

Introductory speech by

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Seminar

“ The Strategic levers for successful advanced regionalization”

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you today to the IRES to contribute in this seminar; a seminar that is dedicated to the topic of "Strategic Levers for successful advanced regionalization.

At the beginning, we should recall the strategic nature of the process of regionalization, in view of the impact it creates in terms of the state architecture reconfiguration and the revision of the rules that govern the relationships between the center and the different components of the national territory. This is indeed a structural reform that concerns the division of powers and responsibilities between institutions and bodies of governance and seeks an equitable distribution of resources between regions, a development of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the adaptation of a regional division of reform objectives.

Apart from some progress in decentralization, the Moroccan experience in regionalization has encountered several obstacles, widely discussed in scientific work. Moreover, the deficit in terms of local development has been identified as a node of the future in the "Outlook 2025" report, as detailed in the fiftieth anniversary report of human Development. To overcome this node of the future and push the border between the possible and impossible, the implementation of a real regionalization policy was recommended, putting an end ultimately to the Multi-speed Morocco.

To move to a higher level in the regionalization process is a strategic breakthrough that will open new prospects for concretizing the Morocco's development project. The main principles behind this project is the establishment of a more egalitarian, open-minded and democratic society which value diversity. The new opportunities arising by an advanced regionalization are as follows:

- Establishing a strengthened democratic practice that meets the need of a new political mediation approach, an approach that is in phase with the changes affecting the Moroccan society and which represents the outcome of a proximity based policy that is appropriate to reweave and strengthen confidence between the centres and regions.
- Tarring the groundwork for a more dynamic economy that generates wealth, based on potential maximization of each region and built around a shared vision by different actors. Also, territories would be, within an advanced regionalization, in better position to take advantage of decentralized cooperation opportunities, provided by the advanced status with the European Union.
- Recognize and value the Moroccan fruitful diversity in the cultural, ethnic and linguistic plan.

Designing a model of regionalization, based on the specificities of Morocco and encompassing all regions, including the Sahara, which will be "... among the first beneficiaries of advanced regionalization". This has been entrusted to the Advisory Commission of Regionalization that kindly present the findings of its report at the seminar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Because of their complexity and transversal, that challenges that are posed by the reform of regionalization can be found in the scientific program of the IRES. Indeed, it is appropriate to recall that:

- Reviewing aspects relative to public policies territorialisation and the coordination of actors in terms of design and reforms implementation is one of the axes of the study named “The reforms in Morocco and their impact on global competitiveness”. This study is developed as part of the program called “Global Competitiveness and the positioning of Morocco in globalization”. Not to mention that the territorial competitiveness is also part of the global competitiveness.
- Issues relating to the process of development of cultural characteristics, while promoting national unity and those relating to inequalities and their impact on the co-existence, all lie at the heart of the themes covered by the program called "Social Bond: what role do the state and main social actors play? ". In this regard, a study was initiated by the IRES on the theme of regional identities.
- The preservation and enhancement of sensitive areas such the oasis and the coastline and the analysis of solidarity imposed by the natural ecosystems unit (solidarity of upstream-downstream watershed) are all discussed in the program called “Climate Change: Impacts on Morocco and global adaptation options”.

Through the organization of this seminar today, the IRES wishes to contribute to the debate on advanced regionalization by encouraging the reflection around three key questions:

- What type of optimal governance should be put into effect to unite all the players around the regional development mission in its economic, social and cultural dimensions?
- What identity project of the Moroccan regions could be considered to balance the development of regional particularism and the unity of the nation-state?
- What contour models of regionalization should be applied in the southern regions, taking into consideration the need for both the smooth integration of these regions in the national whole and the implementation of Morocco's international commitments in terms of southern regions autonomy project?

Those are some points that will guide our debate today. Participation of experts, policymakers and representatives of civil society in this seminar is an opportunity for us to deepen our understanding of relevant aspects related to regionalization reform. I want to thank all participants for accepting our invitation.