

HM the King's Message on Commemoration of 70th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(Full Text)

Here follows the full text of the royal message read out by HM the King's advisor Abdeltif Menouni, during a meeting organized, on Thursday in Rabat, at the initiative of the state ministry for human rights and the national council for human rights:

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This December, the International Community is commemorating the 70th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was a milestone in the history of humankind.

A founding charter drawn up by fervent advocates of human values, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains, 70 years after its adoption, a universal canon and a timeless yardstick for all peoples yearning for more freedom, dignity and solidarity under the rule of law.

I applaud the commemoration of this symbolic date, decided at the behest of the Ministry of State for Human Rights and the National Human Rights Council.

This commemoration is taking place just after the appointment of the new President of the National Human Rights Council and of the new Inter-ministerial Delegate for Human Rights. A new stage in the renewal and adjustment of these institutions and in the consolidation of their achievements and means of action has thus been initiated.

In this regard, I call on all bodies and institutions concerned to keep up their efforts in order to play their role in protecting and promoting all types of human rights, both as a culture and as concrete action on the ground, making sure there is commitment to civic values and to a sense of responsibility – a commitment which implies that the enjoyment of rights and freedoms goes hand in hand with the honoring of obligations.

In particular, I urge the Ministerial Delegate, as part of his mandate, to attach special importance to enhancing protection in the area of human rights.

It is gratifying to note that commemorative meetings and events organized by advocates of human rights and supporters of women's rights, children's rights and sustainable development are taking place throughout the Kingdom. These initiatives clearly reflect Morocco's resolute commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

This 70th anniversary is particularly important. It comes at a time when humanity is facing challenges of global magnitude and unprecedented scope. In addition to the inequality issue, there is increasing discrimination. The 'clash of ignorances' continues to engender intolerance, extremism

and radicalism, just as climate change and migration flows pose new challenges in terms of economic, social and cultural rights.

The celebration of the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an opportunity to take stock of the progress made during the last decade and to gauge the challenges facing us as well as the ground still to be covered.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our national commitment to human rights is not just enshrined in our Constitution, it is a determinant of our political, economic and social agenda.

First of all, the 2011 Constitution, which was drawn up using a participatory and inclusive approach, includes a real charter of basic rights and freedoms, itself based on the universal frame of reference for human rights. It guarantees the judiciary full independence and sets up a system of pluralistic and independent bodies for the protection of rights and freedoms and for the promotion of participatory democracy, human rights and good governance.

I am keen to make sure Morocco consolidates its achievements and keeps moving forward. In this respect, the Kingdom is putting the finishing touches to a national action plan for democracy and human rights. It includes a large number of measures aimed at consolidating democracy and strengthening respect for human rights in all areas.

In parallel, our country has continued to interact positively and energetically with the international human rights system, in particular the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Morocco has ratified the nine Core International Human Rights Instruments. It regularly submits reports to the supervisory bodies provided for by the above-mentioned treaties, reacting constructively to the recommendations put forth by these bodies.

Moreover, rapporteurs of many United Nations human rights mechanisms and special procedures have been able to visit Morocco in recent years, to everyone's satisfaction.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Morocco, together with other Member States of the United Nations, was actively involved in the preparation and adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

As regards Moroccan civil society, it has constantly been developing and diversifying. It works on a daily basis to protect rights and promote civic values.

I wish to pay tribute to our civil society for its contribution. Its active participation in the good governance institutions provided for in the Constitution, as well as in participatory democracy councils set up by the state and local authorities, brings added value and attests to a commitment to dialogue.

In thirty years or so, the status of national human rights institutions has been steadily enhanced and their contribution reinforced, both domestically and within the United Nations system.

The countries of the South are becoming increasingly engaged in human rights in the international arena, and civil society groups have become indispensable partners of government authorities. They enrich the national policy development process as well as the international human rights doctrine through their proposals and recommendations.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights law has continued to develop as increasingly sophisticated pacts have been adopted, despite frequently unfavorable conditions.

However, in many parts of the world, these positive developments unfortunately come up against devastating conflicts, violent extremism, inward-looking tendencies, rejection of the other and intolerance.

At the same time, new challenges are emerging and require appropriate responses. I am thinking in particular of the effectiveness of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, the fight against discrimination - especially that affecting women - the empowerment and inclusion of young people, the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups - particularly children and persons with disabilities - and, of course, the reduction of social inequalities and regional disparities.

Answers to these challenges must be based on a clear frame of reference and should be inspired by the fundamental values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A concrete example of this is the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a non-binding document which was adopted in Marrakesh on 10 December. It puts the respect, protection and achievement of migrants' basic rights at the heart of the new migration governance system.

Based on international human rights law, the Compact reiterates the universal and indivisible nature of human rights. It is grounded in the firm belief that migration cannot be safe, orderly and regular if migrants' rights are not rigorously respected - regardless of their status.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A nation strongly committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against migrants, the Kingdom of Morocco has put the human element at the center of its migration policy. Our country has developed a humane, balanced and solidarity-based migration policy which cares about the well-being of migrants and encourages their long-lasting integration into Moroccan society. We shall continue to work tirelessly to promote the culture of human rights, to ensure respect for all rights and to see that everyone complies fully with his or her obligations towards others, society and the nation.

I wish to reaffirm, in this regard, the Kingdom's commitment to multilateralism which is rooted in solidarity among peoples, the pursuit of peace and belief in the universal nature of rights.

Social justice and inter-regional equality have always been at the heart of my political, economic and social orientations. Today, all public policies ought to contribute to the achievement of the

above objective, thereby setting the stage for inclusive, harmonious societies in which everyone is entitled to security, freedom, dignity and equality.

In this respect, I believe wholeheartedly in the benefits of an intelligent, judicious blend of universal values and the requirements of diversity. As I have pointed out before, "universality should, in its very essence, be the result of a progressive, dynamic process whereby values are embraced at individual and collective levels. In this process, national and cultural traditions should be allowed to find their rightful place around a set of immutable values, not in opposition to it or next to it. Indeed, universal values acquire greater legitimacy when they represent and protect human diversity, and when all peoples and cultures contribute to shaping them, ultimately considering them as their own".