This Sunday  November the 6th,  the Kingdom of Morocco commemorates the forty-seventh anniversary of the glorious Green March.

The glorious Green March is an unprecedented model of collective mobilisation, commitment, discipline and attachment to the right, through the spontaneous and sincere response of all Moroccans, as patriots, to the call of the architect of the Green March, the late His Majesty King Hassan II, may God rest his soul.

This peaceful march, which led to the recovery by Morocco of its Southern Provinces, not only represents a major national event and a milestone in the process of completing its territorial integrity, but it also embodies a dynamic whose spirit is perpetuated and renewed through the action carried out to consolidate the Moroccanness of the Sahara on the international scene and to establish the Sahara as a driving force of regional and continental development.

Moroccans of all generations commemorate, every year, with great joy and pride, this landmark date which profoundly shaped political life in the Kingdom and which marked a decisive turning point in the struggle to recover the southern provinces.

It was following the confirmation by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague of the existence of legal links and allegiance between the Sultans of Morocco and the Saharawi tribes that the late HM Hassan II announced, on 16 October 1975, that this great popular march was going to take place in order to liberate the southern provinces.

After hearing this opinion, which represented a recognition of the legitimacy of Morocco’s claims for the recovery of its territories, the late HM Hassan II announced, in a historic speech delivered on the same day, the organisation of a peaceful Green March, a call that soon mobilised 350,000 Moroccans, armed with their faith in God and in the validity of their just cause.

This confirmation was in response to a request made by Morocco on 13 December 1974 for the UN General Assembly to refer to the ICJ a request for its advisory opinion on the legal situation of the Sahara during the Spanish occupation.

In its 16 October opinion, the ICJ ruled that the Sahara has never been “terra-nullius” and that there were “legal ties of allegiance” between this territory and the Kingdom of Morocco.

In this historic speech, the late Sovereign stressed that “the whole world has recognized that the Sahara has been in our possession for a very long time, the whole world has recognized that there were ties between Morocco and the Sahara which were only altered by the coloniser”, concluding that “all that remains is for us to undertake a peaceful march from the North to the South in order to go to the Sahara and to renew our ties with our brothers.

The call was therefore launched and 350,000 participants, 10% of whom were women, from all over the country, came to join this liberating march, which demonstrated in the most eloquent way the firm will of the Moroccan people to recover their territory and reflected the political lucidity and wise vision of the late Sovereign.

By raising the national flag in the sky over Laayoune on 28 February, the Green March became a reference in the peaceful struggle of nations and people to recover their violated rights.

Since then, Morocco has placed the development of this integral part of its national territory at the forefront of its concerns, by providing it with the basic infrastructure necessary to break its isolation and guarantee the local population conditions of prosperity, security and peace.

Thus, the cities of the southern provinces, which constitute a real link between Morocco and the rest of Africa on the geographical, human and economic levels, have been transformed into real well-structured urban centres and dynamic economic poles.

This momentum has continued under the prosperous reign of HM King Mohammed VI, who has ensured the completion of major projects in all sectors of activity to provide the population of these provinces with the best conditions for a dignified life and to promote their development.

Thanks to the determination and unfailing patriotic commitment of the entire Moroccan people, especially the sons and daughters of the southern provinces, the new development model for these provinces, launched by HM King Mohammed VI with an initial budgetary envelope of 77 billion dirhams, has given a boost to this sustained socio-economic evolution.

This model has helped lay the groundwork for an integrated policy to strengthen the

influence of the Moroccan Sahara as an economic center and a hub for relations between the Kingdom and the countries in the region.

Since the launch in 2015 of the new development model for the southern provinces, this region has seen its economic growth accelerated with this ambitious expressway linking Tiznit to Dakhla, which will totally transform the economic landscape of the entire south of the country.

The region also ensures the development of sophisticated logistical and industrial platforms, especially through the establishment of a new industrial, commercial and distribution park in the city of El Marsa, for a global cost estimated at 259 million dirhams on an area of  73 hectares.

Higher education and vocational training are also among the major projects of the region. In this context, the Faculty of Medicine of Laayoune, which is part of the new development model of the Southern Provinces, launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in 2015, is operational since October 1, 2021. This large-scale project required an investment of 250 millions dirhams.

In 2021, the faculty welcomed about 100 students, all from the Southern Provinces. Their number was doubled in 2022, and this university welcomes foreign students from other African countries.

In the field of housing, several projects have been launched in Laayoune to meet the needs of its inhabitants. The project, which aims to build 34,220 housing units for a population estimated at 137,000 people, required the mobilisation of a budget of about 260 million dirhams.

As the gateway to the Moroccan Sahara and an essential passageway between the north and south of the Kingdom, the region lives and develops to the rhythm of large-scale structuring projects. Hydraulic installations are among the integrated projects that will give a strong dynamism to the agriculture and tourism sectors and will create more jobs in the region.

In this respect, the dam of ”Fask”, whose works were launched in 2018, at a financial cost of 1.5 billion dirhams, is considered as the largest in the southern provinces. With a capacity of 79 million m3, this hydraulic work will irrigate agricultural land, ensure the supply of drinking water to Guelmim and its region, improve the local water table and protect the region from flooding.

To strengthen its position as an attractive region for green investments, particularly in solar and wind energy, the Noor Atlas project in the municipality of Chbika (Tantan province) will be built on an area of 200 hectares and will have a production capacity of 40 megawatts.

This project, which is part of the national strategy for the development of renewable energies, will help strengthen the capacity of the national electricity network and reduce energy dependence.

With a capacity of 250 beds, the project of the regional hospital of Guelmim, with a budget of more than 460 million dirhams, will contribute to increase the hospitalization capacity, to develop the health offer and to bring the medical services closer to the inhabitants of the region.

Other projects already completed have contributed to strengthening the economic attractiveness of Guelmim-Oued Noun, notably the new Guelmim airport, which has an annual capacity of 700,000 passengers. This flagship project, which will have positive impacts on the region of Guelmim-Oued Noun, is equipped with modern technological facilities that meet international norms and standards.