



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



# **HM The King Sends Message To Participants In International Conference On Promotion Of Dialogue Among Cultures And Civilizations And On The Respect For Cultural Diversity**

His Majesty the King Mohammed VI sent a message to the participants in the international conference on promotion of dialogue among cultures and civilizations and on the respect for cultural diversity which is scheduled September 30- October 2 in Fes under the patronage of the Sovereign

Here follows the full text of the message read out by Abdellah Baha, State minister:

“Praise be to God May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Honorable Director-General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Mr. President, Secretary-General of the International Organization of La Francophonie,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are delighted the city of Fez, the cultural and spiritual capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, is hosting this important international symposium on the promotion of dialogue among cultures and civilizations and on the respect for cultural diversity.

I should like, first, to welcome the eminent figures participating in this conference - thinkers, political, economic, cultural and media experts and civil society actors, to whom I wish a pleasant stay in their second home, Morocco.

Allow me to take this opportunity to commend Mrs. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, His Excellency Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director-General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and my brother His Excellency AbdouDiouf, Secretary-General of the International Organization of La Francophonie, for their untiring efforts to provide platforms for a constructive exchange of views between distinguished figures from different backgrounds, in order to promote cultural diversity and protect freedom of expression.

We are proud that the Kingdom of Morocco is an active member of these important organizations and a founder member of the Alliance of Civilizations. Morocco will spare no effort to continue to support these organizations' action, to contribute to the implementation of their relevant treaties and agreements, and to actively help uphold their lofty objectives.

The Kingdom of Morocco's adherence to the advanced international standards adopted by ISESCO and UNESCO - especially those provided for by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted by UNESCO Member States in 2005, and those provided for by the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which was endorsed in 2004 by the Fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers - attests to my country's undeniable commitment in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I firmly believe that the consolidation of cultural dialogue and the respect for cultural diversity cannot become an international reality unless they are deeply rooted at the national level, making it possible for each citizen to embrace them and to claim them as their own.

Building on the Kingdom's time-honored history as well as on its specific identity - which is based on positive interaction between the key elements of unity and diversity - the new Moroccan Constitution has balanced the preservation of the Moroccan national identity with a firm commitment to universal values.

Thus, in addition to confirming a genuine charter of basic rights and freedoms, and giving due prominence in the national frame of reference to the tolerant faith of Islam, the Kingdom's Constitution underscores the Moroccan people's commitment to the ideals of openness, moderation, tolerance, dialogue and mutual understanding among cultures and civilizations.

The Kingdom's Constitution also reaffirms the diverse, yet indivisible nature of our national identity, which is forged by the blend of Arab-Islamic, Amazigh and Saharan-Hassani components, and which is nurtured by African, Andalusian, Hebraic and Mediterranean influences.

In addition to making the Amazigh language an official language alongside Arabic, the Constitution entrusted the State with the mission of safeguarding the Hassani language and heritage - which are an integral part of the unified Moroccan cultural identity - calling on it to protect Moroccan dialects and cultural expressions and to see to it that the most widely used foreign languages are acquired and mastered.

This is clearly shown by the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists in Morocco and by the special care taken to protect and promote that diversity.

In keeping with the same vision for a pluralist society, access to public media is allowed provided the linguistic, cultural and political pluralism of the Moroccan society is respected.

Similarly, I have been insisting on the key role the education and training system should play in the good upbringing of young people, making sure they are committed to the ideals of tolerance, dialogue and openness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Commander of the Faithful, it is my duty to guarantee the free practice of religion.

As part of this sacred mission, I have sought, since my accession to the throne, to undertake a thorough restructuring of the religious domain in order to safeguard the spiritual security of Moroccans by upholding the genuine values advocated by Maliki Islam, such as moderation and tolerance, and the rejection of obscurantism or radicalism.

Similarly, the Commandership of the Faithful remains the guarantor not only of the respect for the beliefs embraced by all components of the Moroccan society, but also of the nation's time-honored tradition of openness and positive interaction, particularly with respect to its African environment.

In this regard, I would like to say how much I value the religious and spiritual bonds which have, at all times, existed between Morocco and many West and Central African nations.

Guided by a firm belief in the lofty principles of Islam, advocating peace and brotherhood, I have consistently endeavored to promote the true image of Islam, which is deliberately distorted as a result of heinous campaigns, in which the fanaticism and narrow-mindedness of some Muslim clerics is exploited with a view to associating Islam - the religion of moderation and balance - with violent and destructive acts for which extremist and terrorist groups claim responsibility.

The history of Islam refutes these erroneous claims and allegations. Indeed, Muslims lived alongside believers of other faiths - be it in the East or in the West - and showed they were committed to cooperation, mutual understanding and tolerance.

This is clearly shown by the interaction and sound relations that have existed for centuries between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Mediterranean region. This coexistence has made it possible for Muslims and non-Muslims to contribute extensively to the development of human knowledge and thinking as well as to the promotion of arts and crafts, thus enriching human civilization.

This is what wisdom is all about. Indeed, wisdom tells us to make dialogue between cultures and civilizations a top priority, especially at a time when all reference systems are questioned, and when we are witnessing a significant rise in terrorism as an ideology, in transnational organized crime, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination.

I am confident that sustained, constructive dialogue between states and a greater number of regional and international meetings on cultural interaction and inter-faith coexistence - in which young people

and civil society should be involved - are appropriate means to combat fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, peacefully and in a civilized way.

It is important, however, not to be tempted by simplistic intellectual shortcuts, equating openness and interaction with alienation and renunciation of the distinctive features of every nation.

For this reason, we have an ethical obligation to promote communication, mutual understanding and interaction between nations and take advantage of cultural diversity as a means to enrich human civilization, instead of using it to breed hatred and antagonism. This is a sine qua non for any successful cross-cultural dialogue.

Similarly, it is the collective duty of all stakeholders - state institutions, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, intellectuals and the media - to strive to develop operational mechanisms for peaceful and serene coexistence.

Making our young people aware of the importance of openness, of listening to one another and being tolerant, of caring about others and of respecting diversity is an effective antidote to the "clash of ignorance". It is also a prerequisite and an essential requirement for the preservation of global security and peace.

I should like, in this regard, to praise the decision to hold an online debate among young people on the Conference's themes. I believe we need to listen to young people on a regular basis, using all available means, and to find out about their concerns and aspirations, as it is they who will shape tomorrow's world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In today's uncertain world, which is facing various, successive crises, we should not be mere spectators as a new global cultural model takes shape under the influence of globalization and the new technologies. We have to play an active role in this process.

In this regard, it is important to show intellectual integrity and be creative in order to develop new tools that help us understand the world and shape it. In doing so, we should neither forsake our identity, nor give in to fanaticism and rejection of others.

Aware that we are living in complex times, and that today's key issues are intertwined, and despite the crises, tensions, wars, conflicts and the global development, social, environmental and security challenges facing the world today, we need to keep faith in the future and deliver a message of optimism and hope, in order to build a more secure, stable and fair world.

In this respect, I firmly believe societies and communities should not see themselves through the narrow prism of states and peoples that coexist or are rivals, but look at themselves from a larger, more positive perspective, and consider themselves as diverse elements of one and the same entity - humanity.

This means each element should place its resources at the service of the larger community, in a spirit of complementarity and harmony.

It is therefore important to create positive links between the various expressions that are the most important asset of humanity, and foster awareness about our common destiny and the imperative of living together, avoiding any form of selfishness, fanaticism and blind hatred.



Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure that, given the widely-recognized and extensive expertise, competence and sagacity of the participants, and thanks to the pertinence of the recommendations and proposals that will be made, this conference will contribute to enriching the debate on issues related to the dialogue between civilizations and cultures and thus serve the interests of all humanity.

Once again, I welcome you and wish you a pleasant stay in your second home, Morocco. May the Almighty grant you success in your endeavors.

Thank you.

Wassalamualaikumwarahmatullahiwabarakatuh”.