

Praise be to God

May peace and blessings be upon
the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy the Kingdom of Morocco is hosting this first International Conference of Expatriate Communities' Councils, Institutions and Elected Representatives.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished figures participating in this gathering and to commend them for their action and the effective part they are playing in organizing expatriate communities and attending to their affairs.

I am pleased there is such a climate of confidence and resolve to build a better future, and wish to commend the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad for holding this international event, the first of its kind, and for creating this opportunity to ponder collectively on common issues and chart a way forward. Past experiences and interactions will be examined to better serve the interests of all expatriate communities without exception.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, immigration has become a global phenomenon, with multiple, rapidly changing implications.

And yet, the problems faced by migrant communities are fairly similar: how to facilitate migrants' integration in host countries, secure a dignified life for them, help them participate effectively in the development of host countries, consolidate their cultural and social bonds with the country of origin and preserve their identity. Another concern is how to strike a balance and achieve harmony between the different ethnic backgrounds of expatriate communities, regardless of where they came from or where they settled.

Our world today is also marked by cultural globalization which is the product of interaction between our diverse cultures. This form of globalization is based on a dynamic exchange and mutually enriching experiences which benefit mankind, serve its progress and promote the values of understanding, peace, tolerance, coexistence and solidarity among all humans. This is the current positive cultural dimension of migration, and the future of migrants around the world hinges on it.

Although culture is a positive dimension, this must not obscure the fact that profound changes have a direct bearing on immigration today. They deeply affect the spiritual and cultural values of migrants, whether they move from South to North, or East to West.

Hence the various political, legal, spiritual, cultural, economic and social problems migrants may be confronted with in the environments in which they live constitute a pressing issue and are a common concern for all institutions and agencies dealing with migration across the world.

Addressing these issues collectively and in a concerted manner can lead to constructive proposals and ideas which make it possible to find suitable solutions. And thus, a unified, global approach which respects national and local specificities and values, preserves identity and upholds commitment to universal principles can be developed.

I am sure this international conference will be the first in a series of extensive consultations and exchanges of experience, and a prelude to the creation of a credible, sustainable structure.

The proposals, ideas and approaches you will be considering in terms of addressing both present-day situations and future action will be of great benefit to migrant men, women and children. I am confident that your debates will contribute to migrants' well-being, enhance inter-communal concord and harmony, help preserve human rights and promote peace and understanding between different civilizations and faiths.

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you”. The Word of God is Truth.

I wish your conference every success.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

**Mohammed VI
King of Morocco**

The Royal Palace, Fez,
2 March 2009