

*Rabat – His Majesty King Mohammed VI, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan and HRH Prince Moulay Rachid, delivered, on Friday October 13, 2023 , a speech to the Parliament on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the third legislative year of the 11th Legislature.*

Here follows the full text of the Royal Speech:

“Praise be to God,

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

Honourable Members of Parliament,

It was the will of Almighty God that a tragic earthquake should strike our country, leaving behind thousands of martyrs and injuring a great many people – may they recover quickly, with God’s help.

This has been a most painful experience which has affected us all, the King and the people, from Tangiers to Lagouira, from the east to the west of our country.

Almighty God says: “Say, ‘Nothing will happen to us except what God has decreed for us.’” True is the Word of God.

I pray to Almighty God that He may stabilize His land, out of mercy for the weak and the needy among His servants, for He is the Most Merciful.

Earthquakes cause destruction, but we intend to rehabilitate and rebuild the devastated areas.

I therefore stress the need to continue providing assistance to the stricken families, to speed up rehabilitation and reconstruction in the affected areas, and to make sure basic services are available.

Beyond the horrific nature of the tragedy, what alleviates our suffering and, indeed, makes us proud, is the reaction of civil society and of all Moroccans – in the homeland and abroad – who have shown heartfelt, spontaneous solidarity with their afflicted brothers and sisters.

I also wish to commend the Royal Armed Forces and the various emergency and security agencies, government authorities and local governments for the sacrifices

they have been making to rescue and assist the people living in the stricken regions.

I should like to reiterate my thanks to our friends and to sister nations that showed solidarity with the Moroccan people and stood by us during those painful circumstances.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This tragedy has shown that authentic Moroccan values have prevailed. They have enabled our country to overcome adversity and crises, again making us not only stronger, but also more determined to forge ahead, with unwavering confidence and optimism.

That is the spirit and those are the lofty values ingrained in our DNA. We see them as the cornerstone of our unity and of the cohesion of Moroccan society.

These rallying national values are enshrined in the Kingdom's Constitution. They apply to and are embodied by all the components of our authentic Moroccan identity and are also fully in line with universal values.

I am referring, in particular, to the values that form the bedrock of our unified national identity:

- Firstly: Religious and spiritual values, at the forefront of which are the values of Maliki Sunni Islam, which is based on the Commandership of the Faithful, and which calls for moderation, openness to others, tolerance and inter-faith, intercultural coexistence.

This is what makes Morocco a model of coexistence between Moroccans, Muslims and Jews alike. Ours is a country in which other faiths and cultures are duly respected.

- Secondly: The national values underpinning the Moroccan nation, and which are based on the monarchy. The latter is unanimously supported by all Moroccans; it brings together all components of the Moroccan people. Its pillar is the strong cohesion and the mutual allegiance – *Bei'a* – between the throne and the people.

Love of the homeland and unanimity on the nation's unity and territorial integrity are among Morocco's long-standing, immutable values which unite Moroccans, and

which bring together all the constitutive components of our rich, diverse, yet unified identity.

- Thirdly: The values of solidarity and social cohesion between groups, generations and regions; this makes Moroccan society closely-knit, with different segments supporting and reinforcing one another.

We call for continued adherence to these values because they consolidate our national unity and family cohesion; they also preserve human dignity and enhance social justice. This is all the more necessary, given the profound and rapid shifts which are at work in the world today, and which have led to a noticeable decline in the value system. In fact, values are sometimes abandoned altogether.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is in keeping with the spirit of these national values – which consider the family and family bonds to be sacred – that I have addressed a letter to the Head of Government asking for a review of the Family Code.

According to our Constitution, the family is the pillar of society. Therefore, I have always sought to make sure the conditions conducive to family cohesion are in place.

Society will not function properly if the family is not cohesive or is imbalanced. Family disintegration makes societies lose their moral compass.

Therefore, I have been working to enhance our identity through major projects. Among these is the large-scale social protection project, which I consider a pillar of our social and development model.

By the grace of the Almighty, we shall begin the implementation of the program for the provision direct social assistance at the end of this year.

To give concrete substance to the values of social solidarity, which are deeply ingrained in Moroccans, I have decided that this program should not be limited to the payment of family allowances. I have made sure it also includes some social segments that need support.

This assistance will concern school-age children as well as children with disabilities, newborn babies and also impoverished and vulnerable families without school-age

children, especially those supporting elderly people.

Thanks to its direct impact, this program will contribute to raising the standard of living of target families and will help fight poverty and vulnerability, in addition to improving social and human development indicators.

Society is more productive and proactive when it is deeply committed to solidarity. It also becomes more resilient to contingences and fluctuations.

I have instructed the government to adopt a comprehensive approach for the implementation of this program, in keeping with the principles of the framework law on social protection adopted by Parliament.

It should be implemented in a gradual manner, taking into account the funds allocated, the optimal scope of the coverage, the amounts to be disbursed and how the assistance is to be managed.

It should also be a model of successful implementation, based on the system for targeting beneficiaries under the unified social registry, making sure modern technology is properly leveraged.

In this regard, I wish to stress the need to uphold the principles of solidarity, transparency and equity, and to provide assistance to those who deserve it.

I call on the government to give priority to the rationalization of current social benefit schemes and ensure their effectiveness as well as the sustainability of their financing.

I also insist on the need to uphold the principles of good governance for the implementation of this project in its entirety; a special monitoring and evaluation mechanism needs to be set up for the project's continuous development and evaluation.

I am sure you are aware, ladies and gentlemen, of the role Parliament plays in terms of embodying and disseminating these time-honored values, as well as in the implementation of major projects and reforms and in ensuring the country's mobilization and its vigilance to defend the nation's causes and its best interests.

I can think of no better way to close this address than these words by the Almighty: "And they will say: 'Praise be to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow: for

our Lord is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Ready to appreciate (service)". True is the Word of God.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh."