The response to the new terrorist threats posed by ISIS in Africa requires strengthening the capacities of states and sub-regional organizations, said on 30 March, 2021, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Mr. Nasser Bourita.

“The response to the emerging threats of ISIS must prioritize support to African states and sub-regional organizations in terms of capacity building, the aim being to ensure more sustainable results” in the fight against this terrorist group, MFA Mr. Bourita stressed at the virtual ministerial meeting of the Core Group of the International Anti-Daech Coalition.

In this regard, the Minister expressed Morocco’s commitment to capacity-building efforts in Africa as evidenced by the support shown to the opening in Rabat of the Program Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

MFA Mr. Bourita also called for better coordination of international initiatives and efforts to address the situation “which is evolving on the ground,” highlighting the “great potential” of pooling the efforts of the coalition with those undertaken by the Coalition for the Sahel in support of the G5-Sahel.

The Minister stressed the need to implement the conclusions of the first meeting of the Coalition on the ISIS threats in West Africa, held last November, by providing support to the countries of the region.

While ISIS has lost control over its strongholds in the Middle East, the group still aims to reinvent itself by garnering more support, funds and fighters in other parts of the world, Morocco’s FM warned.

Africa is now the target and focus of ISIS. Since the last meeting of the Coalition, the situation is alarming and continues to deteriorate in the continent where the terrorist threat is spreading and has now reached the southern part of Africa, said MFA Bourita.

For Morocco’s top diplomat, the year 2020 has been the deadliest in the Sahel region with a deathtoll of 4,250 people, i.e. a 60% increase compared to 2019. That the majority of victims are civilians (59%), he added.

ISIS is strengthening its presence in Africa through stronger collaboration with other

terrorist groups and criminal networks. More and more groups pledge allegiance to it. They control territories while recruiting among armed separatist groups and vulnerable refugees, MFA Bourita observed.

Attacks are conducted in a more sophisticated manner with the transfer of knowledge and expertise from ISIS to local terrorist groups with the use of new technologies, including drones for reconnaissance operations, the Minister stated.

MFA Bourita expressed Morocco’s thanks to Belgium and the United States for this timely meeting, adding that the pandemic situation, which is monopolizing the world’s attention and efforts, “should not distract us from the serious threat that ISIS continues to pose to international peace and security.”

Established in September 2014 at the initiative of the United States, Gulf countries, Turkey and Egypt, the Coalition now has 83 partners with Mauritania joining the group in 2020.