

# Morocco's Leadership in Africa: A Partner for Progress and Peace

In the 15 years since ascending the throne, King Mohammed VI has been committed to enhancing Morocco's strong relationships in Africa. Morocco promotes economic and human development projects in Africa as a means of promoting stability and security; and it has contributed to peacekeeping efforts throughout the continent.

## Peacekeeping

- As of November 2013, Morocco had more than 1,500 troops, military observers, and police serving in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, ranking 20<sup>th</sup> in terms of worldwide contributions. It is currently involved in peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire.

[http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2013/nov13\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2013/nov13_1.pdf)

## Diplomacy

- In February and March 2014, King Mohammed VI undertook a four-nation trip to promote peace, progress, and stability in Africa and deepen Morocco's relations with allies in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Guinea-Conakry. The trip began in Mali, where King Mohammed VI concluded a five-day state visit to enhance cooperation between the two countries and support the peace process between the government and the Tuareg communities in northern Mali.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/198635-morocco-willing-and-able-in-africa>

- In each of the countries he visited, King Mohammed VI presided over the signing of numerous accords to strengthen bilateral programs promoting economic, social, and human development. The accords covered many sectors, including: business and investment; banking and finance; infrastructure and construction; agriculture and rural development; industrial cooperation and trade; mining, oil, and gas; and healthcare. Throughout the trip, King Mohammed VI emphasized the need for more cooperation across the continent, as well as private-sector investment, to spur development.

<http://www.map.ma/en/activites-royales/hm-king-chairs-abidjan-opening-ceremony-moroccan-ivorian-economic-forum-and-gives->

<http://www.map.ma/en/activites-royales/ivorian-moroccan-economic-forum-hm-king-chairs-signing-ceremony-twenty-six-public->

<http://www.map.ma/en/activites-royales/hm-king-and-malian-pres-chair-signing-ceremony-seventeen-bilateral-cooperation-agr>

- In March 2013, on official visits to Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Gabon, King Mohammed VI underscored Morocco's commitment to meet the security and economic challenges facing the region, in particular concerns about al-Qaeda-linked extremists who seized control of northern Mali last year and threaten to spread across Africa's Sahel. Morocco signed agreements on a host of economic and development initiatives, including air and land transport, mining, renewable energy, and tourism.

<http://moroccoonthemove.com/2013/03/26/moroccos-king-mohammed-vi-deepens-ties-with-african-states-middle-east-online/#sthash.IQaBKRf9.dpbs>

## Counterextremism

- Morocco's keen understanding of Africa's cultural and social dynamics is illustrated by its program to train imams from Mali, Libya, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, the Maldives, and Nigeria.
  - The first step in this program to promote religious moderation was Morocco's agreement to train 500 Imams from Mali, and the first group of 90 has already completed their training. This agreement builds on longstanding cooperation between the two countries. Morocco is a key ally of the new Malian government and is working to advance peace and international security throughout Mali and the Sahel, as noted by the US in a US-Morocco Joint Statement after King Mohammed VI's meeting with President Obama on November 22, 2013.  
<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/education/20131111.AFP1718/maroc-bientot-un-institut-a-fes-pour-former-les-500-imams-maliens-ministere.html>  
<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/12/19/Morocco-s-stock-rising-in-Washington.html>  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/22/joint-statement-united-states-america-and-kingdom-morocco>
  - In May, a key step in growing this program was taken when the King launched the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Murchidines, and Murchidates in Rabat, which will welcome students from Morocco, Africa, and the Middle East to promote religious moderation and tolerance in the region.  
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/13052014-morocco-new-institute-imams-murshidines-murshidates-training-promote-spiritual-religious-immutable-values%E2%80%8F-oped/>

## Human Rights and Development

- In September 2013, Morocco introduced a groundbreaking initiative to reform its asylum and immigration system based on recommendations from Morocco's National Human Rights Commission. Recommended reforms, welcomed by King Mohammed VI, include establishing a legal and institutional framework for asylum and refugee status to improve integration and support policies for migrants, promoting the human rights of undocumented migrants, revising the criminal code to better crack down on human trafficking, and revising the law to expand the rights of documented immigrants. In November 2013, Morocco announced plans to regularize the status of illegal immigrants, starting with 850 asylum-seekers who benefitted from legal residency rights automatically.  
[http://cndh.ma/sites/default/files/documents/CNDH\\_report\\_-\\_migration\\_in\\_Morocco.pdf](http://cndh.ma/sites/default/files/documents/CNDH_report_-_migration_in_Morocco.pdf)  
[http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/11/14/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/11/14/feature-02)
- Morocco continues to play a key role in socioeconomic development in both North and sub-Saharan Africa as its businesses increasingly transfer their technical know-how to other African nations. A *Jeune Afrique* article noted, "The expertise and know-how of Moroccan entrepreneurs is widely recognized and solicited throughout the continent." This effort has been notable particularly in the telecommunications, banking, transportation, health, agribusiness, and engineering sectors, where the Moroccan government and businesses cooperate with their African counterparts and international officials in all phases of a project: financing, planning, and execution.  
<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Articles/Dossier/ARTJAJA2547p068-069.xml0/-Afrique-investissement-commerce-exterieur-Economie-une-offensive-continentale-encore-trop-timide.html>

- Part of this development includes training to build the human capacity of these countries. Morocco has played a key role in fostering educational development. Currently, 10,000 students from sub-Saharan Africa are enrolled on scholarships in Moroccan universities. Many Central and West African governments look to Morocco for management training that contributes to the formation of a viable civil service capable of promoting sustainable socio-economic development and democratic change.  
<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Articles/Dossier/ARTJAJA2547p064-066.xml0/-Afrique-diplomatie-Mohammed-VI-RASD-Diplomatie-l-appel-du-sud.html>

## Trade

- Morocco is an important member of several regional economic and trade bodies, including include the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Common Market for the Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN- SAD) and the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA). Morocco also is a member of the EU-oriented Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED). Harmonization and integration of regional trade policies is a strategic and natural priority for Morocco.  
[http://www.finances.gov.ma/depf/publications/en\\_catalogue/etudes/2010/maroc\\_afrique.pdf](http://www.finances.gov.ma/depf/publications/en_catalogue/etudes/2010/maroc_afrique.pdf)  
[http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en\\_GB/features/awi/features/2012/02/20/feature-01](http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/02/20/feature-01)
- Morocco has engaged in many activities to improve access to technologies, infrastructure, and quality of life in Sub-Saharan Africa including technical assistance and expertise-sharing in electrification, access to potable water, road and rail infrastructure, telecommunications, and new technologies infrastructure in countries including Senegal, Gambia, Niger, and Sierra Leone.  
<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Articles/Dossier/ARTJAJA2547p071-078.xml4/infrastructure-port-somagecports-somagec-s-active-en-guinee-equatoriale.html>
- To expand trade into sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco has signed commercial accords with 16 countries, including Senegal, Gabon, Niger, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mali, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Guinea. Moroccan businesses and investors regard sub-Saharan Africa as an important market. For example, Attijariwafabank has emerged as a leader in providing financial services to sub-Saharan African communities where these services had been previously considered unprofitable. Other Moroccan companies active in sub-Saharan Africa are BMCE Bank, Maroc Telecom, l'Office National de l'Electricité (ONE), Omnium Nord-Africain (ONA), SOTHEMA Maroc, and Royal Air Maroc (RAM).  
<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Articles/Dossier/ARTJAJA2547p071-078.xml5/onep-eau-potable-electricite-oneequipement-l-one-etl-onep-feront-bientot-front-commun.html>

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