

*On the occasion of his official visit to Rome at the invitation of his Italian counterpart, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates Mr. Nasser Bourita had, on Wednesday, October 7 2020, talks with the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Luigi Di Maio, focusing in particular on the positive dynamics in the relations between the two countries and the means to strengthen them.*

These talks focused on the evolution of bilateral relations, which have been elevated to the rank of “Multidimensional Strategic Partnership” signed in November 2019.

The two Ministers also discussed the means to consolidate cooperation in the cultural and scientific fields, in addition to international and regional issues of common interest, in particular the Libyan issue.

“The Italian Minister welcomed the course set by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in a dynamic of open progress and modernity, through the design of an adapted and renewed development model and the promotion of advanced regionalization,” according to the joint statement issued at the end of the official visit.

Noting “the depth and quality of the ties of friendship and mutual respect that unite Morocco and Italy, as well as the positive dynamics of bilateral relations,” the two Ministers, the statement added, “welcomed the prospect of the Multidimensional Strategic Partnership between Morocco and Italy and agreed, in this regard, to establish appropriate mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation, namely a partnership Council at ministerial level and cooperation Committees on priority issues”.

The two parties, said the same source, “have confirmed their commitment to deepen economic and commercial collaboration between the two countries, an instrument of growth for the welfare and friendly relations between the two countries”.

The two Ministers have also “welcomed Italy’s support for the process of implementation of the Advanced Status enjoyed by Morocco in its relations with the European Union, as well as the follow-up of the Morocco-EU action plan”, and agreed to “continue to work for the strengthening of the privileged partnership between Morocco and the EU within the framework of an ambitious strategic vision”.

Mr. Bourita indicated, during a joint press conference with his Italian counterpart, that the two countries will celebrate next year the 30-year anniversary of the agreement signed in 1991 on friendship and cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Italy, an agreement “which forms the basis of bilateral relations,” he said.

“Morocco’s willingness is to seize this event to give a strong impetus to bilateral relations and visibility, and to organize a number of events to celebrate the anniversary of this important agreement,” he said.

This anniversary, said Mr. Bourita, will be an opportunity to implement the declaration on the Strategic Partnership signed between the two countries in 2019. “This will be an opportunity to organize an economic forum and strengthen the partnership between the business communities of both countries,” he stressed.

After recalling that Italy is the 5th trading partner of Morocco and the 5th provider of tourists, Mr Bourita said that “Morocco’s ambition is to further strengthen our partnership”. “The objective, in accordance with the High Royal Instructions is that, within the framework of the diversification of Morocco’s relations within the European Union, Italy has a place of choice among the Kingdom’s strategic partners,” said the Minister.

Regarding the Libyan issue, the two Ministers “stressed the need for regional and international parties to work together to help the Libyans find a lasting political settlement”.

In this regard, both parties “welcomed the international initiatives under the UN process, particularly the meetings held in Bouznika, Morocco, in September and October 2020, which testify to the constructive role that Morocco is playing for the resolution of this crisis”.

The two Ministers were able, on this occasion, “to measure the convergence of views and diagnoses on several regional and international issues of common interest”. They “agreed on the strategic importance of Africa and reiterate their respective commitment to sustainable and multidimensional development action,” the joint statement stressed.

Minister Bourita also underlined that the Sahel issue was also raised during the meeting with his Italian counterpart. “We agreed to coordinate more and strengthen

our cooperation to make a contribution to the stability and development of the region within the framework of an integrated approach where security, religion, economic and social matters must go together”, he added.