



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 this message to the participants in the International Meeting on Climate Change, which is to address the threats posed by climate change and the responses we must come up with to mitigate the impact of these threats and adjust our modes of development.

The scientific community has regularly provided evidence that proves that human activity has contributed significantly to current climatic disturbances. IPCC experts predict scenarios in which the future of climate cycles will be profoundly affected if greenhouse gas emissions remain unchanged.

The degradation of land, marine and coastal ecosystems will disrupt the balance of these ecosystems and jeopardize our development and that of future generations. Given these threats, the international community cannot but take urgent, decisive action, in a spirit of solidarity, equity and responsibility in order to safeguard our planet's future.

The fragile ecosystems of African countries, the vulnerability of their economies and the limited means they can rely on to cope with climate change will inevitably lead to more poverty and less security in many parts of the continent. This is particularly unjust as these countries, which are low greenhouse gas emitters, are among the hardest hit by the effects of climate change. More than ever before, international solidarity, equity and shared responsibility are needed to support these countries as they develop and implement measures to adapt to climate change, for which they will need technical assistance as well as appropriate financial backing.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Like the rest of the world, Morocco is suffering from the consequences of climate change. Morocco's geographical location and the characteristics of its ecosystems have a lot to do with the impact climate change has on our country. From the beginning, Morocco has firmly believed in the need to act and has shared the world's growing awareness in this regard. The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio confirmed this awareness through the climate change conventions it adopted on biodiversity, forest resources and the fight against desertification. Having ratified all these conventions, my country has developed national action plans in this regard, which I have been monitoring closely. In keeping with this spirit, I wish to reiterate my firm determination to act swiftly and resolutely. I have, in this regard, asked the government to see that environmental issues are at the heart of our development programs. I have also laid emphasis on the need to preserve our natural resources, help regenerate them and safeguard their quality.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Being very much aware of the special importance of water resources for the country's development, Morocco has implemented a sound policy for the optimal management of water resources, thanks to the dam building strategy started in 1967 by my late father His Majesty King Hassan II, may he rest in peace. Despite extreme climatic conditions, such as the longer, more frequent and more severe droughts and floods that our country has experienced over the last decades, we have been able to secure our drinking water supply, ensure irrigated agriculture, protect flood-prone areas and safeguard property and equipment, thanks to our water catchment capabilities. As well as increasing our water resources, our current and future challenge is to constantly strive to ensure the proper management of these resources. The conservation, optimal use, quality and proper allocation of our water resources will be a key element of our modes of development.

The energy sector, which I consider to be of strategic importance in our development plans, must meet three requirements : energy efficiency, security of supply and renewable energy production, particularly through the rational exploitation of our country's potential in the area of wind and solar energy.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

By reducing the pressure on natural resources we shall preserve the balance of our ecosystems. This is why our country is strongly committed to restoring forests, conserving biodiversity and fighting land degradation, erosion, sand encroachment and desertification. The aim is to preserve and develop our capacity in terms of natural resource production and regeneration.

However, these strategies call for more than just technical solutions. They require strong commitment on the part of all stakeholders to make sure that citizens are actively involved and that they embrace this national ambition. Sustainable development, which guarantees long-lasting social progress and intergenerational solidarity, must meet the twin requirements of spatial solidarity and social solidarity. Given our keen desire to ensure spatial equity, we must focus on rural areas, remote and landlocked zones and regions with inadequate infrastructure so as to create the right conditions for local development that generates opportunity and hope and contributes to the creation of wealth.

Because it cements social bonds, social solidarity will further enhance spatial rehabilitation and strengthen our hand in the fight against exclusion, social vulnerability, inequality and poverty. Genuine sustainable development hinges on successful human development. Then, and only then, will citizens live in harmony with their environment.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,.**

Needless to say, your meeting today on the impact of climate change in Morocco is of particular importance because it will look into ways and means to develop short-term adjustment policies. I believe it should also look into the changes needed in our modes of production and in the working methods used in our programs and development projects so that we may base future action on scientifically proven facts.

Our approach, in this respect, should focus on the analysis of land and the ecosystem, use an integrated work method in terms of planning and rely on sectoral projects as a means for concrete action.

I hope this IRES meeting will be the starting point of an uninterrupted process for the development of national expertise on challenges relating to climate change. We should, first of all, develop our expertise, analysis capabilities and networking skills in order to assist policy makers and help officials in charge of formulating programs and making decisions.

At the same time, centers of excellence must be set up to increase our monitoring and prediction capacity as well as our pro-active capabilities in the area of implementing development programs.

Finally, we need to remain vigilant regarding climate and environment issues, build on national and international skills and competencies and develop our risk assessment and management capabilities.