

PANORAMA OF MOROCCO IN THE WORLD

The Kingdom's International Relations

Updated Version of December 2019

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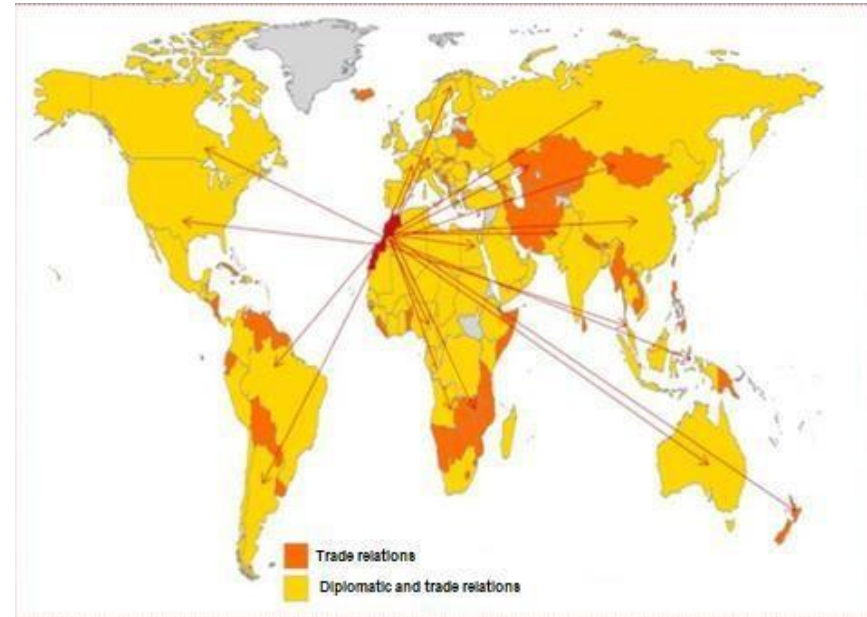
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FOREWORD

In 2015, the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES) has launched a new series of strategic reports: **Panoramas of Morocco in the world**. A common feature of these annual strategic reports is that they describe a given situation in its general context (the *Big picture*): a broad perspective.

The first report in this series examined the major transitions underway at the global level and their impacts on Morocco, in terms of risks to be avoided, opportunities to be seized and disruptions to be anticipated. The second Panorama was devoted to the Kingdom's International Relations (2016). The third Panorama (2017) addressed the crucial issues of climate change and the ecological footprint. The fourth Panorama (2018) focused on the autonomous development of Africa.

Figure 1: Morocco's international relations
(May 2, 2019)



FOREWORD (2)

This strategic report is an update of 2016 Panorama. IRES has dedicated this report to the **Kingdom's international relations**, starting from the Directions contained in the Royal Message of August 30, 2013, calling on the Institute to devote its efforts to Morocco's external relations and the diplomatic field.

This **Panorama** highlights the foundations of the Kingdom's foreign policy, as they stem from the Vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. It explores Morocco's relations with its neighbours and devotes three chapters to the Kingdom's areas of affiliation, one chapter to relations with America and one to relations with Asia.

The strategic report refers mainly to the conclusions of the studies carried out by IRES on Morocco's external relations, which have given priority in recent years to the African continent. The report has been enriched by the proposals made during the meetings organized by the Institute.

Mohammed Tawfik MOULINE
Director General of IRES

INTRODUCTION

Morocco is a crossroads for several civilizations. Inhabited since prehistoric times by the Amazigh, it has experienced, to varying degrees, the influence of Phoenician, Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine and Arab civilizations, which enabled **Morocco to build a plural cultural identity.**

From the 8th to the 15th century, **Morocco has been a place of great importance in the history of mankind**, interacting with Al Andalus, a land of peaceful coexistence between the peoples of the three monotheistic religions. This period was characterized by the works of great thinkers and scholars, including Al-Bakri, Sharif Al Idrisi, Moses Maimonides, Ibn Rochd – Averroes -, Ibn Khaldun and Hassan al-Wazzan - Leon the African -.

Morocco's openness to the world has also been marked by the travels abroad of illustrious explorers, such as Ibn Battuta. It has been consolidated with the establishment of close cooperation links with great powers such as England, a country with which Morocco has eight centuries of diplomatic relations.

From the 15th century, however, due to the end of the Muslim era in Andalusia in the north and the presence of the Ottoman Empire in the east, **Morocco has given priority, from the sixteenth century, to its openness to Africa**, turning its back to the rest of the world.

INTRODUCTION (2)

It was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that Morocco opened up to the world again, with the construction of a new port in Essaouira and the restoration of other ports on the Atlantic coast, including the port of Casablanca. In addition, **Morocco was the first country in the world to recognize the independence of the United States in 1777** and established **trade relations with Russia in 1778**.

From the nineteenth century, Moroccans settled in Africa and Europe. **Ties were forged with the new Republics of South America** thanks, in particular, to **Moroccans of Jewish faith**.

INTRODUCTION (3)

Since the twentieth century, Morocco has continued to open up to the outside world and has made a vital strategic choice, building on the assets available to the Kingdom, including in particular:

- its geographical position, at the crossroads of the European and African continents, with a projection on the Arab world, placing Morocco at the centre of the preoccupations of the great powers (security in the Strait of Gibraltar, political stability in the southern Mediterranean, the fight against terrorism and organized crime in the Sahel...),
- an international behaviour, based on political and religious moderation, which allowed the Kingdom to play a role as a privileged mediator and a bridge between the Muslim world and the West,
- acute sensitivity to global issues (human development, global security, climate change, defence of a fair and just international order...),
- judicious choices, based on the development of promising sectors, contributing to the emergence of a modern Morocco which remains, nevertheless, attached to its values and its age-old traditions.

INTRODUCTION (4)

The pattern of cooperation and partnership relations developed by the Kingdom places it, today, at the heart of major international stakes. It requires Morocco to constantly re-adapt the tools for deploying its foreign policy to the accelerated changes at the regional and global levels.

Being at the same time Mediterranean, Arab-Muslim and African, Morocco is perfectly at ease in its different areas of affiliation and claims this plurality.

As a soft power advocate, Morocco intends to use the cultural component as one of the key drivers of its alliance and partnership strategy.

The emergence of a new global geopolitical landscape, consecrating the pre-eminence of integrated spaces, brings the Kingdom of Morocco to question the means to consolidate its areas of belonging.

CONCLUSION

Morocco's foreign policy choices are characterized by their relevance. In order to make this policy proactive and in tune with tomorrow's world, a few proposals are made with respect to the Kingdom's international relations and its diplomacy.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Partnership policy

- Consolidate the partnerships already established by Morocco and contribute to their diversification in order to adapt the pattern of the Kingdom's alliances to the new global geostrategic realities.
- Broaden the scope of bilateral cooperation to geographical areas of common interest and embed relations with partner countries in a globalized world, taking into account the challenges of competitiveness, sustainable development, security and migration.
- Make South-South cooperation a driver for the deployment of the Kingdom's foreign policy and give precedence to triangular cooperation approaches involving Morocco and partner countries on the one hand, and Africa and Europe on the other.

Immediate neighbourhood

- Restore the collective memory, rewrite the common history with neighbouring countries, especially Spain, and anticipate possible tensions, by setting up permanent consultation and coordination mechanisms.
- Promote cooperation between economic operators in order to broaden the scope of economic interests and release cooperation relations from the ambivalence of the political agenda.

CONCLUSION (2)

Aeras of belonging

- Continue to play an important role in political mediation and in the peace and security process in the Arab world.
- Take advantage of Morocco's relations with West Africa to strengthen the Kingdom's position in the strategic agenda of the major powers.
- Extend cooperation in Africa beyond French- and Arabic-speaking countries to English- and Portuguese-speaking countries and make Southern and East Africa one of the priorities of Moroccan foreign policy.
- Consolidate the Kingdom's return to the African Union by becoming more involved in the various organs and structures of this organisation, particularly within the ongoing institutional reform process.
- Advocate a vision of Euro-Mediterranean partnership that is part of a civilizational project in which human, cultural and institutional aspects are also integrated.
- Make the Euro-Moroccan partnership of shared prosperity a reality.

Openness to the world

- Make the South Atlantic a common area of cooperation, through the creation of a platform for dialogue and consultation and bring together the States bordering the Atlantic in Africa and South America.
- Use intangible capital as a lever to reduce the asymmetry in Morocco's relations with developed countries, particularly those in North America.

CONCLUSION (3)

- Improve Morocco's positioning in South America, by targeting countries whose position with regard to the artificial conflict in the Sahara is shaky and undecided, in a definitive manner and by using the privileged relations with the sub-continent's leading countries as a gateway to the South American regional economic communities.
- Build a dynamic and sustainable economic partnership with Asia, by encouraging the investment of large Asian firms in Morocco and by developing cooperation between the Moroccan and Asian banking sector, especially in Africa.

DIPLOMACY

Political component

- Take an active role in rebalancing forces, on a regional scale, by taking advantage of Morocco's Advanced Status with the European Union and the Kingdom's links with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Economic component

- Reinvigorate economic diplomacy and renovate the instruments of economic promotion of the Kingdom with the aim of rebalancing trade relations between Morocco and the partner countries, reinforcing the attractiveness of foreign direct investment and encouraging the internal diversification of Moroccan companies.

CONCLUSION (4)

Cultural component

- Give the cultural dimension the importance it deserves at the level of the Kingdom's diplomatic action, on an equal footing with the political and economic dimension.
- Lay the foundations for a lasting and balanced cultural relationship with countries with which cultural affinities exist or which host a large Moroccan community.

Security component

- Intensify security cooperation to curb the threat of terrorism and crime.
- Integrate the fight against terrorism and violent extremism into a comprehensive vision, based on a doctrine to counter the radical discourse of extremist movements, in particular towards youth and pursue the multidimensional approach to preventing the terrorist threat.
- Provide Morocco with a cyberspace diplomacy.

Environmental component

- Consolidate the achievements of the COP22 conference and put Morocco at the heart of the challenges of a new climate governance.
- Strengthen the means of action of climate diplomacy and direct it towards the defence of the Kingdom's interests, namely adaptation to climate change.

CONCLUSION (5)

Parallel diplomacy

- Encourage the involvement of civil society in the effort to promote the image of the Kingdom internationally and enable it to make its contribution, particularly with regard to the national issue of territorial integrity.
- Involve Moroccans living abroad and encourage them to act as a real transmission belt between Moroccan and foreign civil societies.

Intellectual diplomacy

- Develop close cooperation between Moroccan and foreign think tanks, particularly those operating in the field of international relations and security.
- Develop prospective watch and promote Morocco's capacities in strategic thinking of international standard.
- Promote scientific and technical cooperation, by encouraging collaboration between Moroccan and foreign universities.

Communication component

- Provide the Kingdom with an active communication strategy on the image of Morocco which is differentiated according to the continents, in order to publicize the progress made in different fields, to fight stereotypes and negative prejudices and to increase the country's visibility abroad.
- Implement an appropriate "Morocco Brand", by associating the public authorities as well as the economic operators and the media, and use it as an instrument at the service of the Kingdom's influence abroad.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALECA – DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
BM – WB	World Bank
CCNUCC – UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ERASMUS	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
FMI – IMF	International Monetary Fund
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GIEC – IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IDE – FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
IGM – WGI	World Governance Index
IRRHM	Royal Institute for Research on the History of Morocco
MAEC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
MDM	Marocains living abroad
OCDE – OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCP	Office Chérifien des Phosphates
OMC – WTO	World Trade Organization
ONG – NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

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