

His Majesty Mohammed VI King of Morocco sent a message to the participants in the scientific gathering held on the occasion of World Statistics Day on "**Serving Economic and Social Development, Statistics in Line with International Standards**", which opened on Wednesday 20th October 2010, in Rabat.

Here follows the full text of the message, read out by the High Commissioner for Planning, Ahmed Lahlimi Alami :

“Praise be to God May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to start my message to your scientific gathering by praising the call made by the UN Secretary-General to the international community to make 20 October of each year World Statistics Day. I commend this initiative since statistics have always played an important role in promoting the dissemination of knowledge and measuring human progress in various scientific, economic, social and cultural fields.

I avail myself of this opportunity to invite all participants in this scientific symposium and in the various activities held across the Kingdom to celebrate World Statistics Day - to which I have granted my high patronage - by pausing to think about the progress made in the area of statistics, not only in terms of concepts and methods, but also with respect to fulfilling the expectations of public and private actors and stakeholders.

In a world marked by fast economic and social changes, statistics have become an essential reference tool to inform decision-makers and help them with the identification and selection of development programs, target groups and geographical areas.

Statistics are also an indispensable tool for the evaluation of public policies and for any review they may require. In fact, the uses to which statistics is put today make it a real public service tool which has taken on an international dimension by virtue of globalization and the impact it has had on the economy and on human values. Statistics, as a science, must therefore be based on specific concepts and transparent methods.

Similarly, statistical findings must be widely disseminated, taking into account the need to respect the norms and standards applied by the relevant regional and international organizations.

This can be achieved only when each country has statisticians who have received a high level of scientific and technical training and who are truly autonomous in the exercise of their profession. This means they should be protected from any kind of influence, be it ideological, political or from sponsors, so that they come up with objective data on a given subject or situation.

In this regard, our country is proud of the significant progress it has made with respect to the production of official statistical data, thanks to the Moroccan authorities' untiring efforts to train and upgrade human resources, develop institutions and guarantee their independence.

To this end, we have placed statistics under the authority of the High Commission for Planning, an autonomous entity which operates according to internationally recognized scientific and technical standards, without being influenced by political changes. Our aim is to ensure the credibility of statistical information in studies, assessments and analytical reviews in all fields.

We have adopted the same scientific approach in the management of the National Initiative for Human Development.

Whilst this ambitious initiative, with its specific approach and practical steps, is based, above all, on social reality, facts on the ground and an analysis of the living conditions of our citizens across the Kingdom, we are keen to take into account the principles of scientific accuracy and independence in the day-to-day implementation of this Initiative. Thus, target groups and geographical regions are subjected to rigorous statistical analysis, and the results obtained are systematically and regularly assessed by the various parties concerned.

Our goal is to ensure the sustainability of this reign-long project, making sure it has the means to effectively tackle poverty, marginalization and social exclusion, and to reduce social disparities and inter-sectoral imbalances.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The praise our country is getting from our international partners - both for the remarkable progress achieved by our institutions -with respect to statistical data production and for the quality of the training received by our graduates in specialized institutions at home and abroad - should not cause us to rest on our laurels, but rather to work harder to build on our achievements, making statistics instrumental in providing information to decision-makers.

The requirements of reliability and regularity must therefore be fully observed for the impartial production of National Accounts and the formulation of socio-economic indicators. To this end, I call on government departments, businesses, professional organizations and civil society associations - across the social spectrum - to work more closely with official statistical bodies, institutionalize this cooperation, and provide statistical agencies with the financial, economic and social data available inside and outside government.

I call, in this regard, on the government to lay down the legal framework for census-taking and statistical research and studies, together with the relevant decrees related to the national statistics council. The government should also draw up a business directory and a business identification system, and keep them up to date, in order to finalize the legal and institutional basis of the country's national statistics system.

It should be pointed out, in this respect, that the Kingdom of Morocco has embarked on a process aimed at aligning its national accounts with the norms and standards advocated by the United Nations for national statistical systems. Over the next five years, we shall undertake the sixth general population and housing census as well as the third general agricultural census. We will also have to carry out the five-year business and household survey program to update data on economic and social structures and on citizens' living conditions.

Completion of this program within the prescribed time limit, using a multi-year funding scheme, should help us monitor our country's evolution better and provide objective, up-to-date benchmarks for the assessment of the progress I want my people to benefit from in the areas of economic growth and human development, particularly with respect to the Millennium Development Goals, which the Kingdom of Morocco has pledged to achieve -an area in which we have made significant progress.

I urge statisticians to strive doubly hard to give the public a better insight into economic affairs, enable Moroccans to realize the importance of objective national data, and help them fully understand public policies, since they reflect our democratic, development-oriented model designed to help us achieve progress and prosperity for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the international community celebrates World Statistics Day, I should like statisticians and statistical research centres in Morocco and abroad to know how much I appreciate their integrity and commitment to the ethical norms and standards of their profession.

I also wish to commend Moroccan statisticians, demographers, econometricians, computer scientists and experts in economic prospective studies and forecasts for the contributions they have been making to improve the quality of our national statistical system.

I wish your conference every success.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh”.