



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



# **HM the King Addresses Message to Participants at 2nd National Conference on Advanced Regionalization**

His Majesty King Mohammed VI on Friday addressed a message to the participants at the 2nd National Conference on Advanced Regionalization, held on December 20-21 in Tangier.

Here follows the full text of the Royal Message, which was read by the Interior Minister, Abdelouafi Laftit.

"Praise be to God,

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to send you this message at the start of the Second National Conference on Advanced Regionalization, which is being held under my high patronage. It attests to the keen interest I take in this strategic plan, which will contribute to consolidating good local governance and achieving economic and social development in our country, at the regional as well as the national levels.

The First National Conference on Advanced Regionalization provided an opportunity to adopt the regulatory framework that enables regions to exercise their own powers as well as other shared prerogatives. That framework, which is based on a participatory approach that anticipates prospects for cooperation and partnership between the parties concerned, constitutes today and will continue to constitute a binding commitment for all signatory parties.

I hope your conference will be a chance to take stock of what has been achieved with respect to implementing advanced regionalization, and to consolidate positive interaction between all the stakeholders concerned - including government officials, representatives of public institutions and elected officials - on matters of common concern relating to the optimal implementation of advanced regionalization. I also hope you will identify the most effective ways to make advanced regionalization a lever for economic and social development that can help address development challenges, unequal growth, and regional disparities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your first term of office coincided with the creation and activation of the various bodies of regional councils, the completion of the implementation texts relating to the regulatory laws on local governments, the adoption of the first planning documents and development programs, and the issuance of the national charter for administrative devolution. During the current term, we need to reach cruising speed for the actual, effective implementation of this structural project on the ground.

With that in mind, it is important to assess the progress made by our country in laying down the foundations of advanced regionalization and consolidating administrative devolution, especially with regard to implementing the recommendations of the First National Conference on Advanced Regionalization.

In the message I sent to the participants in the First National Conference held in 2019, I invited them to “reflect on a methodological framework with a specific timeline for regions to exercise their powers”.

In this regard, the strategic character of the advanced regionalization process requires greater involvement of the parties concerned in a process based on consultation and constructive dialogue for the gradual implementation of advanced regionalization, until this plan is executed in full. Of special importance is the definition, scrutiny, and ownership of powers, as well as their effective exercise in order to

address the challenges encountered on the ground.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Consistent with my keen desire to ensure the optimal implementation of the advanced regionalization process, I call for efforts to tackle current and future challenges posed by this flagship project to be kept up. I will mention seven major challenges in this regard.

First: The challenge of the actual implementation of the National Charter for Administrative Devolution:

As you know, since my accession to the throne, I have attached special importance to devolved administrative powers, given their strategic importance in the institutional dynamic for the implementation of advanced regionalization.

In the message sent to the participants in the First National Conference on Advanced Regionalization, I called for the implementation of the National Administrative Devolution Charter to be accelerated. I stressed the need to make sure “all energies are mobilized and all ministerial departments are actively involved in implementing the charter”. I insisted, to that end, on the need to “speed up the preparation of master plans for administrative decentralization, which must be based on actual devolution to regions of function-related and decision-making powers”.

On that point, however, it has been noted that most ministries have lagged behind in terms of actually implementing the devolution of administrative powers. Notwithstanding the importance of devolving administrative powers, the implementation of that process is still plagued by shortcomings, especially key powers relating to investment. Any delay in transferring these devolved powers to the authorities concerned is likely to complicate administrative investment procedures, thus preventing investors from completing those procedures easily.

Second: The challenge of clearly determining and implementing the powers of local governments, especially regional councils. This is one

of the key prerequisites for the actual implementation of advanced regionalization and the promotion of economic and social development in the country. Despite the efforts made in this regard, this goal has not yet been achieved in the desired manner, either.

I therefore call for the adoption of a comprehensive approach in which the ministries and local governments concerned would shoulder their responsibilities so as to achieve the objectives sought from a precise determination of powers. This is an essential entry point for the full implementation of advanced regionalization.

Third: The challenge of strengthening participatory democracy at the local and regional levels, in keeping with the provisions of the Kingdom's Constitution. This requires involving the citizens and civil society organizations in the process of formulating, preparing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating public policies, alongside elected councils, in order to achieve the desired objectives.

Fourth: The challenge of ensuring accountability in public office as regards the management of local affairs:

Regions and other local government bodies have become key components of our country's decentralization policy; they are key players in the management of local affairs. As such, they can successfully rise to the challenge of achieving development and breaking with classical management patterns by adopting the mechanisms of good governance and democracy, and promoting legitimacy and effectiveness. In view of the above, it is necessary today to promote ethical conduct in public life and combat corruption through a policy of oversight and accountability, in keeping with the constitutional principle which stipulates that holding public office and accountability go hand in hand.

Fifth: The challenge of enhancing the appeal of regions in order to attract productive investment, as a basic lever for strengthening sustainable development:

In this globalized world, and given today's fierce competition, it is a fact that the attractiveness of any region or territory goes a long way in stimulating economic growth, creating job opportunities, and improving people's living conditions.

In view of the above, it is now incumbent on the Kingdom's regions to

seize the opportunities at hand, and to make the most of their potential. To rise to this challenge, it is necessary to build on a proactive strategy that seeks to enhance attractiveness on several levels, including by creating a favourable business environment, offering modern infrastructure, a qualified labour force and appropriate incentives, and properly showcasing the natural resources, and the cultural and historical heritage of each region in the Kingdom.

Such a goal necessarily requires an integrated, participatory approach. Local governments, the state, the private sector and civil society must work together to develop and implement ambitious strategies in order to enhance attractiveness, taking into account the particularities of each region.

Sixth: The challenge regarding the capacity of regions to come up with new financing mechanisms:

Practice and experience in the field have shown that classical financing modes and strategies are no longer sufficient to meet the challenges faced. It is therefore necessary to develop other funding modes that would reduce the financial pressure on regions and other local government authorities.

This challenge means local actors need, on the one hand, to take a long, hard look at the extent to which the new local budgetary model based on efficiency has been implemented, and, on the other, to determine to what extent the new financing patterns allowed by the legislation on local finance have been considered.

Seventh: The challenge of addressing certain crises and adapting to today's deep changes and to future impacts:

In addition to seeking to promote the attractiveness of regions and local territories, local actors have to make sure crisis and risk management are not overlooked. Any region may face a number of growing threats that can be natural, economic or environmental. These challenges, which are often sudden and unpredictable, can undermine development efforts if they are not addressed in a timely, appropriate manner.

Hence the need to opt for a more flexible, interactive approach to regional planning. Instead of continuing to adopt inflexible work

programs, regions should seek to enhance their capabilities for anticipation, adaptation and continuous learning.

Moroccan regions are capable of developing more resilient territories that can adapt to change more effectively, face crises, and rise to current and future challenges. To achieve this, risk management strategies need to be embedded into development programs. This is a crucial challenge if we want to ensure sustainable, comprehensive development across the Kingdom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issues and risks hindering development in our beloved Kingdom's regions - and which must be tackled successfully - include water stress management, the development of the transport and mobility infrastructure, and engaging in the digital transition.

It is a fact that Morocco has, for some time now, been in a situation of structural water stress, as I emphasized at the 2022 state opening of the first session of the second legislative year.

Needless to say, water stress is a challenge for all stakeholders, regions and local governments included. The latter are called upon to deal with the situation in a serious way and exert the necessary concerted efforts. What is at stake is not simply the provision of the water infrastructure needed - a matter that is crucial in and of itself. We need to go beyond that and establish good water governance mechanisms to enhance an integrated approach in public water policy. Indeed, properly tackling water stress is a key entry point for the achievement of sustainable local and regional development.

To achieve this goal, regions and local governments - each in their field of competence and within their specific powers as well as those shared with other stakeholders - are called upon to launch more ambitious programs and initiatives within the framework of a national strategy for water conservation at the regional level. They are also expected to contribute to implementing that strategy through effective procedural measures.



As regards the development of the transportation and mobility system for the achievement of integrated regional development, it is clear that this sector will quickly develop in the next few years. The reason for this is the growing dynamism of our country as a regional hub that attracts investment, not to mention the large-scale projects launched as part of our country's preparations to host the 2030 football World Cup.

In view of the above and the major challenges facing Morocco in the early part of this third millennium, and considering the ambitions and strategic objectives set by the state, developing a comprehensive, sustainable transportation system has become a basic requirement for the achievement of integrated local and regional development. It is also a key entry point for reducing regional and social disparities.

To achieve this goal, regions and local governments are expected to contribute to developing this sector, and accompany the efforts made by the state in this regard.

As for the digital transition at the local and regional levels, it is now a requirement, not an option. The aim is to keep pace with the technological revolution the world is witnessing today. Indeed, one can hardly imagine a regional or local development process without digital development, especially since digital technology has been playing an increasingly important role in the management of local and regional affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our country is aware of the magnitude of the challenges and problems faced. It is also convinced of the crucial importance of advanced regionalization, and of the need to pause and assess what has so far been achieved in this regard, especially with respect to implementing the recommendations of the First National Conference. For all of the above reasons, I invite you to come up with a clear, consensual roadmap with strategic guidelines for the next stage.

I look forward to the adoption of sound, constructive recommendations and conclusions at the end of your conference, and



pray that Almighty God grant you every success, for the wellbeing of the nation and the citizens.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh."

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