



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



# **Full Text of Royal Message to Participants in Congress of Confederation of African Athletics**

HM King Mohammed VI addressed a message to the participants in the 27th Congress of the Confederation of African Athletics, which opened on Monday in Skhirat (Rabat outskirts).

Here follows the full text of the royal message, read out by HM the King's advisor, Abdellatif Menouni:

"Praise be to God

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

Honorable President of the International Association of Athletics Federations,

Honorable President of the Confederation of African Athletics,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Morocco, your home away from home, for this conference of the Confederation of African Athletics.

I was keen to grant my patronage to this African sporting event, during which issues that are important to the officials in charge of athletics federations will be discussed. This is because Africa holds a special place in my heart and also because my country has solid relations with African peoples - ties that are rooted in brotherhood, solidarity and cooperation.

This great gathering is of special interest to me because I believe that the genuine sustainable development of African sister nations unquestionably hinges on mustering the energies of young Africans, who account for two-thirds of the continent's population. The task of providing these young people with proper training and coaching in the fields of education and culture, among others, lies with us.

Sport in general - and more so, athletics - is one of the means whereby African youths can fulfil themselves and achieve their socio-economic integration. It can also make them more effectively immune to all forms of delinquency and radicalism.

Sport is not just about titles and achievements. It is a fully-fledged system involving values and principles. It contributes to disseminating a culture of mutual understanding and coexistence - a culture of respect for others and of close interaction between peoples.

Just like the school and society in general, sport should be a means for education, refinement and social advancement.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Athletics has, for decades, been a deeply-rooted sport in Africa. In many events, African athletes have been the best in the world, thrilling us all with new records and superb performances.

The titles achieved by African athletes and the top positions secured by their countries - be it in IAAF World Championships or the Olympic Games - are not merely a source of pride for African peoples. These performances also enhance the African identity, make the continent better known and increase its influence.

Nevertheless, these positive elements should not obscure the fact that, by and large, track and field in our African countries remains structurally dysfunctional. Such a situation can be overcome only if we adopt a well thought-out strategy to keep abreast of successive developments in world athletics.

This strategy must be based on good governance, the honing of talents, capacity building through modern training and coaching systems, the consolidation and upgrading of infrastructure and efforts to reconcile grassroots athletics with elite track and field.

The strategy should embrace the private sector through effective partnerships that provide for the financing of development plans in the field of athletics. This is a real issue for a number of African countries.

Consistent with the development plans of the IAAF and of the Confederation of African Athletics, a decade ago, my country adopted a contract program for the development of our national track and field. Based on a strategic vision, this program aims to increase the number of active athletes while also training elite competitors.

In this regard, I call for consolidating training and capacity building systems and developing the necessary infrastructure based on modern, sophisticated work methods to accompany athletes properly and ensure optimal use of the resources available.

It is also important to combat doping in sport as well as any dishonorable practices which are at odds with morals, sportsmanship and fair competition.

The above initiatives and concrete measures earned my country the confidence of international sports institutions and stakeholders. This was confirmed by the honor bestowed on Morocco to be one of the countries hosting the prestigious IAAF Diamond League qualification meetings, and thus represent our African continent.

Moreover, we expect this strategy to allow for the optimal use of the resources available in terms of training world-class athletes and preserving Morocco's record and its standing as one of the leading nations in this field.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Morocco did not wait until it regained its natural place in the African Union to demonstrate its commitment to serving African causes, including in the sports sector.

It has regularly participated in African sporting events, even hosting some of them. My country has also been actively involved in African sports decision-making institutions, particularly the Confederation of

African Athletics.

Consistent with a solidarity-based policy applied across the board, Morocco is both willing and committed to put its experience as well as its infrastructure in the sports sector in general, and in athletics in particular, at the disposal of African sister nations through the adoption and implementation of innovative, participatory and mutually beneficial approaches as well as South-South cooperation mechanisms.

I hope this session will provide an opportunity to reflect on the conclusion of effective, strategic partnerships between African federations in the areas of training, coaching and the exchange of know-how and promote convergent views as well as common stances at IAAF.

Being a decision-making body, I am sure that your conference will shape a new policy aimed at identifying promising prospects for future action that would enable African athletics to hold its rightful place in international sporting events and world sport forums and also increase the number of track and field athletes in Africa.

Once again, welcome to Morocco. I wish you a very successful conference.

Thank you.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh."

MAP 09 October 2017

