

Morocco's Leadership in Africa: A Partner for Progress and Peace

Since ascending the throne, King Mohammed VI has been committed to enhancing Morocco's strong relationships in Africa. Morocco has engaged in regional diplomacy to counter violent extremism; increase trade and investment; and promote economic and human development projects; and as a means of promoting stability and security throughout the continent.

Diplomacy

- King Mohammed has made over [50 visits](#) to African countries during his reign, resulting in more than 1,000 cooperation agreements on economic, political, security, and educational issues.
- In January 2017, at the 28th African Union Summit, 39 of 54 member states agreed to admit Morocco to the pan-African organization after a 33-year hiatus. In a visionary speech at the Summit, King Mohammed VI reaffirmed his country's "commitment to the development and prosperity of African citizens" and pledged to "help bring about unity and progress" to the continent.
- Joining the AU was a crowning achievement to King Mohammed VI's diplomatic efforts, wherein a key priority has been fostering relations with neighboring countries in West and Central Africa. In the past four years, King Mohammed VI has undertaken four regional tours.
 - In February-March 2017, the King visited Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, and Cote d'Ivoire, signing nearly 50 [governmental and public-private partnership agreements](#) on investment, industrial cooperation, technical assistance, electricity, insurance, banking, agriculture, renewable energy, mining, tourism, training, and climate action.
 - In May-June 2015, he traveled to Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, and Gabon, signing 35 bilateral agreements on issues such as sustainable economic development, local governance, agricultural, and vocational training.
 - In March 2014, the King visited Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Gabon and presided over the signing of more than 80 bilateral agreements on trade, agriculture, water, energy, and job training, among other areas.
 - In March 2013 he visited Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Gabon.
- In 2016 and 2017, King Mohammed VI expanded Morocco's Africa outreach beyond its [traditional domains](#) with visits to East and Southern Africa. The tours aimed to strengthen the country's economic partnerships, its religious leadership, and support for its bid to rejoin the African Union after more than three decades.
 - In February 2017, the King visited South Sudan and Zambia, his first visit to both countries. In South Sudan, he oversaw the signing of [nine bilateral agreements](#) with President Salva Kiir Mayardit in the areas of urban development, investment promotion, agriculture, industrial cooperation, mines, vocational training, and the building of a new capital city in Ramciel. In Zambia, the King and Zambian President Edgar Chagwa Lungu chaired a signing ceremony for [19 political and economic partnership](#) agreements covering air services, investment promotion and protection, finance and banking, insurance, education, training, tourism, agriculture, technology, industry, and mining and renewable energy.
 - In December 2016, the King traveled to Nigeria, where he and President Buhari launched a project to construct a [regional gas pipeline](#) linking Nigeria and several other West African countries to Morocco. In addition to the pipeline agreement, Morocco and Nigeria signed

over 15 bilateral agreements in the fields of agriculture, renewable energy, training, youth capacity-building, and banking.

- In November 2016, the King visited [Ethiopia](#) and [Madagascar](#), signing nearly 30 bilateral agreements and launching a project for fertilizer production in Ethiopia.
- In October 2016, the King conducted a [two-country tour](#) to Rwanda and Tanzania that resulted in over 40 bilateral agreements on agriculture, finance and investments, banking, air transport, renewable energy, and security cooperation. Morocco and Tanzania also signed a religious affairs cooperation agreement covering “education, religious foundations, construction and management of mosques, exchange of experiences, and other forms of cooperation which aim to preserve authentic Islamic values and help prevent all forms of deviation and extremism.”

Countering Violent Extremism

- In June 2016, the King [inaugurated](#) the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Oulema, with a mission of strengthening age-old historical and religious ties between Morocco and its African neighbors. First announced in June 2015, the Foundation brings together 120 Muslim scholars recognized for their knowledge of Islamic law and theology from 31 countries in Africa. Their aim, as King Mohammed VI explained in a speech at the inauguration ceremony, is “to make sure [Islam’s open-minded values of moderation, tolerance and coexistence] help us promote security, stability and development in Africa.”
- In March 2015, Morocco inaugurated the [Mohammed VI Institute](#) for the Training of Imams, Morchidines, and Morchidates. The school aims to instill the values of Morocco’s open, moderate form of Islam, based on the Maliki rite and Sunni Sufism, in the next generation of Muslim religious leaders (imams) and preachers (morchidines and morchidates) from across the region and the world.
 - Since late 2013, Morocco has signed accords or entered into negotiations to train imams from a number of countries across Africa, including Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia, as well as from Belgium and France. Currently, in addition to 250 Moroccans, 447 foreign students are enrolled: 212 from Mali, 37 from Tunisia, 100 from Guinea Conakry, 75 from Côte d’Ivoire, and 23 from France.
- In a visit to Morocco in April 2014, Secretary of State [John Kerry praised](#) King Mohammed VI and Morocco for “playing an essential leadership role” in the region, noting that Morocco “plays a very important role in facing extremism, and it also disseminates cooperation with African countries in the religious domain at a moment where Africa needs this spiritual support to face terrorism based on these values, the values of tolerance.”

Trade and Investment

- Morocco is the [second largest](#) African investor in the continent, and between 2003 and 2013, [51%](#) of its foreign direct investment went to Sub-Saharan Africa, peaking at 88% in 2010.
- Moroccan trade with the rest of Africa increased by [12% annually](#) between 2003 and 2013. In 2016, trade totaled [\\$3.1 billion](#), approximately 6.4% of Morocco’s overall trade.

- Morocco is a member of regional economic and trade bodies, including the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN- SAD), the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA), and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED).
- Morocco has regional or bilateral trade and tariff agreements with [33 African countries](#), including Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, and Tunisia.
- As of 2015, Moroccan companies accounted for [approximately 10%](#) of the business transacted in Africa, and 77 Moroccan companies ranked among the 2015 "Top 500 African Companies" list compiled by [The Africa Report](#).
- Moroccan banks operate in [25 African countries](#) outside of Morocco – BMCE bank operates in 16, Attijariwafa Bank in 14, and Banque Populaire in 10.
- Maroc Telecom operates in [9 countries](#) outside of Morocco, with a subscriber network of 51 million – the largest in French-speaking Africa.
- [Moroccan businesses](#) are also active in the insurance and pharmaceutical manufacturing sectors, as well as in the production of fertilizers derived from Moroccan phosphate for distribution on the African market.

Socioeconomic Development

- Morocco further contributes to economic growth and sustainable socioeconomic development in neighboring countries by providing technical education and training.
- Morocco is a [leader](#) in fighting climate change on the continent. As host of COP22, the Kingdom held an "[Africa Action Summit](#)" to establish a common approach to the issue and actionable measures for sustainable development. Key priorities include climate justice, adaptation financing, agricultural initiatives to improve productivity and food security, and capacity building and expertise sharing, particularly in the field of renewable energy. Toward this end, the countries at the Summit signed a joint declaration to pool their resources and speak in one single voice to tackle climate change.
- Morocco's [National Office of Electricity](#) has provided technical assistance and concessions to generate electricity in Chad, Gambia, Libya, Mauritania, Niger Senegal, and Sierra Leone; Morocco's National Office of Potable Water has helped Cameroon and Mauritania provide drinking water to their citizens.
- Currently, [16,000 students](#) from the rest of Africa are enrolled in Moroccan universities, 90% of them on scholarship.
- Morocco's economic and development expertise is widely regarded. In April 2015, Morocco signed an [MOU](#) with the Millennium Challenge Corporation to "facilitate sharing the lessons of Morocco's development experience with other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, and serve as an important catalyst for

South-South cooperation.” Morocco provides management training to many Central and West African governments to help in the formation of a viable civil service capable of promoting sustainable socio-economic development and democratic change. And as a [Jeune Afrique](#) article noted, “The expertise and know-how of Moroccan entrepreneurs is widely recognized and solicited throughout the continent.”

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