

*Tetouan – His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Assist Him, delivered, on Monday, a speech to His faithful people on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Sovereign’s accession to the Throne of His glorious Ancestors.*

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

Dear Citizens,

Today, we are proudly celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of my accession to the throne.

During these years, and by the Grace of the Almighty, we have accomplished a great deal in terms of political and institutional reforms and the consolidation of the Moroccan identity.

I have also launched many economic and development projects as well as social programs to achieve social cohesion and enable citizens to have access to basic services.

Furthermore, I have sought to consolidate the country’s territorial integrity and enhance Morocco’s standing as an influential player and a responsible, reliable partner at the regional and international levels.

Dear Citizens,

Our achievements enhance our self-confidence and nurture hope for the future.

Nevertheless, the challenges our country is facing require further efforts and vigilance, as well as more creative solutions and good governance.

And one of the greatest challenges we are facing today is that of water – a challenge which is becoming increasingly serious due to drought, the impact of climate change, a naturally growing demand and the delay in completing some of the projects planned as part of our water policy.

Six consecutive years of drought have had a profound impact on water reserves and groundwater, making the water situation more and more fragile and complex.

To address this situation, which many regions are suffering from, especially in rural settings, I have instructed the authorities concerned to take urgent, innovative steps in order to avoid water shortages.

Concurrently, I have been insisting on the optimal implementation of all components of the 2020-2027 National Program for the Supply of Drinking Water and Irrigation Water, which has contributed – by the Grace of the Almighty – to mitigating the severity of the water situation.

Given the growing needs and the constraints in this regard, I wish to insist on the regular updating of the national water policy mechanisms, and the establishment of a strategic goal – regardless of the conditions or circumstances – which is to provide drinking water to all citizens, and mobilize at least 80% of the irrigation water needed, across the national territory.

In this regard, it is necessary to complete the dam construction program and to give priority to the dams planned in the areas receiving significant rainfall.

In keeping with my ambitious, proactive and strategic vision, I recommend accelerating the completion of large-scale projects for inter-basin transfers: those from the Oued Laou and Loukkos basins to the Oum Er-Rbia basin, through the Sebou and Bouregreg basins.

This will make it possible to retain one billion cubic meters of water that is being lost to the sea.

Additionally, these projects will allow for a balanced distribution of national water resources across regions.

Just as importantly, we need to accelerate the completion of seawater desalination plants, according to the program set for this purpose, and which aims to produce more than 1.7 billion cubic metres annually.

Thus, by 2030, Morocco will cover more than half its drinking water needs thanks to these desalination plants. This will also make it possible to irrigate vast farming areas, thereby helping to enhance the country's food security. A case in point, in this regard, is the Casablanca desalination plant, which will be the largest of its kind

in Africa, and the second worldwide to be 100% powered by clean energy.

The greatest challenge remains the completion of the plants programmed and the related renewable energy projects on time and without delay.

And since water production from desalination plants requires supplying these facilities with clean energy, it is necessary to expedite the completion of the electrical connectivity project to transfer renewable energy from the southern provinces to the country's central and northern areas as soon as possible.

With that in mind, I am calling for the development of a national water desalination industry as well as courses for the training of specialized engineers and technicians. I also encourage the creation of Moroccan companies specialized in the construction and maintenance of desalination plants.

In this regard, let me stress that there is no room for any negligence, delay, or mismanagement in such a crucially vital sector as that of water.

Dear Citizens,

Considering the efforts that are being made to provide water for us all, we ought to be honest with ourselves regarding the sound, rational use of water resources. Indeed, spending billions and billions in order to mobilize water resources, only to see that cases of waste and misuse continue to exist, is unacceptable.

Preserving water is a national responsibility that concerns all institutions and all stakeholders. It is also every citizen's solemn duty.

I therefore call on the authorities concerned to be stricter when it comes to protecting the nation's water resources, to set in place the water police, and to reduce the excessive use of water and chaotic water pumping practices.

I also urge further coordination and consistency between the water policy and the agricultural policy, especially in periods of water scarcity, and call for the use of drip irrigation across the country.

In the same vein, we need to adopt a more ambitious program for the treatment and reuse of water in order to make sure reclaimed water can serve as an important source to cover our needs in the areas of irrigation, industry, etc.

Finally, I should like to emphasize the need to encourage innovation and investment in new water management technologies.

As regards the Kingdom's southern provinces, the water desalination plants completed there have contributed significantly to the region's economic and social development.

I therefore call for the expansion of the Dakhla plant and an increase in the production capacity of similar facilities in the future, relying, to this end, on these provinces' significant potential for clean energy production in order to meet the needs of the population and of productive sectors there, such as agriculture, tourism, industry, etc.

Dear Citizens,

The keen interest we take in the situation prevailing in the country does not mean we are oblivious of, or insensitive to, the tragedy befalling our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

As Chairman of the al-Quds Committee, I managed to have an unprecedented route opened up, through which we delivered urgent food and medical aid to our brothers and sisters in Gaza.

And in keeping with the same spirit of commitment and responsibility, I continue to back constructive initiatives aimed at finding practical solutions, achieving a tangible and permanent ceasefire, and addressing the humanitarian situation.

The deteriorating conditions in the region require going beyond the logic of crisis management and seeking, instead, a final solution to this conflict, based on the following:

- First: If putting an end to the war in Gaza is an urgent priority, then this must be achieved concurrently with opening up political prospects conducive to a just and lasting peace in the region;
- Second: Opting for negotiations to revive the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides requires cutting off the path for extremists - from whatever side they may come;
- Third: Achieving complete security and stability in the region can be realized only

within the framework of the two-state solution, with Gaza an integral part of the territory of the independent Palestinian state, and East Jerusalem its capital.

Dear Citizens,

It is the responsibility of all citizens - male and female alike - to contribute to the development of the homeland and defend its best interests and just causes.

Having said that, I would like to say how much I value the efforts made by the nation's stakeholders and driving forces, both in the public and private spheres, for the sake of the country's progress and development.

I should like, in this regard, to express my appreciation to all members of our Royal Armed Forces, the Royal Gendarmerie, local government authorities, the National Security Forces, the Auxiliary Forces and the Emergency Services for their dedication and constant mobilization under my leadership to defend the nation's unity, security and stability.

We pray for the souls of our righteous martyrs, foremost among them my blessed grandfather and revered father, Their Late Majesties King Mohammed V and King Hassan II - may they rest in peace.

I can think of no better way to conclude this address than with the words of the Almighty: "And God sends down rain from the skies, and gives therewith life to the earth after its death" - True is the Word of God.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh."