



Submission No 10

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

Name: HE Mr Mohamed Mael-Ainin

Organisation: Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
PO Box 3531
Manuka ACT 2603



Why should Australia open an Embassy in Morocco?

I- STRATEGIC POSITION:

- The Kingdom of Morocco is an African State with a long and diverse history which spans over 12 centuries.
- Geographically, Morocco, is located in North-West Africa, bordered from the North by the Mediterranean Sea, from the West by the Atlantic Ocean (making 2 sea fronts extending over 3000Km). Neighbour of Europe, It is separated from the European Continent by the Strait of Gibraltar (just 14 Km) and shares boundaries with Mauritania in the South, and Algeria in the East.
- The surface area of Morocco is 710.850Km², Rabat being its political and administrative Capital and Casablanca its economic capital.
- Strategically located along the straits of Gibraltar, the African country Morocco is seen more and more as a regional hub in North Africa for the international commercial navy transportation, transit and business.
- Culturally, The Australian historian C.R. Pennell qualifies Morocco as a “mosaic of cultural choices”.

II- DEMOCRATIC REFORMS:

- Morocco is a democratic, social and constitutional monarchy. The Head of State is His Majesty King Mohammed VI (since 30 July 1999).
- A new democratic and comprehensive constitutional reform was adopted on July 2011. The Moroccan population voted by an overwhelming majority for the new Constitution which confirms the following:

- The commitment to the Moroccan nation's immutable values; and to all Human Rights;
- Separation of powers under constitutional, democratic, parliamentary and social monarchy;
- Independent Judicature, ensuring genuine protection of rights and guaranteeing compliance with the law;
- Recognition of a genuine status for the parliamentary opposition, trade unions, civil society and NGO's;
- Fundamental constituents of the diversified, open Moroccan identity;
- A full fledged Charter of fundamental rights and freedoms rooted in the universal frame of reference for human rights;
- Enhancing gender equality through the confirmation of parity;
- Regional and local democracy, and advanced regionalisation;
- **These reforms have been highly appreciated and welcomed by the Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that hailed:**

“The very successful referendum held on 1 July in which an overwhelming majority of Moroccans voted in favour of the constitutional reforms,

“The new Constitution, which includes the introduction of an executive branch led by the Prime Minister,

“ A commitment to Human Rights,

“An independent power judiciary and a Parliament with stronger legislative powers demonstrates a strong commitment to democracy and good governance.”

III- AFRICAN SUCCESS STORY:

- The Kingdom of Morocco, proud of its African identity, places the continent of Africa at the core of its external policy.
- It had been at the forefront of Africa's liberation supporters and pursued its mission till the achievement of total independence in Africa.
- Morocco takes a positive approach towards the African countries, based on cooperation in many vital areas such as education, health and capacity building. It extends this cooperation to productive investment sectors, namely air and sea transport, finance, telecommunication and banking services.
- Under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Morocco continues its cooperation with some forty African countries, governed by a legal framework comprising more than 480 agreements, with several joint committees having been set up to follow up this cooperation.

- The company Royal Air Maroc fly to direct to Senegal , Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali , Niger, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, South Africa.
- Moroccan major public companies are progressively present on the Sub-Saharan markets (over 25 countries) in the field of banking (AWB, BMCE, BP), transportation (Royal Air Maroc), insurance, construction, telecommunication (Maroc Telecom), drinking water (ONEP). This presence does not exclude private companies, such as the mining company MANAGEM.
- **Morocco is the second major investor in the continent, South Africa being the first. However, it is the first investor in West Africa. Morocco's total investments in Africa reached MAD 2.195,4 million; that is to say, 52% of Morocco's investments abroad.**
- **Morocco receives over 8000 students from 42 African countries, 6500 of whom are granted scholarships by the Moroccan government.**
- **With its African expertise and full engagement, Morocco can play with Australia an important role in triangular cooperation, designed to channel international aid to finance infrastructure projects in Africa.**

IV- MOROCCO AS AN INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN:

European Union:

- Morocco is the first country in Africa and in the non European Mediterranean region to benefit from the advanced status in its relations with the EU.
- This European engagement on the advanced status is a proof of confidence in Morocco's efforts in terms of political reforms, consolidation of the rule of law, a better justice system, economic reforms and social cohesions.

United States of America:

- In March 2004, the United States and Morocco reached agreement on a comprehensive and ground breaking free trade agreement entered into effect on January 2006, thus being the second Arab and first African nation to have an FTA with the US. Morocco has also concluded an ATTA with Turkey, a regional FTA with Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. The FTA provides US importers increased access to the Moroccan Market by eliminating tariffs on 95 percent of currently traded consumer and industrial goods.

Wide zone of FTA with Morocco:

Any investment in Morocco will take the advantage of the possibility to sell to a total of 1 billion of citizens of the countries linked to Morocco by FTA: EU, US, Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia, Jordan and Emirates, and in a near future all the CCG.

United Nations:

- Since its accession to independence in 1956, Morocco has been a dedicated member of the United Nations and its main organs for over 55 years. Morocco has shown an active and unconditional support for the core United Nations goal and principle. In recognition of its committed stance, the KM had the privilege to be elected as a non permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1963-1964, 1992-2013 and recently for 2012-2013 for Africa and Pacific region.
- Morocco's constant dedication to peace-keeping and peace building missions worldwide was materialized through its participation in 12 peace and security operations since 1960, including Shaba (Nigeria), Congo, Cambodia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Angola and Haiti.
- Morocco is a strong partner in the international struggle against terrorism.
- **Morocco has always been a staunch advocate of South –South cooperation as well as a steady promoter of solidarity with Africa. In a gesture of good faith, Morocco cleared in 2000 its debt owed by African countries as an aid to development. Morocco also granted African exports custom free access to its market.**

V-MOROCCO AND AUSTRALIA:

- Designation of the first non resident Ambassador to Australia in 1976. Since 1980 Morocco made the step towards Australia by designating an Australian citizen as Honorary Consul to deal with Moroccan interests in the Commonwealth of Australia and the Pacific countries.
- Many Australian parliamentary and business delegations paid official visits to Morocco, the first occurring in 1993.
- An Australian parliamentary delegation had also visited Morocco in 2002 for the 107th Inter-Parliamentary Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, hosted by the Moroccan Parliament in Marrakesh.
- The delegation's visits to Morocco and other countries followed the visits to five North African countries including Morocco in November 2005 by members of the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee's on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT).
- In 2005, recognizing the importance of Australia and the common interest of our two countries bilaterally and on the international arena, Morocco opened an Embassy in Canberra at the level of plenipotentiary Ambassador.
- Since then, cooperation between Morocco and Australia has been in progress, in different areas: trade, investment, import and export, people to people relations, and official visits.
- In 2005 the Minister of Employment of Morocco visited Australia.

- From 27 August to 1 September 2006, an Australian Parliamentary delegation visited Morocco before attending the 52nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Abuja, Nigeria.
- The delegation came to the conclusion that **“there are good prospects for enhanced trade and investment in these countries, notwithstanding distance, language and other constraints. In addition to the traditional areas of agri-business which apply for both countries, Morocco’s growing tourist sector offers many opportunities”**. 1
- The same delegation concluded that **“Morocco had come to be regarded as something of an exemplar among the countries of North Africa for its commitments to political, economic and social reforms that have transformed the country into one of the most open and progressive in the Arab world”**.
- The Australian Government’s assessment of areas that offered the best prospects for Australian exporters and investors were: agribusiness –live animals and tourism- hotel fit-out, equipment, food and beverage, and training in the hospitality sector.
- 14 April 2009 the General Secretary of the Moroccan affairs and cooperation Ministry paid a visit to Australia and presented a memorandum for regular consultations.
- In May 2010 the Minister of Agriculture of Morocco led an official delegation comprising businessmen to Australia.
- From 18 to 21 December 2010, a delegation comprising parliamentarians, journalists and Australian businessmen visited Morocco. Its members have had political discussions in Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with representatives of the National Council of Human Rights, the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs.
- From people to people perspective, Australia is a home for a community of more than 3000 Moroccan nationals, one third of them held Australian citizenship. A good number of Moroccans studies at the prestigious Australian universities in Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle. Moroccan community has a good reputation and contributes positively in the multicultural society of Australia.
- On the other hand, Morocco is a host country to many Australian citizens: businessmen, travel agents, industry companies, tourists and men of letters who take Morocco as their touristic destination or second residence.
- According to recent statistics, around 33.000 Australian tourists visited Morocco in 2010, which require Australian **Consular Services**.
- The Foreign Editor of the Australian, the journalist Greg Sheridan wrote two articles after his visit to Morocco in December 2010 stating that: **“Morocco is a success story in the Arab world”, “Morocco is determinedly on the side of the friendship with the West, and on the side of moderation. It cooperates closely on security with the US and the European Union”. “In all of this, if ever there were a state in North Africa that Australia ought to be developing an economic and political relationship with, it’s Morocco”**. (The Australian 23 December 2010).

VI-THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY:

On the basis of **the principle of reciprocity**, the main Committee of the House of Representatives has reported on 28 February 2011 that **“we are represented in Morocco from Paris, of all places, and in may of those other places from Cairo. It is simply inadequate, and it is embarrassing that both Ukraine and Morocco have Embassies here and there is no equivalent representation in their country”**.

CONCLUSION:

The Moroccan model is one example of what a country can give to his partners with a vast span of natural potentials, economic opportunities, vibrant civil society and talented human resources.

The Kingdom of Morocco remains fully committed to all the endeavours aiming at granting a vision of a responsible triangular cooperation with vigour, effectiveness and mutual benefit in which our two countries can play a pioneering role that the International Community would welcome with enthusiasm.

An Embassy of Australia to cover other African countries is very welcome to be opened in Morocco.

