

Chairmen's Statement of the Marrakech Forum for the Future 6th edition, 2-3 November, 2009

The sixth Forum for the Future, co-chaired by Mr. Taïb Fassi Fihri, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, and Mr. Franco Frattini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, convened in Marrakech on 2 and 3 November 2009. Participating were the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the BMENA, G8 and other partner countries as well as representatives of international organizations, civil society and private sector from the countries of the region. (see Annex for List of Participants).

Recalling the spirit of the first ministerial meeting in Rabat, which launched the Forum for the Future in 2004;

Welcoming the significant steps achieved since, through the Ministerial Forums successively held in Manama (2005), the Dead Sea (2006), and Abu Dhabi (2008);

Welcoming the progress reached by the countries of the region in the fields of educational reform, women empowerment as well as the steps taken to favour cooperation between governments and civil society, especially in favour of sustainable human development;

Convinced that the destinies of their countries are closely linked and that only a concerted, global and multidimensional approach, based on active solidarity and a sincere dialogue, can help provide effective responses to the challenges facing the region;

Convinced that the reinforcement of democracy, as well as political and economic freedoms, will not only contribute to deepening relations and enriching cooperation between countries of the region, but also to strengthening regional stability and security;

Recalling the aims of this Partnership to build on the various reform and development initiatives of the BMENA region already taking place at the national, bilateral and regional levels, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Japan-Arab Economic Forum;

Renewing their shared commitment to promote mutually profitable development and voluntary ties of cooperation capable of creating an area of shared prosperity within the region, to the benefit of its populations;

Reaffirming their attachment to the flexible and informal nature of the Forum for the Future, which represents an important opportunity to conduct an open dialogue and constructive exchange of views on all issues of common interest and to coordinate policies and initiatives focusing on the region;

1. Participants reaffirmed their firm commitment to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East which end the occupation that began in 1967, based on a two-state solution with an independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living in peace and security alongside Israel, consistent with UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap and the agreements previously reached by the parties.
2. Participants thus called both parties to implement their obligations under the Roadmap, and affirmed that unilateral action, including settlement activity, shall not prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community. They equally underlined the necessity to provide political and economic support to the Palestinian Authority and to protect and respect the common cultural heritage and identity of Al Quds (Jerusalem). They called for immediate resumption of the negotiation process with a view to an early conclusion of a peace treaty resolving all outstanding core issues, including refugees, borders, Jerusalem and security.
3. Participants thus strongly expressed their appreciation for the constant efforts of H.M. King Mohammed VI, as President of the Al Quds Committee and praised his role and commitment in promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, peace and stability in the region.
4. Participants examined the initiatives of the Forum for the Future and confirmed that the Forum framework offers great potential for the intensification of dialogue and the qualitative evolution of political, economic and social cooperation among its member countries. They particularly commended the constructive partnership and open and inclusive dialogue successfully promoted between the Governments and civil societies of the region, a dialogue which has helped consolidate the role of all elements of society and strengthen the participation of all social strata in the political life of their countries. They suggested further exploring possible innovations in working methods and considering new fields of sector-based cooperation and the development of national civil society networks to further enhance coordination and promote the pursuit of a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership with the Governments of the region.
5. Participants welcomed Morocco and Italy's efforts in suggesting improved working methods for the Partnership in order to ensure better follow-through, greater visibility for the initiatives undertaken, and continuity between consecutive co-chairs. They also expressed their commitment to give a new impetus to the Forum for the Future's initiatives, strengthen the core principles that inspired its creation, intensify its effectiveness through action-oriented goals, and reaffirm its essential role in consolidating development in the region through political and socio-economic reforms.
6. Participants welcomed the reports annexed to this document issued by the three thematic workshops held in preparation of the Marrakech Forum, with the participation of representatives of civil society and governments, as well as of international organizations. The three workshops addressed issues related to the global financial crisis, democracy and local governance, and human development. They have made a major contribution to the 2009 Forum for the Future and to the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), which refers to the principles of partnership and dialogue between Governments and civil society enshrined in the "Partnership document".
7. Participants addressed the global financial crisis, which affected in particular the developing countries of the area, underlining the need for enhanced international and regional

cooperation within and among governments, parliaments, civil society and the private sector. They called in particular for increased cooperation between the private sector, civil society and public institutions through projects aimed at fostering job creation, improved business climates and open and free trade economies. They suggested formulating specific regional and sub-regional initiatives to create jobs by promoting funding, technical assistance and innovation for small, medium and micro enterprises, along with better managerial and entrepreneurial skills. To this end, the countries of the region welcomed the continued support and commitment of the G8 and partner countries.

8. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of democracy, emphasizing the importance of the broad and representative participation of citizens in public life. Conscious that political development is a long and demanding process, they reiterated the commitment of the BMENA and G8 countries and other international partners to support these reforms, in a spirit of partnership and full respect for the sovereignty and specificities of each country. While reaffirming their conviction that any political reform process must recognize that the pace and scope of change will vary from country to country, they encouraged initiatives aimed at reinforcing local governance as a means to promote democratic societies characterized by pluralism and unity. To this end, they encouraged closer cooperation between local and national authorities, with a view to strengthening democratic capacities, promoting best practices and enhancing inclusiveness in public life, particularly for women and young people.
9. Participants welcomed the important efforts undertaken by BMENA countries to address human development issues in the region. They expressed their concern over socio-economic inequalities aggravated by the recent economic and financial crisis and their support for social programs specifically targeted to poor and vulnerable groups, in order to ensure equal access for all citizens to basic social services such as water, housing, healthcare, food and sanitation. Building upon existing cooperation in the health field, they encouraged specific regional initiatives aimed at prevention and health promotion and at sharing expertise and best practices.
10. Participants equally stressed the importance of fostering initiatives promoting education, a knowledge-based society and women and young people's empowerment, particularly in rural areas. Participants commended the conclusions of the International Conference on Violence Against Women, held in Rome on 9 and 10 September 2009 at the initiative of the Italian G8 Presidency.
11. Participants strongly stated their commitment to invest in young people and adopt policies and programs that will expand their economic opportunities, increase their social engagement and allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities and civic life. They also called for more partnerships in the education and vocational training fields and encouraged further cooperation of partner institutions and universities from the G8 and BMENA countries to develop exchange and research programs. They underlined the relevance of providing education leading to key qualifications and competences, active labour market participation and open access for all to lifelong learning opportunities.
12. Participants underlined the need for a coordinated response to the challenges brought by climate change. They called for further cooperation between the G8 and BMENA countries in the environmental sector to promote innovation, research, market liberalization and technological development. They reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Participants emphasized that the civil society organisations have a pivotal

role to play in reaching a comprehensive and ambitious global agreement of the COP 15 UN Conference on Climate Change to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009 and in the follow up and implementation of the outcome of this conference.

13. The Forum acknowledged the need to address and to further define the concept of human security and to encourage initiatives to reinforce national civil protection systems and populations' preparedness for natural and man-made disasters.
14. Participants reiterated their commitment to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity and tolerance, and their full support for existing initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilisations and the Interfaith Dialogue Initiative launched by H.M. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. They underlined the need to increase awareness and respect for the region diversity and its cultures, traditions, and history with a view to fostering greater mutual understanding among peoples, for instance by developing cultural tourism to enhance the cultural heritage of the participating Countries.
15. The participants expressed their gratitude to the co-chairs for the successful organization of the sixth Forum for the Future, with special thanks to the Kingdom of Morocco for its generous hospitality.
16. They expressed their strong support for the upcoming co-chairmanship between Qatar and Canada, as next President of the G8.