His Majesty King Mohammed VI addressed, on December 9, 2022, a speech to the 1st China-Arab Summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Here follows the full text of HM the King's speech, which was read by Head of Government Mr. Aziz Akhannouch.

"Praise be to God,

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

My Dearest Brother, the Honorable Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud,

My Great Friend, Your Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China,

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like, first of all, to extend to my dearest brother, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud – may God protect him – and through him to my dear brother His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and to the people of our sister nation, Saudi Arabia, my sincere thanks and appreciation for hosting this first Arab-China Summit, and for the measures taken to ensure its success. I also wish to thank His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, for co-chairing the Summit.

I also wish to express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, for the commendable work done by the League in preparation for the Summit.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate my congratulations to the Chinese people on the success of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of China. I also extend my most sincere congratulations to my great friend, His Excellency President Xi Jinping, on his election, for a third time, at the head of the party. This

clearly reflects the continued trust of the Chinese people and of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. I also laud the position of the Congress regarding China’s relations with the Arab world.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a pivotal moment in Arab-China cooperation relations. This first Arab-China Summit is a historic event and a watershed in the ties between the two sides. It offers a suitable opportunity to add yet another building block to the solid edifice of the longstanding relations between the Arab world and China.

The Summit gives us a chance to explore future prospects for the establishment of a special partnership that would hold a prominent place in the Arab region’s relations with its various partners – be they countries, groupings, or regional or continental organizations. Over and beyond that, the Summit is an opportunity to recall the cultural dimensions and the historical ties based on an intricate combination of human relations, fruitful cultural interaction, and positive mutual influence dating back to the ancient Silk Road.

These time-honored relations, which were developed through cultural exchanges and interactions can be traced back to time immemorial. Not only do these ties link the past to the present, but they also allow us, today, to look forward to innovative, continuous cooperation. And perhaps one of the most promising prospects of that relationship is the current Arab-China cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Summit is taking place in an international context fraught with the crises caused by the Corona pandemic as well as the critical geostrategic developments affecting the world, which include a number of upheavals, hotbeds of tension and armed conflicts. These developments and events directly impact our Arab region, our partner, China, and countries around the world. As a result, our strategic partnership is especially important, given that it offers possibilities to overcome the repercussions of these multifaceted challenges.

The cooperation, in the health sector, between China and Arab countries during the pandemic – which in some cases, as with the Kingdom of Morocco, developed into an institutional, scientific and industrial partnership, especially in the area of vaccines – is clear testimony to the importance and relevance of the close cooperation uniting us.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I note, with deep satisfaction, how keen the People’s Republic of China has been to promote security and stability in the Arab region, and to support Arab countries in their efforts to tackle current crises and mitigate their impacts. In this regard, China has been leveraging its diplomatic wisdom and insight to bridge gaps and make dialogue prevail in order to overcome the turmoil and instability from which some Arab sister countries have been suffering.

I should like to point out, in this regard, that the challenges which the countries of the Arab region are currently facing, and which threaten their security and stability, are sometimes due, regrettably, to the policies and behaviors of some Arab countries towards other Arab nations. With that in mind, it must be emphasized that this situation, which is fraught with peril, cannot be successfully addressed without compliance with the principles of good neighborliness, respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and non-interference in their internal affairs.

On a different level, China’s firm support for the just Palestinian cause is a precious

international asset that can be conducive to a just and lasting solution to this question, in keeping with the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, foremost of which are those relating to al-Quds al-Sharif.

As Chairman of the al-Quds Committee, I cannot but express my deep appreciation for China's unremitting support for the preservation of the legal and historical status of the Holy City and its rejection of any unilateral decisions that would undermine efforts to revive the peace process, remove the case of the city of al-Quds from the negotiating table, and dissociate it from the other final-status issues.

Such actions would increase tensions and complicate matters at a time when we – together with other peace-loving parties – are seeking to bring about the right conditions to make the peace option prevail and ensure that the Palestinians and Israeli sides go back to the negotiating table.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Arab-Chinese relations are diverse. They have been growing at political, economic, commercial, cultural and human levels. They offer great potential, which should be optimally leveraged. This would contribute to fulfilling the aspirations of the Arab world in terms of real economic take-off and scientific and technological progress, building, to that end, on development projects, infrastructure and logistical support, human development and the transfer of technology.

Nevertheless, and although China is the first economic partner of Arab countries, and in spite of the fact that trade between the two sides has grown significantly in terms of volume, diversity and intensity – standing at about $240bn in 2020 – achievements still fall short of the growth potential. There is also a significant deficit in terms of Arab exports to China, with the exception of oil and gas. This means we have to work together to promote and diversify Arab exports, making them the driving force for the development of Arab industrial, agricultural and service sectors.

Moreover, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Arab countries is still inferior to

that of Arab tourists visiting the Republic of China. I therefore call for measures to increase tourist flows in both directions in order to achieve our aspirations, namely closer relations and greater interaction between the Arab and Chinese peoples.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the pillars of the Kingdom of Morocco's foreign policy is the promotion of South-South cooperation, the diversification of partners and the opening-up to regional groupings. Indeed, the Kingdom has relations rooted in friendship, solidarity and fruitful cooperation with many such groupings, especially those of the countries of the South.

In this regard, I would like to say how deeply satisfied I am with the solid, longstanding friendship between Morocco and China. I commend our fruitful cooperation in various sectors, as well as our constructive coordination and consultation on various issues of common concern. I also know that both countries share a sincere, common desire to further expand their relationship.

With that in mind, I wish to stress the Kingdom of Morocco's endorsement of the One-China policy as a basis for the relations between the two friendly nations. Our support for the initiatives put forward by China, such as the "Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative", reflects the extent of the close cooperation between our two countries. Morocco is also keen to press ahead with the consolidation of the "strategic partnership" between the two nations, concluded in May 2016, and the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Belt and Road Initiative". More generally, we look forward to broadening our bilateral cooperation to include new, promising, value-added sectors, and to take the relationship between the Kingdom of Morocco and our friend, the Republic of China, to a new level.

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Your Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As is the case in the cooperation forums which bring together the Arab region with groupings and other countries, the Kingdom of Morocco has taken part, in a constructive, responsible way, in all the numerous, fruitful meetings and activities organized within the framework of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. It has contributed to the endorsement and success of the important initiatives developed within that framework, in line with a belief in the need for, and the pertinence of, the consolidation of the strategic partnership between China and Arab countries. Today, the Kingdom of Morocco is reaffirming its readiness to contribute effectively to taking this strategic partnership to a new level in all sectors, while remaining committed to the just, legitimate causes of Arab countries. The aim is to help bring about a more equitable and balanced global political and economic system, making sure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states as well as non-interference in their affairs are respected in full.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco commends the Arab-China initiatives that will be adopted by the Summit. It is ready to contribute effectively to the recommendations to be included in the “Riyadh Declaration”. The goal is to further promote the Arab-China strategic partnership and lay solid foundations for building a common future in which inter-state cooperation is guaranteed, investment is promoted, the economy is boosted and its performance is improved. I also hope this strategic partnership will lead to the betterment of the conditions of Arab people and enable us to be part and parcel of the knowledge and communication-based society.

I should like to take this opportunity to say how much I value the close bonds between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as the depth of our relationship. I commend the model partnership between the two sister nations – a partnership rooted in constructive consultation, active solidarity and fruitful cooperation in all strategic sectors.

I also value the sincere fraternal bonds and mutual esteem between our two Royal families as well as the cordial relations and friendship between the Moroccan and Saudi peoples.

Before concluding, I would like to renew my sincere thanks to the leadership, government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their warm welcome and for all they have done to organize this Summit and make it a success. The aim is to

achieve what we all look forward to in terms of consolidating the foundations of a true partnership that promotes peace and stability and leads to progress and shared prosperity.

Thank you.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.”