



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
برلمان البحر الأبيض المتوسط

PAM HIGH LEVEL VISIT TO MOROCCO

Rabat/ Casablanca, 9-10 May 2022

A PAM high-level delegation visited Morocco on 9-10 May 2022 at the kind invitation of H.E. Enaam Mayara, President of the House of Councilors. The PAM team was led by President Gennaro Migliore (Italy) and was composed of Sen. Alia Bouran (Jordan), PAM President Emeritus, Vice President and President of the 1st Standing Committee on Political and Security - related questions, Hon. Karim Darwish (Egypt), President Emeritus, Vice President and President of PAM's 2nd Standing Committee on social and environmental cooperation. Hon. Mohammed Abu El Enein (Egypt), President Emeritus, Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal), President Emeritus and PAM Vice-President, Hon. Joana Lima, head of the Portuguese delegation to PAM and Hon. Maryam Majid Bin Theneya, Head of the UAE delegation to PAM. Sen Lhou Lmarbouh (Morocco), PAM President Emeritus also joined the delegation.

Meeting with H.E. Ryad Mezzour, Minister of Industry and Trade

Minister Mezzour started by referring to the Mediterranean as a link between Europe and Africa. No country can play a role alone and he called for strong alliances and the development of common strategies to ensure "economic sovereignty". It was time to face the new world order with courage and action. PAM President agreed with the need for a strong vision, recalled the new challenges derived from the aggression of Ukraine by Russia on food security and energy and introduced PAM's proposal for the organization of a "Davos for the Mediterranean" which would involve politicians as well as the public and private sector with the goal to build a new economic area on the model of the Coal and Steel community in Europe. H.E. Mezzour shared the vision and lent his full support to the initiative. Economic integration would be positive for peace, security and migration. Challenges included water, food, health, energy and technology security. We needed to rebuild capacities in our region. We needed glass, steel aluminum all of which had been sold to Asia. We needed to rebuild the "basis of the industrial pyramid" with resources and workers. We needed to do it in partnership with Africa rich for example in cobalt

and phosphate. He gave the example of the automotive industry. Morocco was ready to build electric cars, and China was ready to support with investments straight away while Europe was more hesitant. This was surprising as ultimately the cars would be sold to European markets so the EU would benefit. He added he would prefer to work with Europe but that now it was a matter of “survival”. Also rules in free trade agreement were changing with the imposition of a “double transformation” clause to export. The South would be taken very aggressively if not looked at very carefully. Hon. Mohammed Abu el Enein (Egypt) was proud of Morocco for its economic development. We needed to act on the vision fast and not drag on discussions for several years. Morocco and Egypt could be the East/West pillars of that vision. Senator Alia Bouran (Jordan) resonated with the minister’s words. She emphasized the need for collaborative efforts, especially on renewable energy. Hon. Karim Dawish (Egypt) highlighted positive development in Egypt on a gas forum. He said it could be replicated at Mediterranean level. The EU was too rigid in its approach. PAM Secretary General agreed there was an urgent need for that vision, and the PAM Secretariat was working at a concept note. PAM could support in bringing international stakeholders to the table. PAM will be going to the Geneva WTO ministerial on 12 June. The outcome of the COP 27 will be shared during the economic forum. He asked for a focal point within the Ministry of Industry and Trade to prepare for the event.

Meeting with H.E. Enaam Mayara, President of the House of Councilors

H.E. Mayara introduced the House of Councilors made up of 120 Councilors including 8 from the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGME). Their main aim was to be a bridge of communication with the “man in the street”. He shared concerns over migration, security, drug trafficking, food security, climate change. Cooperation with PAM was very important. Hon. Migliore recalled their last meeting in Madrid and invited a new phase in the cooperation. He introduced the idea of the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf economic Forum saying that after the pandemic and now with the war in Ukraine, it was important to concentrate the world’s attention on the Mediterranean. He invited H.E. Mayara to the PAM conference on the review of the Palermo Convention to be held in Naples on 20-21 June. Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal) said Morocco was a pillar of PAM. He recalled the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in addressing issues that can be difficult for governments to tackle such as Western Sahara. Hon. Mariam Majid Bin Theneya (UAE) said cooperation between the Mediterranean and the Gulf countries was strategic to deal with common threats and challenges such as terrorism and food security, and that the UAE could be a bridge between the East and the West.

Meeting with H.E. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates

Minister Bourita welcomed warmly the PAM delegation and provided an overview of the current international situation, highlighting the key questions affecting peace and stability in the Euro-

Mediterranean region. He provided an impressive and clear picture of the issues at stake for Morocco and for the PAM region at large. In addition to the multiple consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the delegates and the Minister reviewed recent developments in the Middle East, the question of holy sites in Jerusalem and the Israel-Palestinian Peace Process, prospects in Libya and Syria, and most importantly the overall geopolitical interdependence of Europe, North Africa and the Sahel. PAM involvement into the Call for Sahel was praised, as well as PAM close approach to counterterrorism. A special exchange took place on the relations between European institutions and the Southern neighborhood, whereby EU rules are requested to be applied through “circulars and directives”, which are not discussed in advance with partner countries. In this regard, all presents agreed on the necessity to establish an integrated economic and trade area, together with a strong policy for establishing a renewable and sustainable energy community for the entire region, much needed to ensure resilience and independence from Russian suppliers.

Meeting with H.E. Rachid Talbi Alami, President of the House of Representatives

PAM President recalled Morocco was a founder of PAM and said parliamentary diplomacy needed to be strengthened. Threats can be transformed into opportunities. During the last Dubai Plenary, PAM decided on a plan of action. It was time for a vision to transform reality. He talked about current security challenges such as Ukraine (PAM had recently sent a delegation to the border in Romania) and the Sahel (PAM supported the “Call for Sahel” initiative). Security was linked to economic cooperation. He advocated for an economic community for renewable energy as well as water. He invited H.E. Alami to the Naples conference on the review of the Palermo Convention. He hoped Morocco would be willing to host the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf economic Forum in early December, a “Davos of the Mediterranean” where we could imagine the future of our region. H.E. Alami was pleased to follow-up on the discussions initiated in Madrid in November 2021 on the margins of the 143rd IPU assembly. The world had changed a lot since then. He shared President Migliore’s points. It was time to update ourselves. He noted 5 main challenges: recovery post COVID, the recovery from the impact of the war in Ukraine, climate change, terrorism and the wellbeing of the people we (parliamentarians) represent. We had to reorganize our priorities. According to him, the security of the North depends on the security of the South and necessitates a culture of peace. Mali was “our Ukraine”, occupied by the Russia-backed Wagner militia. There was instability in Mauritania at the Moroccan border where Daesh was present, and situations were difficult in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Israel... It was important to look at food security, green energy and migration. He supported the December Forum in Morocco. He also added that, as President of the UfM PA, he had proposed to European President Roberta Metsola a revival in the common work. Hon. Mohammed Abu El Enein (Egypt) said there was a lack of vision for the future from the leaders of the Mediterranean. Parliamentarians must think about what can be done at the “existential level”. We needed to think regionally and not “each country for itself”. This should be the goal of the December

conference. We can involve specialists to come up with a vision. We also need to involve African countries who are coveted by Japan, China and Russia. Sen. Alia Bouran (Jordan) congratulated Morocco on its development and brought forth the issue of refugees in a security context. They must be treated with respect, with access to water, education but the situation was not sustainable for Lebanon, Turkey, Syria and Jordan. The international community needed to keep focusing on the Middle East, on what was happening in Jerusalem, and on the 2 States solution. Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh (Morocco) said the aggression of Russia against Ukraine should serve as an electric shock. The Mediterranean could be autonomous in terms of energy, food security, health, water if there was more South-South integration. The future of the Mediterranean is being drawn in Africa. He mentioned that positions had changed on Western Sahara and he invited European countries to follow the new positions adopted by Spain and then Germany. Finally, PAM President Migliore requested H.E. Alami - as current president of UfM PA - 's assistance to bring Spain into PAM after years of "misunderstanding". The issue, he felt, was bureaucratic and not political. H.E. Alami agreed with all that had been said. He then suggested that the southern countries of PAM come together before/on the side-line of the Economic Forum to discuss economic integration. He called for Sub-Saharan African countries to be included in those talks.

Meeting with H.E. Awatif Hayar, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family

PAM President explained that PAM was not only looking at security and economic issues but also Human Rights issues including Migration. He was eager to hear from the Minister her management of the COVID 19 pandemic. He passed the floor to Hon. Joana Lima (Portugal) who invited the Minister to the inaugural session of the Women Parliamentary Forum (WPF) in Lisbon on 4-5 July. Sen. Alia Bouran (Jordan) emphasized the need for quality education in the Mediterranean region which needed to catch up with Europe and Asia. Hon Pedro Roque (Portugal) reiterated the invitation to the WPF in Lisbon whose goal was to empower women in the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf region. H.E. Hayar recalled the proud heritage of the Mediterranean, she added that the world was in resonance with what was happening in our region and that it was important to be an "actor in the game". She congratulated PAM for all its efforts in bringing the voice of the citizens to the fore and to work for "more peace". She explained that King Mohammed VI himself led the efforts to tackle the COVID pandemic. All Moroccans benefited from free medical treatment and free vaccination. People made homeless by the pandemic found shelters in centres of *entraide nationale*. The main lesson learned was that we had to invest in human capital and social innovation to be resilient. Regarding Violence Against Women (VAW), she mentioned that the 2020 Marrakesh declaration, under the auspices of HRH Princess Lalla Hasna, sister of King Mohammed VI, had enabled 36 000 women to start their sustainable economic activity. There were currently 44 centres for women survivors of domestic violence and the aim was to have 82, one per province. The 2018 legislation 103.13 had criminalized VAW. She also discussed new policies towards people with disabilities, for kids and for migrants – mostly from sub-Saharan Africa - who are empowered through education. She

thanked PAM for its invitation to the WPF and said she would be honored to come should her agenda allow it.

Meeting with Mr. Ahmad Abadi, Secretary General of the Rabita Mohamedia of Oulemas

PAM President said that The Rabita Mohamedia of Oulemas served as a reference for a lot of countries. PAM was committed to inter-religious dialogue and to the prevention of extremism. The North had an issue with islamophobia. The young generation need good examples. According to Mr. Abadi, we lived in an interconnected world where the young generation spent on average 8 hours a day connected to their device. We need to reach out to them. Only 3% are daily mosque-goers. We would be wrong to stick only to mosques and institutions. We need to be creative and draw a new approach. He identified 6 major burning issues: i) pursue of **Wealth**, ii) **Fear** - that leads to USD 17 trillion invested in weaponry yearly, iii) **Waste** - weapons had a life span of 8 years, they are then resold in zones of conflicts iv) **Addiction** – we have lost discernment about what is essential, v) the threat of major **Wars** – the nuclear threat is very serious vi) we became **spectators** – we need to engage with youth the way a Greta Thunberg does. He outlined the options for actions. Extremism was a “virus” from which it is difficult to protect, but he offered to “immunize” instead by creating a “vaccine”, do the research, study for example the individuals that are back from the camps and are in prison. Immunization needs to look at the existential language of Islam, at how we use our brains to think, anticipate and deduce. We also need to look at our greater scope of emotions beyond the basic ones of anger, grief. How can we all contribute to society is a must for those who think there is “nothing in it for me”. The UN is nothing for them, he added. Sen. Alia Bouran asked how to elevate the narrative when Daesh tweets 90 000 tweets daily. How can we counter this? Mr. Abadi said that it required a “deep dive” as Daesh’s discourse of “**unity**”, “**dignity**”, “**purity**”, “**salvation**” and the “**dream of mastery**” is very magnetic. He suggested we call on artists, creative people without iconizing them. He recalled there were 5 million scholars on the payroll. They can compete with the 90 000 tweets if they sing from the same song sheet in symphony. Moreover, one should not forget that religions are there to ultimately “make us happy”. He referred to “amazing grace”. PAM Secretary-General Ambassador Piazzì asked Mr. Abadi for recommendations in light that there are thousands ISIL affiliates still in camps in Syria including women and children, we were possibly incubating a new potential generation of extremists. Mr. Abadi continued using the metaphor of the virus and highlighted that there was a need to find a true vaccine and not some fake medicine. He called for integration of universities to spread sound research and knowledge.

Meeting with Mr. Chakib Laalej, President of the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and his delegation which included 6 members of the House of Councilors.

CGEM is the voice of the Moroccan private sector with more than 90,000 members. It is impactful as it is involved in discussions over the yearly budget legislation (*loi de finance*). 65% of Moroccan

exports were to the EU. CGEM had asked the EU for new ways of doing business. CGEM had recently initiated relations with Israel which they had visited in March and have good relations with Africa. Migration was a challenge as Morocco had - due to its economic success - become a country of destination and was no longer a transit country. Other challenges include the price of raw material with the war in Ukraine. A green energy transition was important. Hon. Gennaro Migliore congratulated Morocco for 20 years of impressive economic improvement under H.R.H King Mohammed VI, despite the fact that Morocco did not have energy resources of its own. Morocco was a bridge between the EU and Africa. He outlined the vision for the December Economic forum to be held in Tangiers, which will be symbolic as the port-city overlooks the northern shore. There was a need to look beyond North/South cooperation. We could start with concrete actions, around water for example. He proposed to have each parliament discuss the idea of an economic community for green/renewable energy in the Mediterranean. Members of the CGEM delegation highlighted that besides the USA/Mexico example no other region of the world knew such a gap between the North and the South. The Mediterranean was still a wall. If 20 years ago Morocco had most of his dealing with France, Italy and Spain, there are new actors on the horizon: UAE, Egypt, Saudi Arabia. Morocco is also a hub for West Africa (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin). Hon. Mohamed Abu el Enein (Egypt) recalled his journey as an entrepreneur. Japan and China were very present in Africa. He was now advocating for a new “thinking methodology”, work with think-tanks to invest in trade and investments. This vision had to be well marketed. He also advocated for special “industrial economic zones” to promote investments. M. Laalej said there was a need to invest in education. Another CGEM member explained that CGEM was present in parliament since 2015, that it was on the board of public companies and member of the board of the central bank. Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal) said trade unions and representatives of the private sector shared the same goal of working towards the wellbeing of the peoples. He was interested to know how CGEM envisioned the future of its energy sector given the current tension with Algeria. He was also interested to know more about the social triangular dialogue (government, trade unions, private sector) in Morocco. PAM President Emeritus Lhou Marbouh (Morocco) recalled the words of late King Hassan II “Morocco is like a tree, with roots in Africa and leaves in Europe”. He called on Europe to reinvest in raw materials and an extractive industry. Morocco’s mining sector was doing well by comparison. He recalled the existence of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments and asked CGEM to take an active role in it. PAM Secretary General explained that PAM was well connected with key international institutions (WTO, IMF, BERD, OECD, UNIDO, UNCAD etc...) and had a very active network of universities. In preparation for the December economic Forum, PAM had launched a consultative approach with key partners to define a strategic vision for Europe, Africa and the Mediterranean region to meet the challenges of a post- COVID world and the impact of the war in Ukraine. He asked for CGEM’s support. He also recalled the vision of an energy community for the whole region. Hon. Karim Dawish (Egypt) said he came from the diplomatic world and was interested in the more social aspect of CGEM’s work. He also mentioned that there was an association of young businessmen in Egypt who shared CGEM’s values and that they should be in touch. Hon Mariam Majid Bin Theneya (UAE) supported PAM’s work and called for more collaboration to impact people. A

CGEM representative recalled that the Mediterranean was inscribed in the Moroccan constitution. He added that China, Russia and the USA were eyeing on Africa. Mr. Laalej was pleased to collaborate ahead of the Tangiers economic Forum and said CGEM would need to position itself at the center of the Forum and would invite CGEM counterparts in the region to participate. Finally, Mohammed Abu el Enein (Egypt) also invited CGEM to participate to the annual Youth Forum (this year in Charm-el-Sheikh, Egypt).

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