



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



Full Text Of HM The King's Speech At Opening Of First Session Of Third Legislative Year Of Ninth Legislature

HM King Mohammed VI gave, on Friday in Rabat, an important speech on the occasion of the opening of first session of third legislative year of ninth legislature.

Here follows the full text of the speech:

Praise be to God
upon

Peace and blessings be

and Kin

the Prophet, His Kith

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Members of Parliament,

I am delighted to inaugurate this legislative year of Parliament. This is a valuable yearly opportunity to meet the nation's representatives. What makes it so special is the fact that it concurs with the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Moroccan Parliament.

I want to commend the speakers of the two Houses of Parliament for the steps taken to celebrate this anniversary, mainly by developing a comprehensive program highlighting the major stages in the institutional process in our country.

As you know, the pluralistic parliamentary tradition in our country does not date back to yesterday. This is a strategic option, which spans over half a century. It stems from the strong, deep-rooted commitment of Morocco and of all the forces that make the life blood of the nation, to the principle of democracy.

This is why Morocco's is a pioneering parliamentary model, regionally as well as on the continental level.

The Moroccan parliament is a living memory attesting the firmly established stances taken by our country, and the major struggles it has waged in its endeavor to move forward with its pluralistic political system.

However, there are unfortunately many people who do not know the history of our institutions. Nor are they aware of the wisdom and farsightedness which characterize what has been a gradual, strongly-motivated, freely accepted process.

We have adopted the same, sound approach in our effort to upgrade our institutions. As a result, Parliament has become the only law-making body.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The institutional development in our country is an ever renewable process which builds on positive parliamentary practices, both at the national and the local levels, which complement each other:

First Level: The Parliamentary Mandate: It involves the representation of the nation. It is a major national mission, and by no means a source of political gains.

You must appreciate the magnitude of the lofty mission you entrusted with. It requires dedication, self-denial, true patriotism, and a deep sense of responsibility, in discharging your duties.

You are certainly aware that the current legislature is a founding period wherein it is necessary that all organic by-laws must be passed.

Given that this type of legislation complements the Supreme Law, I strongly recommend, distinguished members of parliament, that during the preparation and the adoption of these texts, you display a sense of national consensus and stick to the broad-based participatory approach that characterized the preparation of the Constitution.

I also urge you to fully assume your responsibilities in discharging your legislative duties. After all, what really matters to us, is not only the number of laws adopted, but also, and most importantly, the legislative quality of the bills enacted.

Similarly, I say it is high time to endorse the rules of procedure designed for the opposition in parliament, and thus enable the latter

to perform its duties with respect to controlling government action, providing constructive criticism, and putting forward realistic suggestions and alternatives, with a view to advancing the high interests of the nation.

I must insist on the need for constructive dialogue and close, balanced cooperation between parliament and the government. In addition, the principle of separation of powers must be observed so as to ensure sound political practices, based on efficiency, coordination and institutional stability. Thus, parliament should not be turned into an arena for politicking and political wrangling.

Secondly: The Community Mandate: Local or Regional Level: This is even more important in the country's political context, as it relates to the daily lives of the citizens who select the persons and parties that are expected to rule their affairs on a daily basis.

Community councils are responsible for managing the basic public services that are needed by the citizen every day. As for the government, it has a duty to lay down public policies and sectorial plans, and to work for their implementation.

It is not up to the minister to provide water, electricity, public transport. Nor is it his responsibility to cater for good quality roads, clean facilities within the community, the district or the city. These are rather the duties of those who hold elected office at community-level, with their constituencies. They are accountable before those who voted for them.

Furthermore, they are expected to initiate and carry out workshops and development projects within their jurisdiction, in order to foster employment and sustainable income-generating opportunities for the citizens.

This is a lofty, challenging mission which demands sincerity, integrity and the highest standards of commitment and dedication. It calls for close interaction with the citizen, and genuine readiness to head his pressing concerns and to attend to his administrative and social needs.

However, wide discrepancies are noted in the way local and regional affairs are managed.

Surely, many community councils are somewhat reasonably managed. Others, however, are unfortunately plagued by mismanagement on the part of their elected bodies.

I now think of the problems experienced by some cities, like Casablanca, for example.

I happen to know the city very well and I am truly fond of it and of its inhabitants, just as I naturally cherish all Moroccans.

Casablanca was the first city I visited in 1999, immediately after my accession to the throne of my revered ancestors. And it is from Casablanca that I issued the new concept of authority.

Ever since that time, I have been keen to go on inspection visits to its various districts and to take stock of the situation in the city.

I have also been monitoring the different programs and projects aimed at resolving its problems.

Given the special status of Casablanca as a powerhouse for economic

development, there is a keen desire to turn it into an international financial hub.

However, such a far reaching project cannot materialize just by taking a decision to this effect, or by erecting huge, state-of-the-art buildings.

If Casablanca is to become a real international financial hub, it is necessary, first and foremost, to provide world-class infrastructure and services. Good governance must be upgraded, together with an appropriate legal framework. In addition, steps should be taken to train highly skilled labor and modern management techniques and methods must be adopted.

Unfortunately, Casablanca does not have all these assets combined, notwithstanding the major efforts that have been made in terms of equipment and investment, especially with respect to urban upgrading.

But one may wonder why, unlike many other cities, Casablanca, which is one of the wealthiest cities in Morocco, is not enjoying the tangible progress its inhabitants, men and women alike, have been longing for.

Should it, nonetheless, remain the city of such great contradictions, to the extent that it has become one of the worst examples of local mismanagement?

Casablanca is the city of the most overwhelming social inequalities, where the rich and the poor live side by side. It is the city of skyscrapers and shanty towns. It is a finance and business hub, but also a place of squalor, unemployment and other social ills. Its image of a white city is tarnished by garbage and waste and its reputation

consequently ruined.

The causes for this are numerous and intertwined.

In addition to the inefficient action of some regional departments – representing various government agencies-, a wide range of major reasons can be identified, starting with the management systems adopted by successive elected councils in charge of the city affairs, unproductive clashes between their members, numerous duties and responsibilities assumed by council members, even though some of them are competent, show goodwill and care about their city.

To put it in a nutshell, , the problem of the economic capital of the country stems mainly from governance.

Indeed, the city's local council budget is three or four times higher than in Fez or Marrakech, for instance, yet the achievements of the latter in terms of effective and quality basic services are far beyond what has been done in Casablanca.

The best example in this regard is the major deficit in sanitation services, where achievements remain limited and far short of meeting the needs of the population, unlike what has been achieved in Rabat, Fez, Marrakech and many others cities.

The gap is particularly noticeable with respect to wastewater treatment rates. They barely stand at 45% for Casablanca, against 100% for Fez and Marrakech. In Rabat too, the optimal rate of 100% has just been reached, both in terms of connection to the sewage network and treatment of wastewater.

This complex situation requires an urgent diagnosis to identify the root of the problem and how to address it. In fact, a city's development is not measured by the height of its high-rise buildings and the width of its streets. Infrastructure, the availability of public services and the quality of life are key elements in this regard.

I refer you to what I said back in 1999, in my first speech, after my accession to the Throne, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People, namely that I did not have a magic wand to solve all the problems, but would tackle all the difficulties consciously, seriously and diligently

This applies today to the city of Casablanca. The people responsible for the city's management do have the will and determination to work for the development of their city, but they need to translate this into action.

Considering the problems experience by many large and medium size cities, as well as some rural centers, suffer from, I would like political parties to focus on the need for the emergence of new regional elites who are able to handle public affairs at the local level, now that the Constitution has expanded the powers of local communities. In addition, new prospects have been opened up under the advanced regionalization policy, as well the challenges it raises.

I also urge the government and parliament to implement the provisions pertaining to the Region and to local communities and adopt the relevant laws.

It is also the government's responsibility to speed up the adoption of the administrative decentralization charter, as this is part of its prerogatives and totally in its hands. I have already called for this charter to be adopted on many occasions in the past.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The parliamentary and the local mandates are the cornerstones of the participatory political pattern chosen by Moroccans. It would be incomplete without these two components.

As far as I am concerned, there is no difference between the two. What is most important is for everyone to discharge their national or local missions and the duties for which they have been elected.

The significance of the two mandates lies not only in the good management of public affairs, no matter how highly it is valued, but also in the will to serve the lofty interests of the nation and advocate its just causes, first and foremost the territorial integrity of our country.

Indeed, this year the Sahara issue has faced major challenges, which we have been able to address thanks to the strength of our stance and to the legitimacy of our cause.

However, we should not content ourselves with the victory we have won in this battle, nor should we be over optimistic.

I have, in fact, identified a few inadequacies in the way we deal with our first national cause, despite serious initiatives taken by some members of parliament, but which remain insufficient.

This might encourage our opponents to step up speed in their manoeuvres against our country.

In fact, the majority of actors are only mobilized when there is a looming threat to our territorial integrity, as if they are waiting for the green light before engaging in any action.

Instead of waiting for our opponents to attack and then retaliate, we should corner them back into a defensive position. We should take the lead, anticipate and interact positively.

The Sahara issue is not exclusively the King's responsibility. It is everyone's responsibility: government institutions, parliament, elected bodies, as well as political, economic and trade union actors, civil society organizations, the media and all citizens.

The key factor in the defense of our Sahara is the unanimous agreement of all the components of the Moroccan society on the sacred values of the nation.

The situation is a difficult one. Nothing has been definitely settled yet. The manoeuvres plotted by the opponents of our territorial integrity are not about to end. Our cause may have to face other crucial developments.

Accordingly, I urge you once again to remain fully mobilized, be vigilant at all times and act efficiently, at both the national and the international levels, to face the enemies of the nation and foil their illegitimate schemes.

Given the current situation, it is henceforth the parliament's duty to lay down a comprehensive and effective plan of action, using all relevant means, to continue upholding the cause of our territorial integrity, while putting aside all majority versus opposition disputes. This cause should not be held at ransom for political designs or because of fluctuating circumstances.

Similarly, it is the duty of members of parliament, as well as of local and regional elected officers, particularly in our Southern Provinces, in their capacity as representatives of the region's populations, to deal with the enemies of the nation.

As the Supreme representative of the State and the Symbol of the unity of the nation, I will spare no effort, at all levels, to preserve the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the stability of the Kingdom, with the support of our loyal citizens and with the joint efforts of all components of society.

I was brought up to love my country and, despite my young age at the time, I was witness, like all Moroccans, to the mobilization and patriotic spirit that marked the recovery of our Southern Provinces, thanks to the glorious Green March and to the genius of its initiator, my venerable father, His Majesty King Hassan II. May he rest in peace. It is this very spirit that should continue to inspire us in all we set out to achieve.

I shall remain, as I have always been, among the front-line defenders of our territorial integrity, leading the March for development, progress and prosperity, in a unanimous nation, enjoying unity, security and stability.

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due". True is the word of God.

Wassalamou alaikoum warahmatoullahi wabaraakatouh.