INFORMATION NOTE ON THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CAPACITY AND INSTITUTION BUILDING (CIB) WORKING GROUP OF UCLG
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MARRAKECH, MOROCCO
Morocco (in Arabic: "المغرب", al-Maġrib; in Amazigh language: "ⴰⵎⵖⵔⵉⴱ», l-Meqrib), or from 1957, in the long form, the Kingdom of Morocco, formerly the Cherifian Empire, is a State located in North Africa.

With a presence of hominids dating back around 700,000 years and inhabited since prehistoric times by Berber populations, the Moroccan state, as a distinct entity, was founded in 789 by Idriss the First.

Morocco experienced a Protectorate regime between 1912 and 1956 and gained independence from the Spanish and French governments in 1956.

Morocco adopted a new Constitution in 2011, the preamble of which (which is an integral part of it) states in paragraph 1: "Faithful to its irreversible choice to build a democratic constitutional state, the Kingdom of Morocco is resolutely pursuing the process of consolidating and strengthening the institutions of a modern State, based on the principles of participation, pluralism, and good governance".

Morocco is a constitutional, democratic, parliamentary, and social monarchy. The constitutional system of the Kingdom is based on the separation, balance, and collaboration of powers, as well as on citizen and participatory democracy, and the principles of good governance and the correlation between responsibility and accountability.

The current Sovereign is His Majesty King Mohammed VI (-God help Him-), who succeeded His father, H.M. King Hassan II, on July 30, 1999.

The Government is chosen from an elected Parliament and since the 2011 Constitution, it is headed by a Head of Government, who is currently Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, of the National Rally of Independents (RNI) Party.

Islam is the religion of the State, which guarantees to all the free exercise of worship.

Arabic remains the official language of the State which works for the protection and development of the Arabic language, as well as the promotion of its use. Likewise, Amazigh constitutes an official language of the State, as the common heritage of all Moroccans without exception.

Geographically, it is particularly characterized by mountainous or desert areas and is one of the only countries - with Spain and France - to have shores both on the Mediterranean Sea and on the Atlantic Ocean. Its population is nearly 37.13 million (2021 census) and its area is 710,850 square kilometers.

The territorial division of Morocco is as follows:

- **12 Regions**, including the Region of Souss-Massa, in Southern Morocco;
- **75 Prefectures and Provinces**, including the Prefecture of Agadir Ida-Ou-Tanane;
- **1503 Communes**, including the Commune of Agadir, a city of 300,000 inhabitants, who's President of the Communal Council (the Mayor) is the Head of Government, Mr. Aziz Akhannouch.

The capital of Morocco is Rabat, and its economic metropolis is Casablanca.

Working for Peace, Solidarity and Cooperation, the Kingdom is a member of the UN, the Arab League, the African Union, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Group of 77, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Union for the Mediterranean, and it is a candidate for membership within ECOWAS, among other international, continental, and regional organizations.

**Morocco hosts also the Headquarters of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) since 2010.**
WEATHER REPORT AND CLIMATE IN MOROCCO

- Morocco's climate varies according to seasons and regions. The coast has a warm Mediterranean climate, temperate on the Eastern coast by the trade winds from the Southwest. The interior regions have a warmer and drier continental climate. In the South of the country, the weather is very hot and dry most of the year, although temperatures can drop dramatically at night, especially in December and January.
- Rainfall falls from November to March in the coastal areas and the country is mostly dry with high temperatures in summer and a cooler climate in the mountains.

TRAVELING TO MOROCCO: HOW TO GET THERE BY PLANE?

- The national airline is Royal Air Maroc (AT) (http://www.royalairmaroc.com)
- Morocco is also served by foreign airlines such as Air France, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, and others.

MAIN AIRPORTS

- Casablanca (CMN) (Mohammed V) airport is 30km south of the city (travel time- 35minutes). From/to the airport: there are taxi services in Casablanca and train services available to Marrakech and other destinations. Facilities: duty-free shop, bank and exchange office, restaurant, tourist assistance service and car rental.
- Marrakech-Menara (RAK) airport is 8.5km from the city of Marrakech (journey time-20 minutes). The airport has a duty-free shop, bank and exchange office, restaurant, bar, tour assistance and car rental service. Facilities: city buses and taxis serve it.
- Rabat-Salé (RBA) airport is 11km Northeast of the city of Rabat, in the city of Salé (travel time-20minutes). From/to the airport: there are urban taxi and bus services. Facilities: There are duty free shops, bank, exchange office, restaurant, tourist assistance service, and car rental.
- Agadir-Al Massira airport is the 3rd busiest airport in Morocco, located 25km from downtown Agadir (travel time – 25/30 minutes). From/to the airport: there are urban taxi & bus services. It has a duty-free shop, bank and currency exchange, restaurant, tour assistance & car rental service.
- Other international airports include Fes (FEZ) and Tangiers (TNG) airports.
- Departure tax: None (included in the price of the plane ticket).

HOW TO GET AROUND IN MOROCCO?

Travel by plane

- Royal Air Maroc (AT) (http://www.royalairmaroc.com) provides regular connections between the main cities of Morocco, which has 12 airports, including Casablanca, Rabat-Salé, Agadir, Dakhla, Fez, Marrakech, Ouarzazate, Oujda, and Tangiers.

Travel by train

- The Moroccan rail system, managed by the national railroad company (Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF) (www.oncf.ma), provides regular and comfortable services. Rail fares are very reasonable.
- The network connects Oujda in the Northeast to Casablanca on the West coast, Tangiers in the North, and Fez and Marrakech in the interior part of the country.
There are several daily connections by train (every one or two hours) and a night train that connects Casablanca to Marrakech, from Monday to Friday; a train runs every 30 minutes between Kenitra and Rabat, and almost every 30 minutes between Rabat and Casablanca.

**Travel by road**
- The main Moroccan roads are all-weather roads, with an important network of highways linking the main cities of the country.
- Coach (Bus): The main centers are linked by a wide variety of coach services, many of which are run by private companies. The two main companies are: CTM (Phone: (+212) 522753 677; [http://www.ctm.co.ma](http://www.ctm.co.ma)), covering the whole country and Supratours (Phone: (+212) 537 686 297; [http://www.supratourstravel.com](http://www.supratourstravel.com)), which completes the train network.
- Taxi: Small metered taxis are available in major cities. Grand taxis are usually Mercedes cars, used for travel outside of medinas and areas outside cities. These can be shared, but fares must be agreed before departure, as they are not metered.
- Car rental: International and local car rental companies have offices in major cities. Car rental is generally expensive. The minimum age to drive a rental car is 21 years old.

**Regulations**
- Driving is on the right side of the road in Morocco.
- Wearing a seat belt is compulsory.
- The maximum authorized speed is 60 kilometers/hour in cities and towns, reaching 120 km/hour on motorways.
- No alcohol is allowed in the blood while driving.
- In principle, it is compulsory to carry official identification at all times. In practice, a photocopy of the important pages of your passport will do, provided that the original passport is in your hotel located in the same city. When traveling between cities, you should always have your passport with you.

**WHERE TO RESIDE IN MOROCCO?**
Hotels in Morocco are cheap, good value and generally quite easy to find. There may be a shortage of places in the main towns and resorts during the summer period. At other times, you can choose from a wide range of accommodation, including Riads (traditional Moroccan houses) or Guest Houses.

**FOOD AND DRINK**
Morocco is renowned for its internationally recognized gastronomy, which draws its origins from its centuries-old history. It is rich and varied, aligning salty and sweet.
Some national specialties: Couscous (a dish made from wheat, barley, or corn semolina, with meat, chicken or fish, and vegetables), Tajine (a stew), Harira (a soup), Pastilla (pastry usually stuffed with meat), Mechoui (spit-roast), salty or sweet salads, and other delicacies.
National drinks:
- Tea with fresh mint, black tea, and sugar.
- Coffee.
HEALTH CARE
Morocco has an important health and medical infrastructure: University Hospital Centers (CHUs), civil and military hospitals, clinics, emergency services, pharmacies, and analysis laboratories are present in all cities. There are also both public and private entities. Public hospitals offer emergency treatment free or at minimal cost.

PURCHASING & SHOPPING
Morocco is also renowned for its rich and varied craftsmanship and centuries-old know-how in several professions. About as far as you can imagine a typical department store, the souks are a maze of shops and artisan workshops organized in a way by trade and craft: leather goods, basketry, carpets, jewelry, medicinal plants, metalwork or ceramics. These local handicrafts are made by artisans and Maalems (craftsmen) whose techniques and tools have been passed down from generation to generation. They can range from rustic charm to modern design, to surprising objects.

For the past few decades, Morocco has also been home to large Malls and Supermarkets.

EXCHANGE RATE
- The currency used in Morocco is the Moroccan dirham (MAD: symbol Dh).
- Banknotes are in denominations of 200, 100, 50 and 20 dirhams. The coins have a face value of 10, 5, 2 and 1 dirham and 50, 20, 10 and 5 cents.
- Currency exchange: Moroccan dirhams can only be obtained in Morocco.
- The most convenient way to get dirhams is through an ATM
- Exchange rate indicators (Approximate currency conversion rates)
  - 1,00 EUROS = 11,02 MAD
  - 1,00 USD = 10,24 MAD
- National currencies should be exchanged only at official exchange bureaus; changing money on the street is illegal.
- There are no commission charges and visitors will receive a receipt, which they must keep in order to exchange Moroccan currency into the original national currency upon departure.
- The Euro and the US dollar are widely accepted, even preferred.
- Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs: Credit cards are accepted in major restaurants, hotels, hostels and shops.
- Money can be withdrawn from ATMs in major cities.
- Bank opening hours Monday to Friday from 08:15 am to 15:45.

MOROCCO VISA, PASSPORT AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
- For foreign nationals whose countries are subject to visa formalities, their travel documents must be accompanied by visas issued by the Moroccan Authorities at Embassies and Consulates accredited in the Country of origin.
- People residing in countries where there is a diplomatic representation of Morocco must submit their visa application to these diplomatic representations.
- The stay in Morocco for tourist reasons is limited to 3 months for foreigners who are visa-exempt, and limited to the duration of the validity of the visa for those who are subject to it. [https://www.consulat.ma/en/list-countries-whose-citizens-are-exempted-entry-visa-morocco](https://www.consulat.ma/en/list-countries-whose-citizens-are-exempted-entry-visa-morocco)
- In the event that the foreigner wishes to extend his or her stay on Moroccan territory beyond the validity period of their visa or the three-month period, if the foreigner is not subject to this obligation, he or she is required to request authorization from the competent Moroccan authority (General Directorate of National Security) in order to avoid being in an irregular situation.
- For foreigners who wish to exercise a remunerated professional activity, they may, in this case, apply for a registration card.
- Visitors should ensure their passports are stamped when entering the country.
- Travelers must fill in the passenger's health card to be given on arrival at one of the airports in Morocco.

**MEASURES IMPOSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Covid-19 in Morocco: Since September 30, 2022,** the Moroccan Authorities have lifted all health restrictions (PCR or Vaccine Pass) for entry into the Moroccan territory. Only the passenger's health card must be presented duly completed and handed over on arrival at the airport.

**POWER SUPPLY AND VOLTAGE**

- In Morocco, power outlets are of the following types. The standard voltage is 220V standard European sockets and the standard frequency is 50Hz. Be sure to bring an adapter if needed.

**TELEPHONE AND INTERNET**

- Telephone code of Morocco: +212.
- Morocco has an important telecommunications infrastructure that meets international standards. Internet access is widely available nationwide.
- Free SIM cards are often offered at Airports.
Discover Marrakech!

Located at the foot of the High Atlas Mountains, the Imperial City of Marrakech, capital to several imperial dynasties, is charged with history, cultural goods and heritage. Marrakech is an open-air museum; its ancient medina is one of the largest nearly intact medieval cities anywhere. Among its monuments are the 13th-century Koutoubia Mosque with its famous minaret, the ruins of the 16th-century Badi Palace, and Jemaâ El-Fna square, emblematic hub of the city’s social life day and night. Marrakech is famous for its range of museums, its crowded souks and bazars, and for its charming riads (courtyard houses transformed into boutique B&Bs).

Between tradition and modernity, Marrakech is the promise of incomparable sensations. Strolling through the Jemaa El-Fna square and the souks with their bright colors and oriental smells, the Ocher city will satisfy your desire for a change of scenery. You can admire the architectural richness of the Medina by visiting one of its many riads, small oriental palaces organized around a central patio, or recharge your batteries at the Menara, a vast garden with a pool emblematic of the city. Marrakech gives its visitors the choice by drawing from its incredible diversity. Just leave the city walls to be immersed in contemporary Morocco. The districts of Guéliz and Hivernage offer the most modern infrastructures, luxury and international ready-to-wear boutiques and wide and airy avenues; all in the respect of Marrakech’s own cachet.

What to visit in Marrakech: Must-see locations and essential places:

1. **Jemaâ El-Fna Square**: is one of the main cultural spaces of Marrakech. It has become one of the symbols of the city since its foundation in the 11th century. It is a major place of cultural exchanges and is classified as World Heritage of Humanity since 1985 by UNESCO. Located in the heart of the Medina, the square is both the geographical center of the city and a gathering place not to be missed, day and night!
2. **Jardin Majorelle, Berber Museum and Yves Saint Laurent Museum**: Jardin Majorelle, extending over 9000m², is one of the most enchanting gardens in Morocco and is composed of exotic plants and trees. The Berber Museum, located in the heart of the Jardin Majorelle, presents the extraordinary creativity of the Berber tribes, from the Rif to the Sahara, more than 600 objects collected by Pierre Bergé and Yves Saint Laurent testify to the richness and diversity of a culture. Near the Jardin Majorelle, acquired by Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé in 1980, the **YVES SAINT LAURENT Marrakech Museum** covers 4,000m², with a 400m²-exhibition space, presenting the work of Yves Saint Laurent, a temporary exhibition, a research library with 5,000 books, an auditorium, a bookstore and a cafe with terrace.

3. **Bahia Palace**: is one of the most important architectural works of Marrakech and one of the most impressive palaces. Located south of the medina, it is today a monument of the cultural heritage of Morocco. Built at the end of the 19th century, it extends over 8 hectares with 150 rooms overlooking the various courtyards and gardens.
4. **El Koutoubia Mosque**: is the most important of Marrakech and was one of the largest in the Islamic world when it was completed in 1158. The minaret of the Koutoubia Mosque is 69 meters high, making it the highest point of view in Marrakech. This impressive religious building is 90 meters long and 60 meters wide.

**Cadi Ayyad University (UCA)**:

The UCA is a Public University, Created in 1978, under the chairmanship of Moulay Hassan Hbid, which has never ceased to evolve and to confirm its position at the national and international level as much by the evolution of its student population as by the diversification of its training offer or by its research and its national and international influence. Cadi Ayyad University has 15 establishments, 9 in Marrakech, 3 in Safi, 2 in Essaouira and 2 in El kelâa Sraghna and includes 221 initial training courses including 14 bachelor’s courses with a capacity of 48,700 physical places (4,200 in progress); as well as 57 research laboratories and 2 research centers.

It is ranked by Times Higher Education as one of the top 100 Universities in the world under 50 years old and by U.S. News & World Report as number 23 in the 2016 regional ranking of Arab Universities. The university’s strategy involves four fundamental points: Territorial anchoring, Internalization, Digitization, Managerial efficiency.

The UCA was able to succeed in its fight against Covid-19 through the production of digital media, the creation of a digital platform as well as 132 courses recorded for the Arryadia channel and 169 courses broadcast.
Some cities of Morocco:

**Agadir**
The city of Agadir, capital of the Souss Massa region, is located at the feet of the Anti-Atlas mountains, along the West coast and bordered by the waves of the Atlantic. She is the Pearl of the South and one of Morocco’s main seaside resorts, where the sunshine is abundant, the city enjoys a pleasant climate and a 10-kilometer-long seafront. Agadir shelters in an exceptional site and has the particularity of benefiting from a temperate climate, which makes its sunshine all year round the greatest attraction for visitors. It has become an important commercial and fishing port and renowned for its abundance of fish (the largest sardine port in the world). It is the ideal destination for visitors looking for different sports activities such as windsurfing, horse riding, tennis, and golf. For more relaxed holidaymakers, there is plenty to see and do around the city, as it is the starting point for countless discoveries such as tours of the rich hinterland and adventures in the great South.

**Rabat**
In addition to being the political and administrative capital of Morocco, Rabat is a cultural heritage city, home to an immense centuries-old heritage in terms of sites and monuments, as well as modern infrastructures. There is a central beach, a fortified Medina with pretty Riads (guesthouses), & shops of all kinds. The main monuments are the Mausoleum Mohammed V, the Hassan Tower, the Oudaya area, the Chellah Necropolis, the Medina (old city), the Rue des Consuls street housing crafts and craftsmen, the Bouregreg Valley, the Mohammed VI Museum of Modern Art (MMVI), the Archaeological Museum, and other sites. Rabat also has an important transportation network based on the tramway, buses, taxis & trains. The city is home to several traditional markets (souks) and modern markets (supermarkets).
**Essaouira**
The “windy city” of Essaouira is famous for its surfing scene. A major Atlantic port in the age of sail ships, Essaouira is now the perfect place “chill” away from bustle of big cities. Already in the 1960s it was a “happening” place where the likes of Jimmy Hendricks hung out. Today, Essaouira is known for the weeklong Gnawa Festival of World Music, which attracts about 300,000 spectators annually. The spectacular beach attracts wind surfers the year round. Other visitors come to Essaouira for its visual arts scene, or else to wander the streets and squares of this beautifully planned 18th-century port.

**Safi**
Safi is a city in Morocco, located on the Atlantic coast. It takes advantage of its position as a crossroads between the major poles of Morocco: Casablanca, Agadir and Marrakech. Its port is one of the most important in the country.
Since the 1960s, the city has also been home to an important industrial complex for the transformation of phosphate. It recorded a population of 308,508 in the 2014 Moroccan census. Its privileged geographical and natural setting, offering vast plains made up of agricultural soil, bordered by superb beaches of fine sand and a subsoil rich in mineral resources (phosphate, gypsum and barite) and a maritime frontage on the Atlantic Ocean over 150 km.
Casablanca
Casablanca is the economic capital of Morocco, hosting important business districts, as well as the headquarters of companies. This is where business is done, where young Moroccans and foreigners come to seek fortune and where businesses and creative industries thrive. The number of construction projects currently underway is nothing short of extraordinary. The city is experiencing major projects aimed at upgrading infrastructure, equipment and services. The city is also home to an important and rich cultural heritage.