

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Mr. Nasser Bourita, held talks on August 10, 2021 in Rabat, with his Israeli counterpart Mr. Yair Lapid on a series of bilateral and regional issues of common interest.

During a joint press conference held at the end of their meeting, MFA Bourita said that Mr. Lapid's visit reflects the commitment of Morocco and Israel to strengthen their bilateral relations and give them a concrete impetus through the establishment of flexible and effective cooperation mechanisms.

MFA Bourita also stressed the positive dynamic between the two countries since the signing, last December, of the Tripartite Agreement between Morocco, the US and Israel, leading to the creation of five working groups covering promising sectors, such as research and innovation, tourism, aviation, agriculture, energy, environment, trade and investment.

Moreover, he recalled that the resumption of bilateral relations between Morocco and Israel express the will and conviction of His Majesty the King who personally chaired the signing of the Tripartite Agreement which laid the foundation of this relationship. A relationship that, as stated by HM the King, draws its strength from the strong attachment of the Jewish community of Moroccan origin to the Kingdom and the unfailing links between this community, including the one present in Israel, and the person of His Majesty the King.

In this regard, the Minister recalled that Moroccan Jews have lived and continue to live in Morocco with their Muslim brothers, within the framework of the concern of His Majesty the King for Moroccan citizens regardless of their religion.

"We aspire to enrich our relations with a human dimension, one of the manifestations of which was the recent inauguration of direct flights between the two countries and the enthusiasm this has aroused among Israelis of Moroccan origin and the pride of their attachment to the person of His Majesty the King," noted MFA Bourita.

He also mentioned the signing of three new cooperation agreements that consolidate the legal framework governing bilateral relations in the sectors of aviation, youth and sports, and political consultations, adding that the two parties have agreed to move forward in the development of new agreements to facilitate investment, trade and scientific research.

Regarding the situation in the Middle East, MFA Bourita stressed the importance of maintaining the truce after the incidents of last May, noting that tensions are only beneficial to extremists who are more inclined to spread hate.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the prospects for peace, he said, adding that His Majesty the King “has repeatedly stressed the need to break with the status quo and the stalemate in order to resume negotiations, which are the only way to achieve a final, lasting and comprehensive solution based on a two-state solution of two peoples living side by side in peace and security.

He also stressed the urgent need to rebuild trust between the Israeli and Palestinian sides for the sake of peace, stability, progress and prosperity in the region.

MFA Bourita said that HM the King, Chairman of the Al Quds Committee, “has constantly stressed the imperative of preserving the unique character of the Holy City as a universal heritage of mankind, endowed with a deep symbolism and a spiritual charge for the followers of the three monotheistic religions”.

He also stressed the importance of restoring trust, maintaining calm and avoiding anything that might inflame tensions, “fundamental prerequisites for opening a political horizon to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and maintaining the two-state solution as the only way to ensure peace and stability for all”.

Mr. Bourita stressed the importance of a rapid return to the table of direct and useful negotiations that should ultimately lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State, the establishment of a comprehensive peace and the creation of conditions for progress and prosperity in the region.

For his part, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated that the signing of these cooperation agreements will bring innovation and mutually beneficial opportunities to both parties, stressing the imperative of cultivating hope to transcend the hatreds inherited from the past.

Expressing his gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, whose “vision and courage have enabled us to meet here today”, the Israeli MFA stressed the imperative of cultivating hope to transcend the hatreds inherited from the past.

He stressed that his visit to Morocco, the birthplace of a vibrant Jewish community dating back to the 2nd century BC, is part of a futuristic vision driven by the virtues

of friendship and cooperation, notably in the fields of tourism, economy, trade, and cultural exchanges.

Three cooperation agreements were signed by the two Ministers at this occasion. The first is a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of mechanisms for political consultations which aims to contribute to the deepening and strengthening of the multifaceted cooperation relations between the two countries.

The second text is a cooperation agreement in the fields of culture, youth and sports which aim to establish a framework in order to support and encourage the development of bilateral cooperation in this regard.

The third agreement concerns air services between the governments of Morocco and Israel. The main objective of this agreement is to promote the international aviation system based on competition between airlines and to establish air transport networks providing services that meet the public's travel and delivery needs, with competitive prices and open market services.