



*Kingdom of Morocco
Parliament
House of Representatives*

*Remarks by Mr. Habib El Malki
Speaker of the House of Representatives
At the opening of the International Parliamentary Conference on
Migration*

The House of Representatives,
Rabat, 6 December 2018

In the name of God the Most Gracious the Most Merciful, May peace and prayers be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

**Madam Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Distinguished Speakers of National Parliaments,
Honorable Members of the Government,
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to open the proceedings of this International Parliamentary Forum which is being held in the lead up to the Intergovernmental Conference for the Adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, to be held in Marrakech on 10 and 11 December 2018. I should like to extend my thanks to the IPU and to its Chairperson, my colleague Gabriela Cuevas Barron, for holding this parliamentary conference in Morocco.

I would like, first, to welcome you and to thank you for accepting our invitation to discuss the migration issue. Migration has become a central concern in the current international environment. It is directly affecting international relations. Parliaments have a crucial role to play in this regard as well as in monitoring problems relating to migration and its root causes.

I should like, in particular, to commend the Chairperson of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for all she has been doing to promote not only migrant rights and migration-related issues, but also human rights in general as well as the rights of victims of armed conflict, especially refugees. Her endeavor, which is in line with international efforts, also reflects the struggle of a woman who has contributed, since an early age, to the political and democratic transition from which her country, Mexico, has benefited.

**Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The question of migration is a matter of making a cultural choice in this early part of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the question of migration has human, cultural, moral, political, social, economic, even existential, implications. This is an issue which can be summed up in the following questions: What kind of civilization does the international community want to build? What civilization does the nation state want to build in the post-industrial, post-technological and post-globalization era? What international relations do we

want? What course of action do we take: that of openness, interaction and freedom of movement, or that of introversion, reclusiveness and narrow nationalism?

Today, anti-immigration rhetoric and policies are seeking to recast the culture of coexistence, liberal values and openness, which underpins modern democracies through its founding principles and rights-based tenets. Against that backdrop, it is the international community and the conscience of the world that are being tested in terms of commitment to human rights principles as well as the ability to accept the other and integrate him or her, and to uphold solidarity in times of crisis. In fact, it is our humanity which is being tested today through the question of migration.

Fortunately, the general trend concerning this particular issue is one of liberal thinking and openness, reflecting a collective awareness of the benefits of migration. This is evidenced by the resolve of the international community to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as by today's conference, which is an illustration of people's will in favor of freedom of movement throughout the world.

**Distinguished Speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We may differ in our approach to migration and how it should be managed, but we probably agree that the globalization of migration and the intensity of the challenges it poses today put this question at the heart of public policy-making. The way we see and manage migration largely reflects how each one of us perceives the future of the world and how we see others.

There has always been a close connection between migration and economic, political and social conditions. As such, migration is a historical phenomenon. Today, that phenomenon has to do with geopolitical and geostrategic considerations which both shape migration and are affected by it. To a large extent, migration is influenced by economic conditions and severe climate disruptions. Therefore, this is not a temporary, short-lived episode but a structural phenomenon that is part and parcel of the contemporary world order. It is a phenomenon that is likely to continue into the future, even expand or worsen if its root causes are allowed to deteriorate.

Demographic shifts and factors are influencing migration trends today and affect global geopolitical balances. In fact, over the next 30 years, the world is likely to witness a full-fledged demographic paradigm shift (not to say 'shock') with deep implications in terms

of the scope, impact and outcome of migration. One such development will be the emergence of Africa - together with Asia - as a tremendous demographic force, and, in contrast, the countries of the North will face a demographic decline. This means needs will be greater but not impossible to meet. All factors point to the following: With its vast potential and resources, Africa is the continent of the future – it is the emerging continent. The international community certainly needs to do justice to Africa. Our continent also needs climate justice, strategic investment and mutually beneficial partnerships. No continent has ever emerged without the help of international development plans.

Throughout history, migration has contributed to building civilizations and to the promotion of development, progress and mutually enriching cultural interaction. Migration is also a tool for cross-fertilization and for building bridges between human communities. To be sure, migration provides today - and will continue to do so in the future - valuable opportunities and avenues for shared prosperity when it is orderly and properly regulated. Migrants are not a burden on host communities as suggested by the proponents of inward-looking discourses. Migrants are not just workhands, they bring scientific, technical and sporting skills to host countries and contribute to the development and vibrancy of host communities. They are also important contributors to the development of the countries of origin. History teaches us that great civilizations, great powers, even nations, were forged through migration and human interaction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a landmark global event. It paves the way for the advent of an important phase in international relations, almost comparable in significance to the adoption of the United Nations Charter in the aftermath of the Second World War and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (whose 70th anniversary we shall celebrate in three days' time) and of subsequent international covenants. One of the advantages of the Global Compact on Migration is that it stipulates, in its preamble, that the Compact is based on all related international conventions and purposes. It refers to these instruments and includes them in its provisions in much the same way it refers to upcoming generations, to the concerns of the international community and to human rights, especially the right to a healthy environment and the need to address the causes and the effects of climate disruptions. As such, it is a comprehensive, forward-looking mechanism that can be seen as a signature UN achievement for the third millennium. The

Compact is the culmination of a long, arduous process of reflection, debate, negotiation and consultation under the auspices of the United Nations. Though a non-binding document, the Compact has intrinsic political, cultural, pedagogical and symbolic value. It is essential, in this regard, to underscore the important contribution made by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including the Declaration on strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees, adopted in March 2018, and the resolution adopted in October of the same year on strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on migration and migration governance towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The Compact builds on a number of achievements and is a culmination of several international mechanisms on migration and asylum-seeking. It provides for monitoring mechanisms and sets clear objectives. We cannot but support and applaud such a compact.

Needless to say, the adoption of the Compact by our governments means our parliaments will face a major test as well as massive responsibilities.

National parliaments and multilateral parliamentary organizations have a major responsibility to shoulder in terms of advocacy for migration; the most important objectives in this regard include the need to achieve development in the countries of origin, address the consequences of climate disruptions, consolidate institutional democracy, enhance social cohesion and reduce social and regional disparities.

Parliaments also have a great responsibility - both today and in the future - to make sure the provisions of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which will be adopted by governments in Marrakesh, are implemented, particularly the achievement of the Compact's 23 Objectives. The latter are the central element of the Compact: they concern the causes and drivers of migration, the rights of migrants and the policies that can make migration productive and useful.

To fulfil this task, legislative institutions' work will inevitably include legislation, oversight of government action, assessment and monitoring of public policies and an evaluation of the impact of national migration policies not only on migrants' conditions, but also on the perceptions of governments, organizations and groups concerning migration. With that in mind, and as representatives of the people, we are expected to play an educational role in terms of fostering a new culture regarding migration and migrants. We also need to face up to introverted, racist trends and discourses, in which migration is exploited for political and electoral gains, or for scaremongering purposes in order to fan the flames of xenophobia and

ramp up support for legislation that curbs the free movement of people, especially in an environment characterized by risks of terrorist, extremist acts. Sadly, a link is sometimes established between the latter, on the one hand, and migration and migrants, on the other, either out of ignorance of other cultures, or deliberately to incite public opinion against migration.

No doubt that betting on stricter legislation, border closure or even the erection of walls to halt the flow of refugees can only clash with facts on the ground because what is involved here are social dynamics that are inherent to human activity. Such a situation has root causes that governments, parliaments, civic, political and economic institutions, public and private bodies and multilateral organizations ought to address. Migrants who travel long distances and risk their lives at sea do so either because they need a job that preserves their dignity or are in search for safety and security that are lacking in their country of origin due to war, chronic conflicts, failing state authority or food security issues. Natural disasters which are often caused by climate disruptions also lead to the loss of people's livelihoods.

We are called upon, first and foremost, to facilitate development in the countries of origin through the investment of largely available capital, the transfer of technology as well as support for education and training to provide jobs, especially for young people searching for work and dignity. Thanks to information technology, young people can see for themselves - at times with resentment - the wealth and prosperity enjoyed by other communities.

We are also expected to prevent or settle conflicts through peaceful means, relying on multilateral diplomacy which allows for a variety of inputs in a multipolar world hopefully governed by an equitable international order that embraces diversity and preserves different interests. Building on such diplomatic endeavors, we should advocate new, sustainable and fundamental solutions to global dilemmas in this 21st century, far from temporary or transient solutions. Indeed, efforts should be made to address the root causes of problems, propose sustainable, structural solutions and make sure they are implemented.

It is our duty to ensure everyone respects the environment and to make sure the international community's pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are honored. This is especially the case with regard to the commitments made at the Paris Conference on Climate Change (COP21), the Conference of the Parties held in Marrakech (COP22) and the Bonn Conference (COP23) concerning support for the Green Fund, the achievement of energy transition and the promotion of investment in the green economy. Our credibility - all of us - would certainly be on the line if the commitments made were not honored.

Events in a number of regions around the world point to a nexus between climate change and security challenges. The latter grow into regional and global threats, as warned by a meeting of the Security Council held on 11 July 2018, which focused on the relationship between the preservation of global peace and security on one hand, and the effect of climate change, on the other.

Should we manage, together, to accomplish these tasks, we would have addressed a significant part of the root causes of the problem, alleviated tragedies relating to migration and given large segments of the population reasons to remain in their home countries, knowing that many migrants are asking for just that.

Distinguished Speakers,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

True to its characteristic hospitality, and as it welcomes members of the international community representing governments, parliaments and international organizations to address migration issues - here in Rabat today and later in Marrakech - Morocco will continue to advocate for and defend a new approach to migration reconciling, as His Majesty King Mohammed VI indicated, facts on the ground and tolerance, thereby making reason prevail over fear.

Mention should be made, in this regard, of the new migration policy adopted by Morocco since 2013. This realistic, humane policy, has made it possible to regularize the status of more than 50,000 male and female migrants, mostly from sister African countries, enabling them to enjoy their social and economic rights in full. This is in addition to thousands of Africans who entered the country legally, either as students or private sector wage-earners working alongside their Moroccan brothers and sisters. This is what this proactive, integration-oriented policy is all about.

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issue of migration entails real challenges. The latter can be met provided there is political will, provided the policy of openness is allowed to prevail over that of introversion, provided also that the logic of acceptance and integration trumps that of rejection – that coexistence beats narrow national considerations.

Allow me to ask the question once again: Is it not a fact that the discourse based on introversion and reclusiveness - which is flourishing in some quarters - is in contradiction with the reality of globalization, global free trade and free markets? The free movement of goods and services has no meaning - and can potentially be undermined - if it is not accompanied, in parallel, by the free movement of people. Just like you, I am wondering: What are we going to bequeath to future generations: a tolerant world based on solidarity, co-existence and diversity, or a world of tension and ever yawning gaps? In all of this, it is the conscience of humanity which is being tested. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to the root causes of problems; let us implement radical solutions instead of tackling human issues - for which we all bear responsibility - with temporary solutions. Your presence today, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and for which I am grateful, reflects our collective mobilization to achieve this goal and address migration from a comprehensive perspective.

Once again, welcome to you all.

Thank you for your kind attention.