



Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Ministerial meeting for the 3rd MRC Summit
Joint Session with Dialogue Partners, Development Partners and other Partners

Speech of Her Excellency Mounia BOUCETTA
Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

4th April, 2018, Siem Reap, Cambodia



**Mister Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First and foremost, I would like to express my joy to be here today to participate in the 3rd Mekong River Commission's Ministerial Meeting.

I also would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the warm welcome and generous hospitality.

Morocco's presence here today reflects the firm determination of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI, to continuously provide new impetus to our relations by putting human development at the heart of our concerns and by adopting a collective, efficient and integrated approach.

In addition, it is part of our ongoing foreign policy's strategy, aiming at diversifying partners and accordingly embarking on an outstanding cooperation with MRC member States and partners.

On the path of this policy, Morocco and ASEAN countries, have upgraded their relations with the signature of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2016. Moreover, Morocco submitted, a few weeks ago, its candidacy to become ASEAN "Sectoral Dialogue Partner" (SDP).

True to its commitments, Morocco has actively participated to the World Water Forum, held last March in Brasilia and whose opening ceremony was, as usual, marked by the presentation of the 6th edition of the Hassan II World Water Prize.

This prize was created at the initiative of the World Water Council and the Kingdom of Morocco in 2000, in memory of His Late Majesty King Hassan II, for his far-sighted policy in the cooperation and solidarity field in favour of preservation and sustainable water management.

Thus, is important to recall and commend the role that MRC plays as a regional organisation and its efforts to achieve balanced sustainable development aiming to improve people's standard of living in the basin region.

In this context, it is worth emphasizing the relevance of intervention basis documents of MRC especially the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2016-2020 and the two strategies recently approved by MRC Council regarding adaptation Strategy and Action Plan as well as the MRC strategy regarding Fisheries Management and Development.

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today and more than ever, water is a crucial issue for humanity, its peace and stability. In Morocco, although hydric resources are inside the country and not shared with neighbouring countries, the Kingdom has for decades been pursuing an ambitious policy of resource management.

Indeed, at the constitutional level, the right for water access is enshrined as a priority right.

Since its independence in 1956, and in order to deal with overall insufficient and spatially heterogeneous rainfall input, the Morocco has pursued a policy of water resources management that allowed a relatively efficient mobilization of conventional, surface and groundwater resources available in the Kingdom. Initiated by his Majesty the late King Hassan II, the enlightened policy of dams, in this case, has been main direction in the country.

The water sector, in Morocco, is of particular interest in the agenda of the public authorities and has been at the centre of economic policies' preoccupations in order to provide the country with a major hydropower infrastructure, improve access to drinking water, meet the needs of industries, tourism and agriculture.

On this auspicious occasion, please allow me to praise the excellent ties of cooperation linking Morocco and MRC member countries that have been strengthened by the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in June, 2017.

Being the first African and Arab country to have the privilege to join MRC as a Partner, Morocco confirms its full commitment and solidarity with MRC member states that call for innovative regional integration, and a development approach in order to address the new challenges confronting our planet and humanity.

Moreover, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes with great enthusiasm the approval of the Action Plan submitted by MRC and which defines concrete and mutually beneficial actions namely those related to river basin integrated hydraulic resources management and to opportunities to develop tourism activities in the Mekong River basin. In this sense, Morocco is pleased to share its experience in the field of ecotourism which would enhance MRC capacities to develop the Basin's tourism sector.

Let me please recall, with pleasure, the organization, in Morocco, in October 2017, of a working visit of the MRC delegation in order to get better knowledge about Morocco's assets and explore opportunities of cooperation in the fields of water management, renewable energies, agriculture....

Regarding the integrated management of hydric resources for Basin versants, I am pleased to announce that a group of Moroccan experts in the field of management of hydraulic infrastructure will undertake a working visit to Vientiane in April 2018, in order to share experience and know-how and explore new opportunities to deepen our collaboration for a mutually beneficial partnership.

In addition, the Moroccan Office of Vocational Training and Work Promotion, proposes to organize, in Morocco, short training courses, for the benefit of irrigation practitioners.

Moreover, the Executive Board of the Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy will conduct a strategic assessment on options and possible sites for solar and wind energy in the Mekong basin.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, the entire world nowadays is facing a major challenge, that is, the climate change. Morocco places this challenge among its top priorities and has set up a well-defined strategy to find ways to limit its effects. Indeed, Morocco organized COP22 on November 2016 in Marrakech and is fully committed to preserve the environment. The effective Moroccan contribution to the preservation and safeguard of the Chad Lake in Africa which highly suffers from climate change and over exploitation of water resources is just a case in point.

Fully convinced that MRC member States share the same commitment to face climate change, Morocco aspires for a more solid cooperation, joint efforts and efficient partnerships in particular under the Action Framework of Sendai 2015-2030.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, I would like to seize this opportunity to express and reiterate the willingness of the Kingdom of Morocco to work with all MRC member States. I am convinced that Morocco and MRC will have tremendous opportunities to explore and achieve many concrete results and interventions.

I thank you for your kind attention