



**HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM**



HM the king Addresses the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU (Full text)

HM King Mohammed VI addressed the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which opened Sunday in Nouakchott.

Here is the text of the royal speech, read by minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Nasser Bourita:

"Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency, the Chairperson of the AU Commission,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, to be African is to live in a land that is, in many areas, a breeding ground for expertise and talent – one that will make it possible to move resolutely forward and accelerate the pace of progress through a rational use of our resources.

In this respect, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area - AfCFTA - provides an exceptional framework through which to boost our trade relations. It paves the way for the anchoring of our economic development in an integrated space by enabling over a billion consumers to hone Africa's competitive edge.

The institutional and financial reform process boldly started by my brother, His Excellency President Paul Kagame, will put our continent on the path towards significant, lasting and irreversible change.

This endeavour reflects real awareness, which tells us the time has come to build efficient institutions equipped with the best possible governance mechanisms. These institutions are the tools we need to reverse the spiral of poverty and ensure Africa's emergence, every step of the way.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know this: the current dynamic cannot really conceal an unpleasant reality. Far too many obstacles and difficulties are still undermining efforts that will lead to the emergence of Africa.

One of the major hurdles is endemic corruption - a scourge that is eating away at our societies and that our Summit has rightly made its main theme.

Corruption is not just a moral or ethical issue.

It has an economic cost as well. It puts a strain on the purchasing power of citizens, especially the poorest segments of society. In some sectors of activity, it represents 10% of the cost of production.

Corruption perverts the tenets of democracy and undermines the rule of law.

It affects the quality of life and promotes organized crime, insecurity and terrorism.

Everywhere we can see positive signs and sustained efforts to curb this scourge.

The measures taken are bearing fruit: notable progress is palpable.

In the relentless fight against corruption, some African countries - and their number is quite significant - are outperforming others, including some among the most developed nations. These are models which incite us to take the same path.

The institutional reforms undertaken within the African Union will also contribute to the emergence of an anti-corruption culture.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kingdom of Morocco has realized the devastating effects of

corruption and has decided to spare no effort to overcome this scourge.

After ratifying the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2007, the Kingdom of Morocco developed its institutional and legal arsenal, thus aligning its legislation with international standards.

To streamline and channel efforts properly, in 2015 the Kingdom of Morocco adopted a National Strategy against Corruption and set up the National Anti-Corruption Commission, which is tasked with implementing the strategy.

Spanning a 10-year period, the strategy aims to reverse the trend in a palpable, irreversible way by 2025, bolster citizens' trust, promote integrity, improve the business environment and enhance the Kingdom's international standing.

Having become a constitutional body, the National Authority for probity and the prevention and combat of corruption has recently seen its powers extended and its mission as a watchdog enhanced. In accordance with the new legislation, it will strengthen the multidimensional action carried out concomitantly in this field by the government, the judiciary and the said authority.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Africa of today is different from the Africa of yesterday.

The fight against this scourge requires the coordination of experiences and the pooling of expertise, building on a common vision shared by all stakeholders. Under no circumstances should this drive become a new form of dominance and pressure.

The Africa of enclaves and trading posts is no more.

Corruption is not specific to Africa. Corruption is not a typically African scourge. It is a universal phenomenon. It exists in the countries of the South as well as in those of the North and it may well have an adverse impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the international community.

I am delighted there is collective awareness and clear determination in this regard. They will make it possible to stem the phenomenon.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Corruption is not inevitable in Africa. The fight against this scourge should be made a priority because corruption is the biggest obstacle to economic and social advancement and to the development of our young people.

The well-being of our peoples hinges on prevention and on fostering a sense of responsibility in all actors in our societies.

This major project requires sincere political commitment: it is possible to tackle corruption through sustained efforts on the part of

government authorities and through the necessary civic engagement.

In order to stay the course in this fight and to make sure the current institutional reforms are successful, regular consultation will be necessary. This is the course of action to which everyone will subscribe and which will give our organization the authority it needs.

To this end, we must match words with deeds at each one of our meetings.

I am sure His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari will leave his mark on the upcoming phase. I know how determined he is and also how capable he is of convincing and uniting people in order to create the necessary momentum to root out corrupt practices at all levels.

By winning this battle, we will shape the Africa we want to bequeath to our children: a prosperous, solidarity-based Africa that is at peace with itself.

Thank you."

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