



# NASSER BOURITA

## Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco

Dear Mr. de Montbrial, friends and colleagues, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to welcome you to the 11<sup>th</sup> World Policy Conference, which takes place under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI - May God be with Him.

There could be no better setting for our meeting tonight than this proud citadel: Chellah, a witness to yesterday and today, the perfect symbol of authenticity, historical depth and cultural mixing.

I am sure that the discussions, like the talks of the World Policy Conference in recent days, are essential.

- The world needs free, level-headed, untrammelled thinking on international affairs;
- The world needs open-mindedness to discuss complex issues;
- It needs intellectual tolerance to talk about sensitive matters;
- It needs various perspectives to enrich debate and get off the beaten track.

Many have understood this but few have followed through. In the profusion of think tanks and international fora, the World Policy Conference has become one of the best.

Above all, the World Policy Conference has remained relevant and kept its own identity, ensuring its remarkable longevity. It is an example of what a space of free thought must be: lasting, not fleeting; creative, not redundant; a leader, not a follower.

Dear Mr. de Montbrial,

Successful events always bear the imprint of those who organise them. The WPC clearly bears yours. Like you, it has a pioneering spirit.

Thanks to you, the World Policy Conference mobilises, many and well.

Looking out over this room, I can spot the familiar faces of brilliant minds: colleagues (FAM of Austria and Spain), eminent figures, journalists and professors.

I would like to congratulate everybody who has helped to make this project successful. Real, lasting successes are often collective.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

"May you live in interesting times". So goes a Chinese saying. We certainly do. We are living through an interesting sequence in global history.

That is an observation, not a reason for self-congratulation. "Interesting" is neither good nor bad. "Interesting" is remarkable, captivating and challenging all at once.



But "interesting" is certainly not "comfortable". Our times are anything but smooth sailing. On the contrary. Changes on the international scene are continuous, simultaneous, sometimes frenzied and often unpredictable.

I am not saying anything you do not already know: I believe we are living in a time of tectonic shifts in international relations. Everything is a shortcut: a WhatsApp group is a negotiation forum, a tweet is a national position and a tweet quarrel is a diplomatic crisis!

The fundamentals of international relations are shaking. Borders, sovereignty, responsibility, even applicable law—threats and opportunities know no frontiers.

This calls for fresh ideas focusing less on formalism and more on efficiency. It also paves the way for a new kind of horizontality determined by comparative advantages and mutual benefit, transcending common divides (North/South, State/non-State players, three-way cooperation, etc.).

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this seething world, Morocco is trying to identify the dynamics of change and anticipate, if not adapt to them.

It is staying the course, guided by its credibility, pro-activeness and responsibility.

Credibility is an essence for a kingdom that has lasted centuries.

- Credibility means taking the long view, valuing loyalty and asking our partners essential questions, for example on the status of Al-Quds (United States) or the state of the Arab world.

- Credibility means resisting shortcuts and pressure. Morocco jealously guards its right to critical discernment. It does not chase headlines. It always keeps pace and never follows.

Morocco's pro-activeness is reflected in its natural tendency to take the lead on important domestic and international issues.

- For example, it can be seen on the issue of climate change, where His Majesty the King, May God be with Him, has shown his leadership, notably through the African Summit for Action. He has embodied the COP's commitments by creating the Sahel Commission (chaired by Niger), the Congo Basin Climate Commission (chaired by Congo) and the Islands Commission (chaired by the Seychelles).

- It can also be seen on migration issues, where the Kingdom is committed to a Royal Vision, contained in the African Agenda on Migration, which has been endorsed by Africa's heads of state. The Global Pact for the Environment adopted in Marrakech on 10 and 11 December is its international crowning achievement.

- It can also be seen in the fight against terrorism through an inclusive, courageous and innovative approach that tackles the root of the evil, not just its symptoms.

Lastly, responsibility means deciding freely and accepting the consequences totally. Morocco listens but does not receive instructions. It consults, but decides independently.

- Responsibility also means shedding complacency in a spirit of constructive frankness.

- That is the spirit in which Morocco calls its Euro-Mediterranean partners' attention to the fact that the sphere of stability and shared prosperity desired so much on both sides of the sea has still not come into being and that the Union for the Mediterranean must be reinvented.

- The same spirit drives Morocco when it calls the Maghreb countries' attention to the state of the non-Maghreb world and the flame of integration, which is quietly flickering out.



Dear friends and colleagues, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I will stop here, but know that it is a real pleasure for me to be with you tonight. Thank you, dear Thierry, for this opportunity.

Thank you for your attention and patience.