

## HM the King Sends Message to National Forum on Senior Civil Service

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HM King Mohammed VI sent a message to participants in the National Forum on the Senior Civil Service, which opened on Tuesday in Skhirate (Rabat outskirts) under the theme "the restructuring of the senior civil service".

Here follows the full text of the royal message which was read out by the Sovereign's advisor, Abdelatif Mennouni.

"Praise be to God,

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to take the opportunity of this National Forum on the Senior Civil Service, which coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the promulgation of the general civil service statute, to send you this message, given that, on account of your position of responsibility, you represent the elite that helps manage public affairs.

I made it a point to grant my patronage to this important event because of the key role government services have been playing since independence to serve the country and the citizens and accomplish their mission by contributing to Morocco's economic and social development, despite the difficulties faced and the shortcomings noted from time to time.

I commend you on convening this forum which shows your commitment to give substance to my instructions regarding the reform of government services and the optimal use of human resources.

I also commend your choice of theme, namely the restructuring of the senior civil service. I hope this conference will be an opportunity to pause in order to examine the situation, take stock of changes and imbalances in the civil service system - at all levels - and consider the legislative and regulatory measures which are likely to improve the performance of state institutions and agencies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Government agencies, at both central and local levels, are at a crossroads today. This means civil servants are expected to be actively involved in the country's economic and

social transformation process and support public policies and development projects in the country.

Despite the important achievements made through large-scale projects, especially in the fields of industry, agriculture, infrastructure, renewable energy etc., the development model we laid down has reached its limit. It can no longer contribute to comprehensive development or satisfy citizens' expectations due to a number of difficulties, including under performance by civil service institutions and a lack of efficiency, innovation and good governance.

Just as I advocated a new development model to rise to current and future challenges, I am calling today for the concept of public service to be put at the heart of this model, through a thorough and profound reform of the civil service.

When I talk about the civil service - sometimes in harsh terms - and criticize its performance and low efficiency, it does not mean it is not accomplishing its mission, or that I am casting doubt on the competence of its human resources or the efforts it is making to perform more efficiently. In fact, I am aware of the remarkable development public service has witnessed over the years as well as the major projects to which it has contributed.

What I want, in fact, is for the civil service to perform more efficiently, to be in step with the changes the country is witnessing, to adjust to global developments and to contribute to efforts to rise to the development challenges facing our country.

For this reason, I have been insisting on the need for the civil service to upgrade its performance and for the competence of its human resources to be improved. This is a strategic choice that will unquestionably help lay the foundations for the development model to which we are aspiring, in addition to making the civil service an effective tool for the promotion of public policies in various sectors.

Soon after my accession to the throne of my glorious ancestors, I defined a new concept of authority, which I consider to be a gateway to improving the performance of government agencies and to consolidating their commitment to the principles of good governance. The aim is to meet the citizens' growing needs, promote social justice and guarantee a dignified life for all.

I was also keen to enshrine good governance in the Constitution. Indeed, I view good governance as an indispensable ingredient for the organization and management of the civil service since it involves the principles of merit, integrity, transparency and equal opportunity among all Moroccans. I also sought to give substance to the constitutional principle of linking public office with accountability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The mission and main function of the civil service, as defined by the Constitution, is to serve the citizens and uphold the principles of equality and fairness throughout the country, while ensuring the continuity of public service.

By law, public institutions fall within the jurisdiction of the ministers supervising them, since the civil service is placed at the disposal of the government. However, the Constitution stipulates that civil servants must comply with the requirements of quality, transparency, responsibility and accountability in order to be close to citizens, listen to their demands and meet their legitimate needs.

In this regard, I call for the promulgation of the civil service charter provided for in the Constitution to be speeded up and for that charter to be given a mandatory character. This will make it a key reference document for good governance as far as the management of government agencies, local governments and public bodies is concerned.

I also want that charter to clearly and unequivocally reflect my new concept of authority, which covers all civil categories and levels, without exception.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The efficient management of the means and resources needed to achieve comprehensive development puts the issue of the efficiency of the civil service and of state institutions in sharp focus, thereby underscoring the need to review their work methods and modes for the management of public funds in order to achieve optimal use of the resources available.

I am sure you realize that the issue of efficiency is closely linked to that of competitiveness. The merit and effectiveness of the civil service today are measured by the extent to which they contribute to enhancing a country's competitive edge and enabling it to engage in cutthroat competition for investment, expertise and capital, given the prospects these assets open up for economic and social development as well as job creation, especially for young people.

The comprehensive, integrated reform of the civil service is an urgent matter, given the challenges that need to be tackled to ensure the continuity and quality of public service. Attention must also be paid to the regional dimension, to devolution and to the sound, efficient management of human resources.

Advanced regionalization, which is viewed as an effective, practical approach to local governance, is the foundation on which the civil service should be based so as to bring

public services, public institutions and decision-making centers closer to the citizens. The optimal implementation of this fundamental project cannot be achieved unless all interested stakeholders are actively involved in it, especially the civil service, at both central and local levels.

The civil service must have competent staff in all professional categories. We should therefore tackle the challenge of ensuring continuous personnel and senior staff training. Actual needs and the credentials required should be taken into account during the recruitment process, and the requirements of competence, merit and equal opportunity should be strictly complied with. It is also necessary to ensure suitable working conditions and facilities in order to increase productivity, not to mention the need to provide incentives and apply disciplinary measures.

We also need to train new generations of senior civil servants to serve in various public departments and agencies. We must also attract highly qualified professionals, making sure they have a keen sense of responsibility as well as the skills needed for effective communication, strategic planning and project management. All of the above are key requirements which must be met when filling senior positions.

Such a large-scale reform project requires an overhaul of the regulations concerned, improved management methods, the raising of moral standards in the civil service and the development of the legal framework. Inspiration should also be drawn from the private sector management model and the best international practices in the field.

Using modern technology is crucial to improving public service performance. We should seek to ensure general access to digitized public services and provide for remote service delivery as well as joint access to information by various sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the attempts and efforts made to promote reform and modernization, the Moroccan civil service will achieve the desired level of efficiency and productivity only if there is a change in mentality and a break with shameful behavior and practices that are detrimental to government agencies and employees alike, such as bribery, corruption, abuse of power or neglect of one's duties.

To achieve the above objectives, we must simplify civil service legislation and strictly apply the regulations governing administrative posts and public institutions, making sure those holding public office can be held to account, where necessary.

The success of the reform we want hinges on collective will as much as on the ability to overcome the impediments and obstacles hindering our civil service and development

model. Particularly worthy of note is the persistence of certain practices which resist change and reform because of the fear of losing privilege, and also because some officials lack competence and audacity, making them reluctant to initiate reforms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You know how keen I am to make sure the civil service carries out its mission by serving citizens and making an effective, constructive contribution to development. However, reforming the civil service and reexamining public service delivery do not concern just public sector institutions. This endeavor also calls for the best ways to involve the private sector in the proposed reform to be identified, making sure we strike a balance between administrative and development considerations, for the benefit of the country.

I hope this National Forum on the Senior Civil Service will be a precious opportunity to reflect on the principles of new public governance and to come up with innovative ideas to ensure its efficiency. Such a governance system should be rooted in a result-oriented, contract-based culture centered on objectives and efficiency. The principles underpinning public service - namely public interest, integrity, regional and sectoral equity and social cohesion - must be taken into account.

I hope your Forum will avail this opportunity to come up with concrete, practical and applicable recommendations and decisions and chart pathways for reform, thereby signaling the actual launching of a gradual transition from a civil service model based on career management to a new competence-centered management model. The aim is to build an effective administrative model that would not only be compatible with the characteristics of the desired development model, but that would also help meet current and future needs.

I commend you on your efforts and pray that Almighty God grants you every success.

Thank you.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh."