

ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN MOROCCO

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Morocco has a strategical situation belonging, as it does, to many geo-graphical and geo-political bodies rooted in Africa and the Mediterranean region, with a wide front to the Atlantic, as well as the Arab Maghreb Union. Our conduct, primarily concerned with specific environmental problems, is inspired by our cultural Arabo-Moslem legacy and our civilisation, imprinted by authenticity when instituting the rules of our development.

We believe that the human factor, by grace of its innovations and its creativity, must be the motive force as well as the beneficiary of any action conceived with the aim of protecting the environment and improving the frame of life. A link between development and environment is a necessity when aiming at securing rational management and reaching efficacious and lasting development.

This creates the necessity of setting up a plan which would secure a concerted intervention in the protection of the sectors and spaces threatened by deterioration such as water streams, forests, marinal regions, urban centers, patrimony. This is the opportunity to stipulate that the pollution problems and the ones concerning environmental protection are of a universal character; this is where interdependence is real and requires international cooperation on all levels (see resolution no. 44/288 of the General Assembly related to the tenor of the United Nations General Assembly organised for 1990 Environment and Development).

We can but note the increasing degradation of the environment due to man, unrestrained urbanism, polarised industrialisation and its prejudicial consequences for the economic growth and social welfare of a country as well as for the health of its inhabitants. Morocco is concerned with economic and social development through the improvement of the life frame and quality of the citizens. The importance of water in all national development efforts, especially in semi-dry areas, and the necessity of mobilising all the existing water resources in a rational way has already been proved. The Moroccan seashore and its peculiarities can be viewed as a source and as a geographical region and the valuable potential in richness it conceals must be used. The fauna and the flora of the country must be protected to secure the ecological balance and also to fight against erosion and desertification.

Man must be placed at the center of all the strategy adopted in order to protect the environment. Educational programs must include environmental sections and be enhanced everywhere, especially in the initiation to sciences and techniques related to the management of environment and to the struggle against degradation of the region. The environmental problems necessitate an integrated approach which would inscribe them into the process of economic and social planification. This is why national politics in matters of environment must be defined and encouraged. Its aims and its strategy of action must be thoroughly examined along the sum of the partners including the local, regional and national assemblies.

The protection strategy of environment must respect the specifications of the region and the means available. The action of global and rational management politics of water should be reinforced on the level of quantity as well as on the level of quality. Littoral spaces and their resources need to be the objects of rational management and must be protected against all bad affectations or prejudices. Juridical dispositions related to environment matters must be organised in order to set forth the establishment of specific rules that would ensure the protection of environment through appropriate penal measures against physical and moral individuals.

Strict cooperation between public and private sectors especially on matters of purification, treatment and organisation of sites is indispensable in order to pull through the economical investment. Activities of technical and scientific research, particularly research related to environmental problems, must be encouraged; one can suggest that 1% of the national income be channeled to these activities.

It is indispensable to mobilise and focus human potential, channel its competences and enlarge the discussion around the subject of environment, as autonomy is a utopia when it comes to matters of environment while cooperation is the only necessary path and the effort of everyone and all is indispensable.

Ambassador **Abdelaziz Laabi** graduated from the Economics and Finance section of the Moroccan School of Administration in Rabat and the National School of Administration in Paris, and began his diplomatic career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1975 as chief of the General Administration Department. He has been director of the Cabinet and Secretary-General of the Ministry of Information and is, since 1985, Ambassador and director for Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. He is the recipient of several orders, the last being the Chevalier de l'Ordre du TrAne and also a writer and a painter of modern art whose work has been exhibited in Rabat and Athens.