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## **UKRAINE AND MOROCCO: COMMON ASPIRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

– *Your Excellency, you have represented the Kingdom of Morocco in Ukraine since 2018. Could you please share your first impressions of Ukraine? Has your opinion changed since then?*

– Having arrived in Ukraine, I had the chance and the pleasure to meet amazing people, discover its charming culture and beautiful way of life. The endlessly beautiful Ukrainian landscapes and the cities' magnificent architecture also fascinated me. Moreover, I am extremely delighted by the unique Ukrainian people's benevolence.

The Kingdom of Morocco and Ukraine share numerous similarities without confining to a firm decision to carve out a distinguished place in the international arena and carry out substantial reforms in order to create a proper environment for a prosperous economy. A succession of civilisations that bequeathed a tremendous cultural diversity, lie in a history of our countries. This heritage deeply rooted in the annals, is illustrated by both Moroccan and Ukrainian ethnic diversity: traditions, clothing, music etc.

– *Nowadays, Morocco is looking for new opportunities to realise its export supply capabilities. Can our country become your reliable partner in this respect? In what spheres of economy are Morocco-Ukraine relations the closest and what are the prospects of deepening economic cooperation between the states?*

– Morocco is aware that bilateral economic relations play a strategic role in the growth and development of economies at the national level. Meanwhile, those relations are beneficial for enhancing bilateral trade and for widening the scope of cooperation.

There is no secret to anyone that commerce is one of the major components of bilateral economic relations. That explains the unanimous will of Morocco and Ukraine in the context of boosting the volumes of trade, thus, both states have to seek the best approaches to fulfil this aspiration. Between 2010 and 2014, the commercial exchanges between the two countries tripled. Moreover, in 2014, Ukraine has become the Moroccan third supplier of grain. There is a notable tendency towards ascending of those markers, especially thanks to the openness of the Moroccan market to the Ukrainian goods.

Besides, Ukraine and Morocco possess considerable potentials that can be beneficial due to their development. The exchange of experience and know-



Спеціальна комісія з розробки нової моделі розвитку Марокко Special Commission on the Development Model of Morocco

how in various fields, enhancement of the cooperation in the sectors of tourism, industry, and services as well as between the private sectors (small and medium-sized enterprises) will come in useful.

Ukraine and Morocco can also focus their efforts on one of the important aspects of bilateral economic relations, which is to increase the Ukrainian direct investment inflow into Morocco and vice versa.

In that purpose, Morocco has implemented several projects and reforms to encourage the foreign companies to focus their activities in the state and take advantage of its strategic location, business environment, the investment incentives provided by the Moroccan government, and the openness and diverse commercial links (Morocco has signed a numerous free trade agreements that covers markets of more than one billion consumers around the world).

The Moroccan legislative environment has also been improved thanks to stimulating private entrepreneurship and promoting investment procedures.

– *In your opinion, what methods of deepening the dialogue at high and the highest level should the countries use given the difficult context of bilateral cooperation during the pandemic?*

– The pandemic of coronavirus has become a part of our daily life and a part of our job as well. Last year, with the beginning of the epidemic, organisations and institutions started working distantly. Working from home and office technology have become a necessity, not a luxury in communication and collaboration.

Therefore, the high-level dialogue should be maintained during new challenges. Of course, the restrictions of both countries should be adhered to and taken into consideration. The cooperation, however, is continued via video calls, available on many platforms. Many events and meetings may be organised online.

– *Ukrainians have only a nodding acquaintance with Moroccan culture. What events does the embassy organise for promoting the Moroccan culture in Ukraine? What formats are usually used and which are transformed due to the quarantine restrictions related to the pandemic?*

– The embassy organised and participated in many events to promote the Moroccan culture in Ukraine before the pandemic: an IWCK Charity Bazaar, the Parade of Nations, the Forum of Tourism to name just a few. The Moroccan culture has been represented by music, dances, food, drinks...

With regard to pandemic and related quarantine restrictions, we have further promoted the Moroccan culture through publication of articles on the official page of the embassy and on different Ukrainian websites.

After the pandemic, the embassy will fully resume its cultural activities.

– *What attracts Ukrainian tourists to Morocco most? Can we talk about alternatives to classical tourism at this challenging juncture for the field?*

– Morocco is an attractive destination for tourists. We can say that this is thanks to one of the stunning features of the country: great geographical diversity, which furthers the Moroccan multiplicity of tourist destinations. Morocco can easily satisfy all touristic inclinations, however numerous.

Morocco has an infinite variety of terrains and territories: mountains, coastline, desert. Every place has its own charm and a uniqueness. A long mountainous strip stretches from east to west, then plunging into the sand of Moroccan Sahara in the south. The landscapes are varied and stunning: breathtaking snow-capped peaks of the High Atlas, the steep Rif Mountains, dense oak and cedar forests of the central plateau, fertile plains, semi-desert steppes and luxurious oases of the bowl of Souss, the Sahara sand dunes. It can hardly be described in words!



Люди верхи на верблюдах у Мерзуги, пустыня Сахара, Марокко

People Riding Camel on Desert Merzouga Sahara desert, Morocco



Шафшаван – місто на північному заході Марокко, відоме будівлями у синіх тонах

Chefchaouen, a city in northwest Morocco. It is noted for its buildings in shades of blue

The visitors enjoy the opportunity to experience such a geographical diversity. They have an opportunity to leave the beautiful Agadir beaches in the morning to meet up at the foot of the Oukaïmeden ski slopes in the afternoon before going down and enjoying an evening in the Marrakech palm grove.

– *Many Moroccan students pursue their higher studies in Ukraine. What attracts enrolling from Morocco to Ukrainian universities? What specialties does the youth of your country consider the most promising? Are there any exchange programs enabling Ukrainians to study in Morocco?*

– We have almost 10,000 Moroccan students who pursue their studies in the Ukrainian universities. Many of them choose medical studies, stomatology, or architecture. Moroccan students are mostly studied in the cities of Kharkiv, Odesa, Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia and Lviv.

There is an absence of any exchange program enabling Ukrainians to study in Morocco.

– *Has the pandemic influenced the embassy's activities and the implementation of various projects? Do you think that the changes caused by the pandemic are to some extent irreversible (including for diplomacy) or that many things will come back to normal after the pandemic is over?*

– Of course, the pandemic has made changes in both the embassy's and other institution's activities. We became more focused on consular services and accompanying our citizens through the difficulties related to administrative processes or the closure of borders.

I think life will come back to normal after the full vaccination of the population. It requires time. Nevertheless, we should stay positive and adapt to every situation.

– *Your Excellency, could you please tell us about your experience of becoming a diplomat. What would you advise students longing to devote their lives to diplomacy? What character traits are the key to success in diplomatic activities?*

– I studied International law and after graduation, I passed an exam to enter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gradually and without skipping any level, I came to this high responsibility.

In my opinion, the required qualities to become a good diplomat are seriousness, competency, honesty, open mindedness, the sense of patriotism and, particularly, awareness that the representation of your state in another country is the greatest of all possible missions.