

Benslimane – His Majesty King Mohammed VI chaired on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, in the province of Benslimane (Casablanca-Settat Region), the launching ceremony of the works for the realization of a manufacturing plant for Covid-19 and other vaccines, a structuring project which, in the long term, will contribute to ensure the vaccine sovereignty of the Kingdom and the African Continent as a whole.

This industrial unit is in line with the vision of His Majesty the King to position the Kingdom as a key biotechnology hub in Africa and in the world, capable of meeting the health needs of the continent in the short and long term, by integrating pharmaceutical research, clinical development, manufacturing and marketing of biopharmaceutical products of great necessity. It should eventually mobilize an investment of approximately 400 to 500 million euros.

The Benslimane project consists of setting up a plant for the manufacture and syringing of vaccines (anti-Covid and other vaccines), with 3 industrial lines whose combined production capacity will reach 116 million units in 2024. These lines will be dedicated to the production of pre-filled syringes, liquid vials and lyophilized vials. The projected investment is approximately €200 million, and the start of production of the trial batches is scheduled for July 30, 2022.

The project, which is the result of a public-private partnership, including the support of one of the world leaders in biotechnology and the “Fill & Finish” industry, the Swedish company Recipharm, will ensure the Kingdom’s self-sufficiency in vaccines and make the country a leading biotechnology platform on the African continent and the world in the field of the “fill & finish” industry.

Named “SENSYO Pharmatech”, the industrial unit, the largest platform by capacity of Fill & Finish of vaccines in Africa, will eventually become one of the first 5 in the world. This large-scale project aims, in the medium term (2022-2025), to transfer the aseptic filling and active substance manufacturing of more than 20 vaccines and bio-therapeutic products, including 3 anti-Covid-19 vaccines, to Morocco in less than 3 years, covering more than 70% of the Kingdom’s needs and more than 60% of those of the Continent.

It is planned in this framework the transfer to Morocco of advanced biotechnology platforms, including clinical research, development and production of cell and gene therapies, stem cells, and advanced in vitro diagnostic technologies.

The project aims, in the long term (2023-2030), the creation of an African Pole of

biopharmaceutical and vaccine innovation in Morocco recognized worldwide and this, within the framework of a partnership between major international players in the fields of research and development of advanced technologies in vaccines and bio-therapeutic products and all Moroccan institutions of supervision, including the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Industry and Finance.

A massive and continuous transfer of know-how is planned to position the Kingdom in the next 5 years as the continent's locomotive in research, development and production of advanced biopharmaceutical products.

It should be noted that today, thanks to the mobilization of aseptic filling lines available locally in Morocco as well as the transfer of the filling of vials in clean room of the vaccine against Covid-19 of Sinopharm to Morocco, the Kingdom produces more than 3 million doses locally per month. Production capacity will increase to about 5 million doses starting in February 2022 and to more than 20 million doses per month by the end of 2022. By 2025, Morocco will be able to produce more than 2 billion doses of vaccine.

On this occasion, HM the King chaired the signing ceremony of the investment agreement for the realization of the manufacturing unit of anti Covid-19 and other vaccines, in Benslimane.

It was signed by Nadia FettahAlaoui, Minister of Economy and Finance, Nizar Baraka, Minister of Equipment and Water, Khalid Ait Taleb, Minister of Health and Social Protection, YounesSekkouri, Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills, and MohcineJazouli, Minister Delegate for Investment, Convergence and the Evaluation of Public Policies.

It was also inked by Othman Benjelloun, president of the company "SensyoPharmatech", Said Ahmidouch, Wali of the region of Casablanca-Settat, Samir Lyazidi, Governor of the province of Benslimane, aoufiqMoucharraf, Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and AbdellahKabiri, Director of the industry pole at the National Office of Electricity and Drinking Water.

With the launch of this project, Morocco, under the enlightened leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is taking another step towards effective and proactive management of the pandemic crisis and its consequences.

