

TAIEB FASSI FIHRI

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Kingdom of Morocco

Thank you very much. My dear friend, Thierry de Montbrial, Mr Presidents, Ministers, Your Excellency, Ambassadors, Madame Mayor of Marrakech. On behalf of the government of His Majesty, I would first like to express the joy of all Moroccans – officials, managers, civil society players, business representatives, young and not so young – at having you here among us with all the diversity you represent, not only in geographical terms, but also in terms of your sensibilities and areas of interest.

Of course, I am saying this to new friends, too, but I especially want to thank everyone who has followed events in Morocco in recent years with sympathy and interest in order to assess and understand what is taking place. Some things have gone well and others not so well. Tonight, we will gather again in this splendid city of Marrakech as part of this dialogue with President Pujol, Minister Hubert Védrine, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach and many others.

I wish to strongly reiterate the government's heartfelt appreciation for your stay in our country and for your participation and personal and collective contributions to our work.

Our efforts have also been guided by the spirit of governance under the leadership of a "G1", Thierry de Montbrial, who, by the authority he represents – moral and sometimes physical – has kept our nose to the grindstone these past three days.

I want to thank all the organisers and sponsors who made these discussions so in-depth and varied on a topic – world governance – that does not deserve to be treated cavalierly. Our concern for democracy prompts us to seek a new compromise, a new global structure and better tools.

Everything was discussed and I recall what Thierry de Montbrial said in his opening remarks about this issue, which is both temporal and geographic in nature. I would like to make six comments about this subject.



There will be no world governance if it is not supported by regional, national and local governance. On the other hand, it is impossible to imagine that this form of governance could be imposed in a top-down way from above on us in the South by a group of states designated by the letter G with a number attached to it!

We must refine this process together, both in the North and South, to avoid certain excesses as well as certain errors of the past.

The United Nations is for all of us, but because it is for all of us and we are so numerous, we have created other mechanisms to tackle organisational, administrative and management concerns. And sometimes we have created too many, as we have said. It is important to make the architecture of this process a little more coherent.

Even though the global hierarchy is well known and not all nations can contribute on the same terms or with the same strength, we need engines of progress – engines that must be expanded to make sure we achieve our final objective. In my opinion, this final objective, as His Majesty strongly emphasised during his speech, involves ensuring that citizens are the focus of everyone's concern. We must move away from a vision that I would not call materialistic, but we must keep in my mind all the children of this world and all humanity, who are affected by the decisions of tomorrow. Of course, there will be engines for the environment, others for health and a third group for food security.

When it comes to global issues, ladies and gentlemen, please do not deliberate only among yourselves. We discussed the value of enlarging the G8, first to a G13, and due to the financial crisis, a G20. That's because we realised that responsibility for the crisis is limited to a certain geographic area of the world, namely the West, but we must all be involved in resolving it, or at least more states. Allow me to use the Moroccan experience and the realities of its "neighbourhood" to illustrate my comments. And I'm very happy to say this after my discussions with my colleague Minister RAHMANI, Algerian Minister of Environment and Tourism, and other North African partners in attendance.

The rightful place of Morocco and the Moroccan people lies within an integrated Arab North Africa. We will not have any significance, we will not represent any value whatsoever for our European partners, for our American partner or for Asia, unless we work more effectively, hand in hand, taking advantage of our powerful economic potential and providing better coordination in the fight against terrorism. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb threatens all of us, the five countries of North Africa. So integration is an obvious imperative. The need for security is well recognised and I



believe that in the Arab and Muslim world, a united Maghreb has a voice and relevance and will provide added value.

On the African continent, a united and integrated Maghreb will undoubtedly contribute to the vision of a better integrated and more prosperous Africa, so that it can face up to its own realities and challenges and take advantage of the continent's enormous potential. If such potential did not exist, we would not have seen so many people visiting Africa in recent years, both North and sub-Saharan Africa, some of them with pre-established contracts.

His Majesty talked about the Mediterranean region's pivotal role – not only in Europe in terms of the Union for the Mediterranean, with partners in the southern and eastern Mediterranean basin, but also in Africa as a whole.

I believe this effort is worth pursuing and that the new world governance should partner with the South.

Over the past three days, I have not heard any mention of the G77. And we often forget that China works with us in the G77. That means that China's sensibilities lie more with the developing world, so her role surpasses the goal of making her an additional player in the G20.

Nor have I heard anything about the G15, an idea that was perhaps a little ideological. A number of developing countries created this group to compete with the G8, which was just emerging at that time.

I also haven't heard anything about the G11, which brings together a number of middle-income countries, including Morocco, which can share their own experiences and make sure they speak louder in this cacophony of sound, this international chaos.

First, as a citizen of this part of the world, and second as foreign minister, I can only ask that we pay more attention to the necessity of working together in our discussions and deliberations. That is not a third worldist message. I want to emphasise that there will always be engines that move forward and drive further progress, but let's not fall into the errors and ways of the past.



Of course, the bigger and more numerous we are, the more difficult it will be to reach a consensus. But let's listen to each other.

On the topic of listening, I would like to conclude my speech with comments on the importance of so-called intercultural dialogue, which conceals the real issue: interreligious dialogue.

Certain initiatives have been undertaken. Our American friends can clarify the Cairo speech for us as well as the U.S. Secretary of State's appointment of a personal representative for relations with the Muslim world. Friends at this table have been working on this issue for many years as part of the Euro-Arabic dialogue, which has been forming for 35 years without growing an inch, or under the aegis of the Anna Lindh Foundation, which grew out of the Barcelona process.

It's worth noting that a great country like Saudi Arabia has stepped forward and taken the initiative of creating a tripartite dialogue. I think this effort has received insufficient attention. What has received attention, unfortunately, are the clichés that associate terrorism with a certain religion and sometimes with the colour of one's skin. Islam is not a terrorist religion, nor are any other religions, whether monotheistic or not. That's why I believe interreligious dialogue should not remain imprisoned in the world of intellectuals, academies and professors of religion. This discussion must take place in the street, in our daily lives and in the media so that we can agree on the main points and avoid a confrontation that some see as inevitable. History does not dictate the inevitability of a confrontation and we must make an effort to ensure that this new world governance better incorporates the human element, the individual within a group, within a society, within a region and within a nation. These legitimate aspirations for more progress and democracy must be taken into consideration. For that reason, we believe that the idea of a greater Middle East introduced by republican thinkers eight years ago as part of a rather tough dialogue between the G8 and the Muslim world must be approached through a "softer" dialogue based on responsiveness and mutual respect and understanding. Yesterday, we were saying that China is so big that we have to take account of its cultural reality and philosophy in our effort. As you know very well, the word "harmony" is the appropriate word for this approach.

The Muslim world also needs to be taken into consideration, despite its divisions, conflicts, contradictions, and despite the nature and diversity of its national political systems. I believe it's important for Muslims to feel as if they are taken more into consideration as players in this new structure. Since we are talking about global issues, why should only 20 or 25 countries be responsible for them? If these are global issues, we must include elites as well as economic realities and players at all levels.



That, my dear friends, is what I wanted to share with you this evening – simply to point out that world governance is an imperative, as we discussed. We are not here to dream of a better world but we *are* here to imagine a better world and to work together building it. We must construct it and, building on the current foundation, develop it by, above all, ensuring that we all take responsibility for it together. Thank you for your attention.