

المملكة المغربية

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Institut Royal des Etudes Stratégiques
Royal Institute for Strategic Studies

STRATEGIC REPORT 2017

MOROCCO IN THE WORLD: A PANORAMA

GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR THE BIOSPHERE

presentation



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July 30, 2016

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D

DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

"... What we need is to develop a comprehensive strategy, based on true partnership, genuine solidarity and an efficient "close proximity" approach. In addition, we should develop norms and standards to curb and contain the dangers resulting from climatic changes and from overexploitation of water, forest and fish resources, as well as the risks arising from the pressure being exerted on ecosystems and biodiversity ..."

Excerpt from the Statement by His Majesty King Mohammed VI at the World Summit on Sustainable development, 2 September 2002

"...The fragile ecosystems of African countries, the vulnerability of their economies and the limited means they can rely on to cope with climate change will inevitably lead to more poverty and less security in many parts of the continent. This is particularly unjust as these countries, which are low greenhouse gas emitters, are among the hardest hit by the effects of climate change. More than ever before, international solidarity, equity and shared responsibility are needed to support these countries as they develop and implement measures to adapt to climate change, for which they will need technical assistance as well as appropriate financial backing ..."

Excerpt from the Message addressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the participants in the International Meeting on Climate Change: Challenges and Adjustment Prospects in Morocco, held by The Royal Institute for Strategic Studies, 16 October 2009

D OCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

"...Climate change is one of the major issues facing humanity today since it now represents a real threat not only to the environment, but also to economic and social development and to global security and stability.

... The new system should also be based on the principle of justice as well as on the right of developing countries to respond to their current and future development needs ..."

Excerpt from the Message addressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the participants in the Sixth Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers, 8 October 2015

"... The African continent deserves special attention. The whole of Africa is experiencing an awakening. Africa is discovering itself and is gaining confidence. It is therefore in Africa - the continent of the future - that the planet's future will be decided. In this context, promoting the transfer of technology and raising funds, particularly for the benefit of developing countries, is fundamental. Above all, let us guard against compelling these countries to choose between economic development and the protection of the environment. Developing countries' commitment to combat the effects of climate change must also take into account their respective development models as well as their inhabitants' customs ..."

Excerpt from the Speech delivered by His Majesty King Mohammed VI at the United Nations conference on Climate Change (COP21), 30 November 2015



F OREWORD

In 2015, the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES) launched a new series of strategic annual reports, titled *Morocco in the World: a Panorama*. These reports aim to provide the **bigger picture that helps to better understand systemic issues**.

Moroccan and international public or private decision-makers have thus access to a tool that allows them to fully grasp the major challenges of the 21st century and form a view towards the Kingdom's forward-looking strategic vision.

After a first issue on **major transitions and their impact on Morocco** (2015) followed by a second one on the **International Relations of the Kingdom** (2016), this third Panorama is devoted to the crucial issues of **climate change and the ecological footprint**.

On the eve of COP22, to be held in Marrakech in November 2016, this Panorama is specifically meant to raise awareness on the **global challenges faced by the biosphere**. The case of Morocco is merely presented in this report for illustrative purposes. Though there were significant and advanced accomplishments in the Kingdom, here the global vision prevails on the recognition of Morocco's achievements.

Climate change is perhaps the greatest threat ever posed to the future of humanity.

Yet it is not the first threat that humans face, and their ability to adapt has always enabled them to survive.

However it is the first time that we are witnessing not only rapid change, but also at the same time, a significant degradation of our planet, as a consequence of our excessive ecological footprint. The cumulative effect of these events means that the 21st century will be a crucial time. The very survival of humankind at worst, or its development path at best, may be at stake.

For this reason, this report chooses to focus on some of the key factors that are most often overlooked, and the most operational strategies.

Tawfik MOULINE
Director-General of IRES



|| Source : National World History (<http://nationalityinworldhistory.net/ch3.html>)



I

NTRODUCTION (1)

Humankind has always shaped its own evolution by mastering technologies and nature. Today, it is faced with a formidable obstacle: the growing autonomy of machines on the one hand, and the alteration of its biotope on the other.

This year, in 2016, Morocco will be organising the COP22. IRES wished to contribute to the international debate on climate change by offering a systemic and forward-looking point of view on this great challenge: the transformation of the natural conditions of human beings' living environment.

Several terms can be used to indicate this challenge: ecosystem, biota, ecosphere, biosphere... The concept of "biosphere" was selected for its holistic and interdisciplinary nature and, more importantly, for its scientific rather than political reference.

The **biosphere** refers to all living organisms on planet Earth, from the single cell to multiple biomes (ecoregions).

Based on research conducted by IRES and the contribution of national and international experts who participated in the Institute's study programme on climate change, this report addresses two of the major issues considered to be pivotal for the future of societies: climate change and the excessiveness of the human ecological footprint.

Indeed, over the past two decades, awareness of climate change has grown. It confirmed what had been established by almost a century of observing nature: that the way we manage and exploit natural resources is unsustainable¹.

Indeed, these two phenomena – climate change and depleting natural resources – are now combining to jeopardize the very survival of the human species on this planet.

The conclusion is clear and definitive: **without an active anticipation and adaptation strategy, our days are numbered.**

From prospects

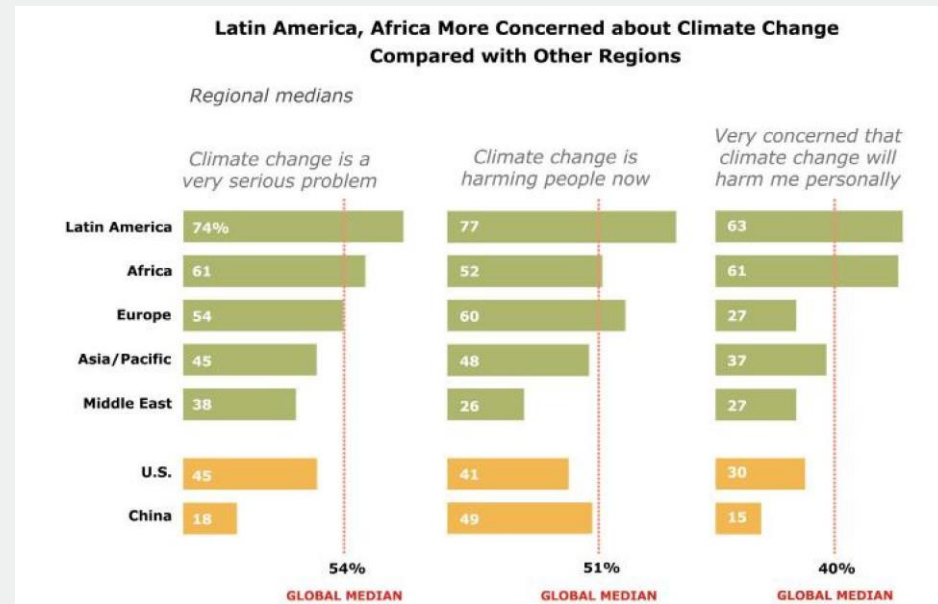
The world is currently going through one of the **great transitions** in human history. During the first transition, humans went from being animals to experimenters (prehistory), in a world dominated by nature. The second occurred when we became builders (architects, engineers, managers, industrialists) who mastered nature.

The third great transition, which we are experiencing today, is one where we move from an agro-industrial world, in which territorial and cultural divides are all-important, to a very digital and globalised world of services. This transition is marked by growing awareness of the limits of the biosphere, and by the need to steer development in a way that is mindful of such limits.

Prospects seem rather grim, due to the **Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity** (VUCA) that distinguish our world today². Crises are multiplying and governments seem helpless.

Some are convinced that it will be difficult to remedy the situation early enough to avoid **collapse** – just as was the case for some pre-Columbian societies³ – either because it is already too late to halt the phenomenon, or because any attempt at remediation – in particular re-engineering the Earth's climate – would be disastrous.

The neologism “collapsology”, which refers to the science of climate collapse, attests to this.



Note : Russia and Ukraine not included in Europe median. Asia-Pacific median includes China.

Source : Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey : Question 32, 41 & 42_Pew Research Center_IRES reprocessing

I

NTRODUCTION (3)

...to hope

Yet people are becoming increasingly aware of these issues and, around the world, new economic models are being invented that are both profitable and concerned with preserving capital for future generations. Such is the purpose of the **positive economy** movement, which refers to an economic growth that restores natural capital which provides resources and services, and an economy based on common interest and the interest of future generations⁴.

The relatively elusive and top-down concept of sustainable development is giving way to more concrete and experimental possibilities. For instance, the **circular economy** aims to create added value by processing waste, which is now considered to be a new commodity. Another example is **socially responsible investment** which promotes “investments that aim to reconcile economic performance and social and environmental impact” (Novethic).

Indeed, well beyond the fight against the multiform degradation of the biosphere, a new world is emerging from thousands of initiatives and millions of people who are getting involved, all around the world, to preserve future generations⁵. This is a formidable opportunity. This is because “the fight against climate change not only requires our societies to shift to an economic model that is more acceptable for the environment, but it also opens the door to radical social transformation, a transformation that could lead us to a better, healthier and fairer world”⁶.



||| Source : Chart of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation adapted by the Institute of circular economy and Chair «business as unusual» of Kedge Business School, 2013 _IRES reprocessing

S STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Climate change and the ecological footprint both constitute a part of this Panorama issue and are addressed in the same manner, according to the following approach:

- ❖ Causes and evolution of the phenomenon.
- ❖ Effects of the phenomenon (situations and consequences), present (2015) and future (2050).
- ❖ Implemented or contemplated strategies

Three geographical standpoints are put forward:

- ❖ The global scale, which provides an accurate picture of the situation in its systemic magnitude.
- ❖ A focus on key regions for Morocco: the Mediterranean eco-region and the African continent.
- ❖ A national approach focused on Morocco.

Climate change related data, in this report, was taken from the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), except where otherwise mentioned. The IPCC's intermediate scenario is chosen here for its high probability of occurrence (**RCP 4.5**).

Lastly, IRES's forward-looking approach highlighted a number of **decisive factors** which generate major uncertainties and risks for the anticipated developments. These are identified throughout the text.

Morocco, at the crossroads of Africa and the Mediterranean



| Part 1

CLIMATE CHANGE

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent grey shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals, arranged in a fan-like pattern on the right side of the slide.

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| Part 3

**TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE
ADAPTATION AND
ANTICIPATION STRATEGY**



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G GENERAL CONCLUSION

The degradation of the Earth's biosphere due to climate change, overexploitation of natural resources and pollution is such today that we must ask the **question regarding conditions for the survival of mankind**.

Two major disruption factors have appeared: the release of methane into the atmosphere and mass extinction risks in the ocean.

Despite growing awareness and the adoption of major global objectives, the implementation of regional and national **measures** is still **too slow** and **ineffective**.

Three reasons best explain this situation:

- the **great complexity of natural systems** which are not yet fully understood;
- the growing gap between humans and nature due to an **increasingly urbanized and technological world**;
- **population growth** and access, by a large segment of the world population, to a lifestyle which is incompatible with the frugality required.

It is therefore time to act and to implement **concerted actions** at the global level (between countries and regions) and at local level (between different levels of governance), laying emphasis on **subsidiarity** to address problems at the most appropriate scale.

Since it is impossible to address all problems at once, **prioritization** is necessary, building on a **systemic vision** of all factors of change (urgent and correlated) and taking into account the **vulnerability** of the populations concerned – be they human, animal or plant. This vision must be clearly and quickly developed.

International awareness of the **urgency of the climate change situation** is a major step towards adopting a mitigation and adaptation policy commensurate with the stakes involved. But focusing on energy and the climate at the expense of all other factors which contribute to the degradation of the biosphere is a risk we must vigorously seek to eliminate.

Restoring the balance of the biosphere will not happen without developing a new mindset, including a radical break with the predatory attitude of humans vis-a-vis the environment. In fact, the entire **relationship with nature** needs to be revisited.

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