

**1st African Regional Review Conference on
the implementation of the Global Compact
for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

**SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY NASSER BOURITA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AFRICAN COOPERATION
AND MOROCCANS ABROAD, KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

September 1st, 2021

Madam Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, [Dear Vera] ;

Madam Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, [Dear Amira];

Mr. Director General of the International Organization for Migration, [Dear Antonio];

Madam Minister of State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in charge of Economic Diplomacy and Consular Services, [Dear Tsion Teklu];

Mr. Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the Human Rights of Migrants, [Dear Felipe González Morales];

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. **We strongly wished that this meeting would be held in person. But Covid-19 - and its variants - decided otherwise.** That said, as virtual as it is, this conference is no less concrete, judging by the work done since August 26.
2. **I would therefore like to thank the International Organization for Migration, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission** for the successful holding of this important event.
3. **As early as February 2020, Morocco expressed, at the highest level, its willingness to host this conference. Indeed, His Majesty**

King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him - as part of His mandate as Leader on the Issue of Migration in Africa - underlined it in His report to the 33rd Ordinary Summit of the African Union.

4. **This conference was conceived with the objective** of examining, together, the implementation in Africa of the Marrakech Compact, and consolidating conclusions to enrich the International Migration Review Forum, scheduled for 2022.
5. **The ministerial segment that brings us together today effectively concludes the work of high-level experts and the various stakeholders.** It is now up to us to consolidate the progress made.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. **The impact of the pandemic on migration is undeniable.** While its economic and social consequences have increased the precariousness of migrant workers, it has also slowed down mobility in general. The closure of borders has dried up migration routes for a time, making crossings even more perilous. But it has not, for all that, destroyed the morbid trade of smugglers and other merchants of misery.
7. **From the point of view of governments,** the pandemic has undoubtedly made migration governance more complex. But it has been useful in that it has underlined the centrality of the Marrakech Compact and reminded everyone of the universal relevance of its objectives.
8. **Indeed, the crisis has strongly emphasized the importance** of regularizing the situation of migrants, and the need to guarantee their access to social security - and security at all.
9. **In a kind of 'mise en abyme', migration in times of pandemic has imposed itself as a crisis within the crisis - except that migration is not a "crisis", but a structurally sustainable phenomenon. For the pandemic will end - as soon as possible, we hope - but migration will remain.**

10. **This is also why migration governance does not - and should not - respond to emergency management.** Nor can it be delegated, externalized or outsourced. It is a field of responsibility.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. **I cannot say it in terms as accurate as those of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, May God Assist Him, in His Message to the Marrakech Conference of December 2018:**

[I quote] "***The Global Compact is not an end in itself. It only makes sense through its effective implementation.***"

12. **These Royal words are particularly meaningful when one realizes that migration in Africa is primarily a regional issue. It is therefore "first" at the level of the continent's states and each of its subregions that it must be addressed.** This is the source of Morocco's early awareness that effective implementation of the Marrakech Compact at the regional level begins at the national level.

13. **In launching its National Immigration and Asylum Strategy in 2013, Morocco intended it to be both responsible and supportive, in line with the approach it advocated for in the African Agenda for Migration in January 2018 and the Global Compact in December of the same year.** This coherence between national, regional and global commitment is a way to get

as close as possible to the goal of optimizing migration instead of fighting it.

14. **In fact, even though African migration is stigmatized, overloaded with stereotypes and associated with binary conceptions, Africa has positioned itself as a central actor in the implementation of the Global Compact.** 2 recent major African measures are markers in this regard.

15. **The first is the effective establishment of the African Migration Observatory:**

- On 18 December 2020, on the occasion of International Migration Day, I had the pleasure of inaugurating the Observatory's headquarters in Rabat in the presence of Commissioner Amira EL FADIL.
- This AU body - which is the very first to be based in Morocco - was born of a Royal Vision, supported by the African Agenda on Migration.
- The Observatory is also a direct result of the Marrakech Compact, and in particular of its first objective, which is to collect and use accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.

16. **The second measure regards Africa's notable participation in the Multi-Stakeholder Migration Fund,** a mechanism set up to assist

countries in the implementation of the Compact:

- Indeed, 16 of the 39 projects - 41% of the total number of projects selected for funding - were submitted by African countries;
- Africa has also distinguished itself with 4 collective projects, thus giving an example of concerted regional management, which the Global Compact calls for.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. I say this with all the lucidity of a country aware of the challenges and opportunities of migration: **we must not allow ourselves to be caught up in the "dehumanization" of migrants; nor must we allow ourselves to be caught up in the increasingly visible tendency to treat migration exclusively as a security policy issue.**

18. **Let us not focus on the wrong target:**

- The real anomaly is not that women, men and children make the difficult choice to migrate; **it is that smugglers exploit their vulnerabilities.**
- The real scourge is not migration, **but human trafficking and migrant smuggling.**
- The real bias is the **distorted imagination that perceives migrants as less human on one side of a border than on the other.**

- The real pitfall is that **migrants are the forgotten ones in development, pandemics and social equity.**
- The real purpose, in short, is to ensure that **migrants are the real center of gravity of responsible migration policies, in solidarity and in accordance with the 23 objectives of the Compact.**

19. **This is our great challenge, and it is because we believe in Africa that we are committed to meeting that challenge.**

20. **I thank you.**