sectors and will finance and provide assistance to major projects within the framework of public-private partnerships.

To enable the fund to carry out its mission in an optimal way, I have asked for it to be endowed with legal personality and have proper management bodies. I expect this fund to be a model institution in terms of governance, efficiency and transparency.

I have also asked for MAD 15 bn from state resources to be allocated to the said fund to incentivize Moroccan and international partners and encourage them to support fund interventions and also to participate in investment projects designed to promote the recovery plan and broaden its economic, social and environmental impact.

The fund will focus its interventions on specialized sectoral funds affiliated with it. Its interventions are to be decided in light of the priorities identified for each phase, taking into account the specific needs of each sector.

The areas concerned in this regard include the restructuring of industry, innovation, high-potential sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises, infrastructure, agriculture and tourism.

I wish to emphasize, in this respect, the special importance that needs to be given to agriculture and rural development under the economic recovery plan.

Needless to say, in the current circumstances, support must be given to this highly important sector. Moreover, the implementation of all farming projects should be accelerated.

These measures should boost investment, promote employment, contribute to the development of our agricultural production and facilitate the integration of professionals in rural areas, in line with the new farming strategy.

Putting one million hectares of communal agricultural land at the disposal of investors and rights holders is a key element of that strategy.

The total volume of investment expected under this project over the medium term is estimated to stand at approximately MAD 38 bn.

This should translate into an added value of approximately two additional GDP percentage points annually, and a large number of jobs should be created in the coming years.

It is therefore essential to enhance coordination and cooperation between the sectors concerned and to incentivize youths in rural areas by setting up businesses and providing training, particularly in agriculture-related jobs and services.

Honorable Members of Parliament,

As you know, I have always sought to make sure economic progress goes hand in hand with social development and with improved living conditions for the citizens.

For this reason, I have called for social welfare coverage for all Moroccans.

This is a far-reaching, unprecedented national project which is based on four key elements:

- Firstly: Achieving universal compulsory health coverage for an additional 22 million individuals by the end of 2022, at the latest. It should include the cost of medication, drugs, hospitalization and treatment;
- Secondly: Ensuring universal access to family allowances for approximately seven million children of school age, from which some three million households stand to benefit;
- Thirdly: Expanding enrolment in a pension scheme for about five million Moroccan workers who do not currently have a retirement plan;
- Fourthly: Ensuring universal access to unemployment protection insurance for Moroccans with steady jobs.

To this end, there should be broad consultation with all partners, in addition to innovative, efficient steering of this societal project. At some point, a single coordination and supervisory authority in charge of all social welfare schemes will be set up.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

The success of any plan or project, whatever its objectives, hinges on observing the principles of good governance and abiding by the responsibility-accountability nexus.

State and public institutions must lead by example in this regard. They should drive development, not impede it.

Given the strategic importance of these institutions, there should be a profound and balanced reform of the public sector.

I am also looking forward to the important role to be played in this area by the agency that will supervise state contributions and monitor performance.

The success of the economic stimulus plan and the establishment of a new social contract require a real change in mind-set as well as improvement in the performance of state institutions.

To this end, I call on the government to carry out a thorough review of criteria and procedures for the appointment of senior officials in order to encourage competent individuals to hold public office. This should also make public service positions more attractive.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

Tackling this unprecedented crisis requires across-the-board mobilization in the country as well as concerted efforts by everyone to rise to the challenge.

I would like to avail myself of this important constitutional event to call on all national institutions and stakeholders, particularly Parliament, to rise to the challenge and to be mindful of people's aspirations.

Ours is a common responsibility; either we succeed, all of us together, for the sake of the

homeland and the well-being of the citizens, or we do not.

I am confident, however, that we shall all rise to this challenge, in keeping with the spirit of national unity and social solidarity.

God Almighty says: "And never give up hope of Allah's soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith." True is the Word of God.

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