

*The Permanent Mission
of the Kingdom of Morocco
to the United Nations*



البعثة الدائمة
للمملكة المغربية لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

Address
by
H.E. Mr. Abbas El Fassi
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco

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**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to begin by warmly congratulating His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockman for his appointment as President of the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election honors your long-lasting commitment to the preservation of peace and security and, particularly, constant engagement in encouraging peace in Central America.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Serjan Kerim for his excellent presidency of the previous Session of United Nations General Assembly.

Allow me to thank the Secretary General, His Excellency M. Ban Ki Moon, for his generous and ongoing efforts in favor of the renovation of our Organization, in particular those aiming to improve its working methods and its interaction with its Member States.

Mr. President,

Twenty years ago, the Fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War era that had been characterized by ideological divisions, arms race and a weak multilateral system with inefficient mechanisms.

With the end of this era came great hope from the world's peoples, leading some to believe in the beginning of a new world order. A world order that would not only be more fair and equitable, but also distinguished by a culture of forgiveness among its nations. This new order was also meant to spread the values of democracy and human rights, giving priority to development and a better exploitation of technological advancement.

At the same time, some people predicted that this new world order would restore esteem to the United Nations and enable it to succeed in building consensus on international issues. The UN would thus be empowered to implement its strategies aiming to foster peace and security, encourage development, and spread universal values.

Mr. President,

Despite the expectations of a better world that followed the end of the cold war, today's reality is one of an increase in regional and internal conflicts, especially in the African continent. This situation is exacerbated by a race for energy resources and a frenzied exploitation of precious minerals.

At the economic and trade levels, the launch of the World Trade Organization, in 1994 in Marrakech, led to a substantial acceleration of world trade exchanges, but without creating a fair trade system, thus failing to meet the expectations of developing countries.

Indeed, in spite of the efforts deployed in UN international conferences, Official Development Assistance has significantly decreased over the last years, by 4.7% in 2006 and 8.4% in 2007. In fact, the assistance provided by donor countries does not meet the expectations of developing countries despite their commitment to increase their global annual assistance to developing countries to up to 50 billion dollars by 2010.

Therefore, notwithstanding the progress achieved over the past years, several African countries remain in the category of the Least Developed Countries. This situation calls for more commitment from the UN in order to overcome the main difficulties that prevent Africa from reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Morocco, in addition to other countries, expresses its concern regarding the delay in the development of many African countries. This is partly due to the complexity of the current international situation marked, particularly, by an economic and financial crises which have had an impact on food security, as well as on the energy needs of these countries. These circumstances undermine years of ongoing efforts towards their development.

In order to improve this situation, the Kingdom of Morocco urges the UN to undertake all the arrangements necessary in order to stabilize the food market, maintain social stability in developing countries and open the market to agricultural products.

Mr. President,

The weak role of the UN in maintaining peace and security throughout the world during the Cold War period was followed by a new phase, during which the multilateral system became characterized by the convening of several meetings and conferences focusing on different issues, as well as the deployment of numerous peacekeeping operations, especially in Africa. As a Troop Contributing Country, Morocco spares no efforts to increase its involvement in UN peacekeeping forces. The Kingdom is also actively promoting the enhancement of South-South cooperation by giving priority to African countries.

In parallel with the changes taking place in the international arena, UN Member States launched major reforms centered on the improvement of the Organization's actions, the reinforcement of its role and the enhancement of its mechanisms. Nevertheless, some weaknesses remain regarding internal coordination among the various UN bodies, as well as between the Organization itself and other regional organizations. This is particularly evident regarding the efforts made to contain and prevent regional conflicts with potential spillover effects.

At this point, it is important to strengthen multilateralism with the aim of meeting the new challenges and to put in place a new order based on justice and equality. The pursuit of such an approach is not merely an option and seems to be necessary given the serious challenges facing the international community, namely the continued threats to international peace and security, the necessity to enhance solidarity among members of the international community and the achievement of economic prosperity and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The Middle East peace process, initiated in the Madrid Conference in 1991, did not succeed unfortunately, to end this conflict which continues to cause a heavy toll in terms of increasing victims causing millions of Palestinians to live in inhumane conditions.

Morocco continues to closely follow the latest developments regarding the situation in the Middle East and encourages all initiatives aiming to bring peace to this region, with respect to international legality and to the agreements previously reached, namely the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

This last initiative represents undoubtedly a realistic solution reflecting the true commitment of Arab countries to reach a fair, global and lasting solution which, once Israel retreats from the Arab territories, will allow the Palestinian population to establish an independent State, with Al Qods as its capital, and would enable the people of the Middle East to live in peace, stability and security.

The Kingdom of Morocco equally expresses the necessity to respect the particular situation of Jerusalem, by avoiding degrading and humiliating attitudes and impeding any attempts to undermine the cultural, religious and civilizational specificities of this Holy city. In this regard, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of Al Qods Committee, spares no effort in encouraging World Leaders to help put an end to the projects that are taking place around the Al Aqsa Mosque and other parts of Jerusalem.

Concerning Iraq, Morocco is closely following the progress on the ground and encourages dialogue and national reconciliation between the different ethnic, political and cultural factions in order to end violence, reach peace and stability, preserve the territorial integrity of this country and allow it to rebuild its economy.

Mr. President,

The Cold War with its ideological divides and alliances has disappeared with the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Today, the world is facing daunting challenges requiring the solidarity and unity of the international community. This imposes upon the United Nations the lead role in the coordination and implementation of international recommendations from its Member States.

Amongst the main challenges that the international community should tackle are the issues of migration and development. In this context, Morocco launched a regional initiative by convening, in 2006, an international ministerial Conference on migration and development.

Furthermore, Morocco considers that the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the occasion to proceed to the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights issues, the main objective being that the United Nations is appropriately tooled to play a leading role in ensuring that all citizens rights are protected and that law regarding the respect of human rights is harmonized.

Mr. President,

The UN is based on the principles of cooperation and neighborly relations, with regional integration and cooperation representing the best means to ensure stability, economic development and an improved common future.

Since its independence, the Kingdom of Morocco has placed the project of an Arab Maghreb Union at the top of its priorities. Morocco has thus spared no efforts towards the accomplishment of this project and towards the revitalization of its institutions. Morocco is firmly committed to make the Arab Maghreb Union the harbinger of an era of peace and the fulfillment of a common destiny of the populations of this region.

The Kingdom of Morocco is strongly convinced and deeply committed to overcome all obstacles and move forward with the regional integration in the Arab Maghreb Union. For this reason, Morocco has proposed the Initiative for Negotiating an Autonomy Statute for the Saharan Region in the aim to put an end to this artificial conflict and overcome the stalemate of this issue at the United Nations level.

The Moroccan Autonomy Initiative, which was described by the United Nations Security Council as serious and credible, is the result of wide international consultations and the outcome of a process of extensive national negotiations with the population of the Sahara region.

As a result, the Security Council successively adopted three resolutions (1745, 1783, and 1813) which call upon the parties to enter into true negotiations, taking into consideration the latest developments and particularly the Moroccan initiative, which launched a new dynamic in favor of a lasting solution to this conflict.

Morocco remains strongly committed to continue these negotiations, with sincerity and goodwill, in order to find a solution to this regional conflict that is respectful of its national sovereignty, territorial integrity and where the autonomy applied to this region benefits its population.

Mr. President,

A strong, integrated and stable Arab Maghreb can play a key role in maintaining regional peace and security. It can also contribute to enhance African integration and play an active role as an efficient and credible partner to achieve the noble goals for which the United Nations was created.

Thank you.