

November, 6th 2006

Full text of Royal speech on Green March Day

Here follows the full text of the royal speech:

Praise be to God

Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

My loyal subjects,

This 31st anniversary of the glorious Green March is being celebrated in a spirit of deep gratitude, loyalty and commitment.

Indeed, we are grateful to the architect of the Green March, my revered father, His Majesty King Hassan II, may he rest in peace, as well as to the participants in the Green March and to the entire Moroccan people, for the enormous sacrifices made in connection with this epic event, which enabled our country to recover its southern provinces.

We have been loyal to the principles underlying the Green March, constantly mindful of the symbiosis between the Throne and the people, the nation's unanimous stand in favour of unity, as well as the people's mobilization and enlightened attachment to the values of peace and dialogue.

Ever since my accession to the Throne, I have been steadfastly committed to upholding these principles when dealing with all major national issues. To this end, the democratic policy we have adopted seeks to get all stakeholders and actors concerned involved in dialogue and consultations, in order to ensure that the crucial decisions we make emanate from the grass-root level, in a down-top approach.

This is the key principle upon which we based our initiative to grant extensive autonomy to our southern provinces, within the framework of the Kingdom's sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity. In this respect, and as far as consultations are concerned, much headway has been made, both locally and nationwide.

I should like, in this regard, to praise political parties, once again, for their sense of responsibility, their positive response and the constructive proposals they have submitted to me.

I also wish to commend the chairman and the members of the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs for their dedicated efforts, and for the sincere patriotism they have shown, both when defending the Moroccanness of the Sahara, and in the preparation of a document, to be presented to me in a few weeks' time, on how they see autonomy.

Consultations on autonomy will thus be completed on as broad a basis as possible, both locally and nationally, in order to develop Morocco's proposal, which should reflect the guiding principles of our domestic and foreign policy at the following three main levels.

At national level, we shall continue to consolidate our country's democratic edifice through advanced regionalization, especially as the latter is the cornerstone of the modern state we seek to strengthen.

At Maghreb and regional levels, we are showing our strong commitment, through this approach, to the unity of the Arab Maghreb and our determination to spare the region, the Sahel as well as the North and South Mediterranean the dire consequences of balkanization and instability that might result from the creation of a phantom entity. Indeed, the region could sink into a quagmire and become a breeding ground for terrorist groups, as well as for smuggling and human and weapons trafficking. These are the perils Morocco seeks to ward off by suggesting the autonomy solution, as a democratic approach.

At international level, Morocco remains strongly committed, through this policy, to cooperating sincerely with the United Nations, the Secretary-General and his personal representative, in efforts to find a consensual political solution, to which all the parties concerned by this dispute would adhere wholeheartedly.

This requires stronger mobilization and resolve to foil the schemes and plots of the enemies of our country's territorial integrity. We can achieve this by working harder for a better understanding of our legitimate rights and rightful stance, which is supported by the influential powers, as well as by a growing number of friendly countries, precisely because of the justness of our cause. Concurrently, Morocco will pursue its tireless action to achieve comprehensive development in those beloved provinces.

In this connection, I call on all the actors involved - public authorities, elected officials, the private sector, the Agency for the Development of the Southern Provinces, as well as the inhabitants of this much-loved region - to pool their efforts, and focus both on programs that have a direct bearing upon the living conditions of my loyal subjects in the Sahara, as well as on major structural projects. I ask them to ensure these programs fit in with the projects planned under the National Initiative for Human Development, for which our southern provinces are a top priority.

My loyal subjects,

I have been keen to enhance the approach based on democracy and development in our endeavours to consolidate the country's territorial integrity. The same approach has, in fact, been adopted when addressing all major national issues. This means we have used the same inclusive, consultative approach based on the active involvement of the relevant players in the search for the most suitable solutions.

For this reason, and given my keen interest in all matters pertaining to the Moroccan community abroad, it has been decided to adopt a new, two-dimensional immigration policy.

Through this policy's external dimension, we seek to defend the rights of the members of our expatriate community in their countries of residence, and to make sure our fellow citizens can exercise their rights without discrimination. Bilateral agreements are signed to this effect, especially with European countries.

Just as I commend the members of the Moroccan community abroad for abiding by the laws and regulations of host countries, I am keen to ensure they preserve their distinctive cultural and religious identity, which is based on tolerance, respect for others and moderation as advocated by Islam.

As for the internal dimension of this policy, it involves the adoption of a new, more equitable policy with regard to the members of the Moroccan community abroad - who are the object of my special care and affection - in recognition for the key role they play in the country's development, modernization, cultural influence, social harmony and democratic advancement.

With this in mind, I have sought to make sure the members of the Moroccan community abroad are able to exercise their citizenship rights fully, through greater participation in all aspects of national life.

I am, indeed, proud of the Moroccan expatriate community's reaction to my initiative. To fulfil their aspirations for a more active participation, I have decided we should adopt a similar gradual, democratic approach. Now that Moroccans who live abroad enjoy the right to vote and stand for election in their home country, we should build on this democratic achievement and set up the higher council for the Moroccan community abroad.

I have decided, in this respect, to ask the Advisory Council for Human Rights - in its capacity as an independent, broad-based national institution with a mandate, inter alia, to defend the interests of Moroccans abroad - to initiate extensive consultations with the parties concerned in order to seek their opinion on the setting up of the new council, taking into account the need to make sure this institution is competent, representative, credible and efficient.

In light of the recommendations to be submitted to me, a Sherifian Dahir setting up the higher council for the Moroccan community abroad will be promulgated and, by the grace of the Almighty, the council will then be installed in 2007.

I am keen to ensure this council serves as an effective institution that enables our expatriate community to contribute to Morocco's current development efforts in all fields. Indeed, Moroccans living abroad have shown deep attachment to their identity as well as strong commitment to their country's progress. They have also been defending Morocco's unity and taking an active part in promoting democracy and development in their homeland, within the framework of the resolute action I am undertaking for the well-being of all the sons of this blessed nation, at home as well as abroad.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.