



Le Ministre Délégué

SUMMARY OF MEETING HELD BY MR. MINISTER DELEGATE AND A DELEGATION OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS

Mr. the Minister Delegate accompanied by the Director of American Affairs, Mrs. Loudaya, received on March 20, 2013 a delegation of American journalists on tour of the various Moroccan institutions.

In Rabat, after a one week tour of several Moroccan institutions which took the American delegation to Laayoune for a visit with the local authorities of the city (Wali included), the Economic and Social Council (CES), as well as NGO's composed of former refugees, the journalists meeting with the Minister Delegate touched upon several topics and subjects, including Human Rights, judicial reforms, regional current events, and Women's Rights. The delegations tour of Morocco is to end with a general visit to the city of Fès.

The topic of main concern evoked under several different angles, is that of the Sahara and the evolution of the political process. The return of the Personal Envoy, Mr. Christopher Ross, and Morocco's expectations for the progress of the negotiations were discussed by both parties. Mr. the Minister Delegate made clear that the return of the Personal Envoy and his last visit to Morocco have been conducted under good spirits, and that Morocco is awaiting a message from Mr. Ross on what reforms to propose in order to re-launch negotiations.

Concerning the new Obama administration, the journalists were interested in how the relations with the latter, specifically with Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry, were perceived by Morocco. The long dated relationship between Morocco and the USA, further catered to by previous Secretary of State Mrs. Hillary Clinton and the Strategic Dialogue between the two countries, provide a basis upon which Mr. Kerry is to consolidate this relationship for future bilateral relations between Morocco and the USA.

Discussing the current regional situation, the American journalists questioned what the USA can do to improve security in the region. Identifying that security is the main priority for Morocco in any future exchanges between the two countries; Morocco wants to be the success story of the region, which withstood the Arab Awakening that left other countries submerged in chaotic democratic transitions. Upon being asked if it considered itself a 'model' for the rest of the region, Morocco considered itself to be a success story indeed, but not a model that can be applied to the region. The strengths of Morocco's success stems from its ability to recognize its limitations, and the reform processes launched ten years ago by a reforming king, His Majesty the King Mohamed VI. Mrs. Loudaya and Mr. the Minister Delegate both reiterated Morocco's willingness to help its neighbors in accompanying them through their democratic transition.

Further exploring the regional security threat, the American journalists evoked the question of Mali and Syria, curious about the lead of France in the Malian crisis, and the lack of intervention of the USA in the Syrian crisis. Morocco, as president of the Security Council at the time when the UN resolution of the intervention in Mali was adopted, perceives the French intervention as legitimate, following the appeal for help launched by Mali. It is in Morocco's

favor that France intervenes in Mali, as terrorism is a threat to the region as well to countries beyond the Mediterranean basin. As for the Syrian crisis, although the USA does not intervene directly on the ground, their help is still present in other forms and ways. In response to the journalists question on the Arab League and the recognition of the newly elected Syrian opposition government by Morocco, the Minister Delegate assures that Morocco's position will be that of the general consensus arrived at by the Arab league.

Last but not least, the American journalists evoked the topic of Women's Rights in Morocco, and the role that Mrs. Hillary Clinton played in their development in Morocco. As can be witnessed from the inclusion of women in the cultural axe of the Strategic Dialogue between Morocco and the USA, Mrs. Clinton was very keen on further integrating women in the Moroccan society.