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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

1. I must begin by thanking our hosts at the Doha Forum for their warm welcome and particularly, for this clear and ambitious choice of theme to discuss.
2. If we pause to think about the highly volatile current state of international affairs, the “future of the Middle East” may seem like an impossible question to address. But it needs an answer and it must be a collective one.
3. As we witness current events that have shaken some of the fundamentals of traditional geopolitics – from Brexit and the outcome of the US presidential elections to the 21st global challenges fuelling increased tensions in all sectors (security, migration, the environment...) – the future has never seemed so uncertain.
4. We have undoubtedly reached a crossroads and the time has come to choose a path, both as a region and as an international community. So I applaud our hosts, for now more than ever, it is an absolute necessity to think about what future we want for our region.
5. Now is the time for courageous discussions, honest dialogues and a genuine exchange of ideas that can help us build together a better tomorrow.

THE PRESENT – THE MIDDLE EAST’S DARK REALITY WITHIN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD :

6. Before we can talk of tomorrow, we must confront today’s bleak reality and come to terms with some difficult truths.
7. There is first of all the urgent reality of violent conflicts in Syria, Libya, Yemen Irak.... They all seem stuck in an intractable status quo, threatening of greater instability and unspeakable humanitarian tragedies.
8. Then there is the key Palestinian issue, which remains unresolved but has now been relegated in the hierarchy of emergencies. This does not make it less important for it remains at the very heart of grievances across the Arab-Muslim world. It is the cause which most commonly feeds frustration across all populations and generations and its hopelessness is a factor most often cited by those who choose the path of extremism.
9. In parallel, governance deficits and the lack of development have become even more problematic. The many crises in our region have severely hurt economies, destroyed state infrastructure and restricted the space afforded to basic human rights.
10. In this context, the absence of effective regional cooperation, combined with weak institutions and bad politics all add to a very toxic mix of ingredients. What is left is little hope for the ambitious partnerships and efficient cooperation urgently needed to address the interconnected web of chronic socio-economic challenges ranging from poverty, marginalisation, youth unemployment and inevitably leading to extremism and terrorism.
11. This brings us to the threat of Daesh and other radicalised groups which have taken hostage our faith and used it to exploit the fear of disenfranchised individuals in order to spread hatred, ignorance and division. Sectarian tensions have grown, entire communities have been displaced and endless innocent victims fall each day as the unprecedented danger of radicalism and violent extremism continues to grow. The ability of States to function and govern is undermined and international peace and stability therefore faces a major existential threat.

12. The extremely unstable situation in the Middle East is then made even more complex by the profound political, societal and human transformations taking place at a wider level:
- i. The rise of populist politics in the West which builds on fear of the other and in many cases on Islamophobia;
 - ii. The emergence of an asymmetrical world, led by new non-traditional, non-state actors and deep changes in our means of communication, where viral social media is taking over fact-based journalism,
 - iii. The exploding demographics and the ever-growing demand on our planet's diminishing resources... (climate change, migration, global health and natural disasters...).

The list of new challenges is endless and we do not yet fully understand any of them.

13. What does all this mean for our region? For the Middle East's future and its place in the world? Where do we begin to try resolving both the frozen conflicts rooted in history and the complex new threats posed by the 21st century?
14. The questions are indeed enormous, but the answers have one obvious common denominator: we need to work together.
15. This then leads me to the real question at hand: Why does the International Community still fail to achieve this? Why do we remain so deeply divided on the approach, methods and means that can help us work together to solve ongoing crises?
16. The situation presently prevailing in the region confirms, that no state or multilateral actor, however powerful it may be, cannot impose alone, crisis and terrorism exit solutions;
17. Today, it is a fact that the international community has not been able to come up with an alternative to the current crises, particularly through the reform of the Security Council. The divisions among the members of the security council concerning Syria or the persistent deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is an example of these divisions....;
18. It is imperative to make the UN organization more representative of the current regional and global balances, capable of dealing efficiently with urgent issues, which may jeopardize international stability and peace ;

THE NEED FOR A NEW GLOBALISATION MODEL AND THE RE-BIRTH OF THE STATE:

19. One of the obvious reasons behind the failure of the International Community to work together effectively - whether at the regional, sub-regional or multilateral level - is the identity crisis that the Nation-State has been facing ever since globalisation took over.
20. Globalisation started out as a force for good, set to open borders, to encourage free movement of ideas, goods and people and to spread liberal values across the world. People would have access to progressive ideas and obviously, they would see that this is the right path to progress.
21. But that is not exactly what happened:
- iv. Competition became uncontrolled, seen by many as unfair.
 - v. Many people lost jobs and whole industries became a thing of the past. New ideas and new industries scared them.
 - vi. Traditions were questioned and identities began to crumble in the face of so much change.

- vii. Fear took over and now, globalisation is seen as the root of all evil.
22. So do we abandon the globalisation experiment? Or do we try and save it as it is and engage in a useless fight to save “business as usual”. Of course, the answer is neither.
23. Globalisation brought about many positive developments. Innovation, education, prosperity have never been so wide-spread. Regions and countries that were “under-developed” have become “developing” and then “emerging”. Some of them have even become the new superpowers of the 21st century.
24. Asia has exploded on the world scene, Latin America is moving forward surely and boldly. Africa is on the rise as the Continent of the future, finding its own solutions to its many challenges. The Middle East has also managed to develop despite the great instability holding back the region. The Gulf Cooperation Council is an exceptional success model in this regard.
25. But unrestrained globalisation has also seen the rise of many inequalities and exclusion. This forces us to ask where things went wrong. People do not want this to continue. Establishment politics have not listened and they have been proven wrong. Voters have spoken loudly to say so, in some very unexpected ways.
26. From these major trends, there are a few clear messages which emerge:
- i. The answer to the failures of globalisation is not a return to the past. Globalisation came as an answer to other failures that preceded it. It was a way to combat hegemonic politics and totalitarian ideologies that triggered two World Wars. Globalisation is a model that can be saved, but it needs to recognise and its failures and it must evolve, putting back citizens at the heart of its process.
 - ii. The Nation-State is not a thing of the past. A strong Nation-State is the building block to a stable, peaceful and effective International Community. Uncontrolled globalisation seemed to make the State useless and this has led to a weak, inefficient international system where multilateral organisations failed to provide those basic needs citizens expect. The United Nations has not managed to resolve regional crises like Syria or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nor can it adequately address the global refugee emergency. Even the most integrated and prosperous regional system, the EU, is today in deep crisis.
 - iii. The question of Identity is at the core of 21st century politics. We must find a way to accommodate safe spaces where all identities can express themselves and peacefully co-exist. The State, in its democratic and pluralistic form, is the only mechanism which has so far been able to offer such a space.
 - iv. That is why we must protect the stability and sovereignty of States. We also need to allow each State the time to find the best model to respond to the the aspirations of its population. This must never be rushed, nor imposed. We need most importantly to work together, as States, in a constructive way, encouraging progress but never interfering.

MOVING FORWARD AND PLAYING OUR PART AS A REGION:

27. In seeking to work together to address these issues through a fairer, more pragmatic and effective global model, we need to think of our role as countries of the Middle East. This starts by doing our own homework internally, in terms of good governance, democracy, structural reforms.
28. This also means building up, in parallel, coherent regional integration and an innovative regional model that can help us foster the stability needed for internal development.

29. In this respect, I would like to share with you some views about collective answers that should be part of a genuine drive for change in our working methods, as a region, to respond to our common challenges and address their root causes:

- We need to establish a model of global governance based on the respect of the specificities of each country of the region. Respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity were core principles that helped us build the UN. It allowed us to foster globalization in its most positive aspects. But when these principles became seen as outdated and undermines, this has led to many of the serious problems we face today.
- We need to work on the building the foundations for a new, fairer economic order. This must be an inclusive order, where the citizen is the priority and where progress and development is defined as human development, in its holistic concept.
- We need strong and pro-active regional integration to counter the Middle East's underdevelopment. Our region is rich by its youth and complementary resources. We need to stop blaming our problems on others and start working more closely together to solve our issues according to our values and beliefs. Despite our differences, the world sees us as a whole. We must act like one instead of continuing to suffer the consequences of being victimized as one.
- We need to address our region's issue of Identity. In the Middle East, identity issues and sectarian divides are rooted in faith and so we must work together on the deconstruction of the Jihadi narrative that seeks to distort Islam. This means working together, with religious leaders, civil society, youth, to communicate in ways that can overturn the narrative of hate and violent discourse.
- The foremost challenge in the fight against terrorism is managing radicalized people. The coherence of strategies and communication endeavours in this regard is also essential in order to counter extremist's narrative, as efforts made by States individually will always be insufficient to fight a global threat. It is up to us to set up the necessary mechanisms that can make our region immune to the terrorist threat. This requires an approach based on a realistic, comprehensive and consistent strategy and a vigorous involvement through the media: the religious leaders have a powerful role in promoting peace and tolerance and in educating people of their faith not be disrespectful to other religions. My country, Morocco is trying to do its best in this field: Morocco is well equipped to help preserve and promote an open expression of Sunni Islam thanks to the Moroccan experience, in terms of reforms in the religious field, initiated by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, which has been crucial in fighting all forms of extremism, through the spreading of Maliki Islam, which promotes the ideals of dialogue, tolerance and moderation.

MOROCCO'S EFFORTS AS A COMMITTED INTERNATIONAL PLAYER:

30. All of these collective answers, Morocco has sought to apply them to itself, adapting them to its citizen's needs, realities and values. This has led to the elaboration of a singular Moroccan Model based on a global vision and citizen-based, grassroots approach for building a modern country.
31. From the very beginning of His reign in 1999, His Majesty King Mohammed VI has led the country on a gradual, endogenous and irreversible reform process that has helped our country build up its resilience and strengthen its institutions. This process was founded on a Vision – for a democratic, plural, open society – and an approach – seeking inclusive partnerships and realistic local solutions to specific problems.
32. This measured but irreversible evolutionary process has been essential in helping Morocco protect itself from the wider regional instability and economic crises undermining our region today.

- 33.** The first step in Morocco's democratic reform model was to make the country stronger by building a fairer, more inclusive society. Human development became the driving force behind all public policies as His Majesty launched in 2005 the National Initiative for Human Development. This brought about new working methods, bringing together public administration and civil society around solidarity-based projects designed by local communities to respond to their needs for better housing, water, electricity, education and so forth. These projects placed priority on the most fragile in our society – women, the disabled and in particular, youth.
- 34.** In parallel to social reform there came an ambitious economic program built around clear, target-based sectoral plans (ex: Green Morocco plan, Tourism Vision 2020) and major infrastructure strategies to upgrade the Kingdom's inherent capacities and global competitiveness ("Tanger-Med" and "Nador Ouest" ports, highways, express trains LGV, automotive, aeronautics, logistics and energy...)
- 35.** Priority was also given to the global issues of the future, especially climate change. Morocco has initiated a proactive policy to promote sustainable development and environment protection at the national level while also playing its part on the global scene. Morocco's organization of the COP22 on November 2016 comes as a clear recognition of the Kingdom's pioneering efforts in this field.
- 36.** Another striking element of Morocco's singular process was that while Establishment politics tried to resist change in other parts of the world, His Majesty the King listened to the wishes of the people and implemented bold reforms to respond to them. A series of major good governance and human rights reforms were implemented, culminating in the landmark Constitutional reform of July 2011 that was voted through by popular referendum.
- 37.** The legislative elections held last month, on 7th October 2016, are proof that thanks to these democratic reforms, Morocco's political institutions are strong, stable and evolving. The elections, which were hailed free, fair and transparent by the International Community were monitored by 68 national and international bodies, including 316 foreign observers. Reforms were put in place that successfully allowed greater participation of women and youth in Parliament.
- 38.** All of these reforms have laid the groundwork for a bold plan set by His Majesty to firmly enshrine devolved, citizen-based politics in the Moroccan governance model through the Advanced Regionalization Plan. This plan launched by the Sovereign seeks to promote devolved powers to local regions so that they are empowered to implement integrated, sustainable policies tailored to the needs of each community. This Advanced Regionalization Plan reflects the reality of Morocco's plural identity as well as its commitment to building a strong and diversified national economy which can generate wealth, create jobs, reduce inequalities and achieve social justice for all.
- 39.** Morocco's focus on the citizen and on the need for inclusivity is best expressed in the speech pronounced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to mark the opening of the Parliament on 14 October 2016 :
- " Everyone is responsible for ensuring the efficiency of state agencies and enhancing the quality of the services they provide because they are the backbone of any reform and are critically important for the achievement of the development and progress we want our citizens to benefit from".*
- 40.** Lastly, I would like to mention the element which has resulted from all the measures described so far regarding Morocco's internal reform process – this element is the strong international trust and wide recognition of Morocco as a reliable ally and active international partner.
- 41.** The continued flow of foreign direct investments, the positive support granted by international bodies such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the establishment of new strategic partnerships with Russia, China, East Africa are all proof that Morocco's international footprint is becoming stronger than ever.



42. There is also strong respect for some of the brave initiatives that have been taken to address key issues such as religious extremism. Today, Morocco's expertise on deradicalization is sought after in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East and His Majesty's religious leadership has led to the emergence of a positive, tolerant spiritual diplomacy.
43. Through its international presence, Morocco seeks to build effective cooperation and win-win partnerships that can bring sustainable solutions to the many common problems we face. Morocco seeks to act as a responsible partner, both with its traditional allies and also by creating new opportunities with new cooperation agreements.
44. The diversification of Morocco's international partnerships rests on the strength of its special alliances that have stood the test of time. The Gulf is today Morocco's most strategically important partner and we are working together effectively with Gulf countries across all sectors and in many regions both in the Middle East and Africa.
45. Morocco's centuries-old alliances with Western powers and its major alliances with the USA and the EU are also a pillar of its diplomacy and one which equally benefits its partners in the Middle East and Africa.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

46. I have developed in some detail the Moroccan model because I humbly believe that at a national level, thanks to a visionary Sovereign and an actively involved population, we have managed to demonstrate a key ingredient necessary for our region to thrive – that is cooperation.
47. Cooperation is needed at all levels to ensure a peaceful and stable future for the Middle East:
- i. There needs to be genuine cooperation domestically, with civil society, the business communities, by including our minorities and placing human dignity and solidarity at the heart of politics.
 - ii. We must absolutely work together at the regional and international levels because the depth of the problems that we face – in security, resources, health and so on – are far beyond what any of us can manage to solve alone.
 - iii. We also need to work together with new actors – NGO's, Social Media organisations – in order to restore balance and order to protect the freedoms we all cherish and not let them be exploited by those who seek hatred and violence.
48. We live in an age of globalization and this will not change. We must stand ready to do what it takes in order to find common solutions. The Middle East is in a state of deep turmoil and the key to its future lies more than ever in dialogue, cooperation solidarity.
49. Its future also lies in its international partners treating the Middle East as equals. We must find our own solutions to problems no one understands as fully as we do. We need support and this support must be built on mutual respect.
50. The Middle East is the cradle of the world's most important religions and civilizations. Its peace and stability means world peace and stability. Today, as we observe the global world order rapidly shifting, we must ensure our region is ready to play its part in making sure this new order is one which is as plural and diverse as our region. For in the end, and beyond all our differences, we all want the same peace and progress and for our future generations.

Jim Hoagland, Contributing Editor, *The Washington Post*

Thank you very much for that. Let me pick up with exactly what you concluded with. You say that Morocco did not wait for the Arab Spring to make reforms. As you look around the Arab world today, what advice would you give to



other Arab countries about proceeding now, at this moment with reforms. What should they be doing? What can they do? How can a country, like Morocco, encourage that development?

Youssef Amrani, Royal Cabinet, Morocco

I think it should follow an inclusive approach that tries to have everyone at work and tries to work on a different culture: a culture of compromise. We must try to listen to each other and compromise within democracy and each country, according to its own specificity. We are not here to give any lessons but we think that, thanks to this vision and this approach, and the instruments, which are transparency, good governance, elections, and also job creation, this is the only way to work towards sharing prosperity and to reach stability. Of course, resolving conflicts, military intervention, and security are important but dignity is in how to respond to the human needs of our population today in the Arab world.