

**International seminar on the experiences of national reconciliation aiming to establish peace and political stability, and to realize social peace**

**House of Councilors, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, January 17-18, 2019**

**Conceptual framework paper**

The House of Councilors of the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA), in partnership with the Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights and Morocco's Council of Human Rights, would organize **the International seminar on the experiences of national reconciliation aiming to establish peace and political stability, and to realize social peace**, in Rabat, Morocco on January 17-18, 2019.

The seminar comes as part of the continued implementation of ASSECAA's schedule of activities approved during its 10th conference held in Rabat, Morocco from 20-21 September 2017, which involved a variety of topics, including peace building efforts, resolution of conflicts and political crises, and transitional justice in Africa and the Arab world.

The event shall deliberate upon the successful experiences of numerous countries that experienced socio-political crises and ethnic conflicts before engaging in national reconciliation process that enabled such countries restore peace, security and stability; these issues shall top the agenda of this meeting.

There is no doubt that armed conflict and the adoption of a systematically repressive policy negatively affects society in a variety of ways, including all aspects of life, whether they are humanitarian, political, economic and social or otherwise.

Besides, conflicts lead to the loss of many lives, violation of human rights, displacement of people, undermining state institutions and collapsing its organs, the deterioration of economic conditions and depletion of state resources, in addition to an increase in unemployment, a decline in levels of health and education services, and poor political and social engagement etc.

In this context, some countries suffering from crises, conflicts or wars seek, in many ways, to find the most effective way out of these conflicts in such a manner that puts an end to the resulting tragic situation created by war, and achieves security, peace and stability.

Given that wars leave deep scars in societies that may take a lot of time to be healed, in addition to the fact that changing a regime or overthrowing its symbols neither achieves justice automatically, nor restores a country to normality or even ends corruption directly, many countries - which have experienced internal conflicts - have adopted national reconciliation as the only way of ending conflicts and achieving security, peace and stability. In addition, national reconciliation serves as a social, political and legal pillar of a stable, modern, democratic state, away from action/reaction and reprisal rhetoric that may be adopted by the conflicting parties in a way that leads to further violence, killing and destruction.

Reconciliation creates a genuine dialogue leading to recognition of truth, and reaching a consensus among rivals on a political formula that excludes the logic of ultimate defeat and victory, breaks the cycle of violence, and strengthens modern and democratic institutions in order to achieve social peace.

Given the importance of the issue of transitional justice at the international level and the positively accumulated achievements of these tracks in building national reconciliation and democratic transition despite its fragility in some contexts, the Human Rights Council, in September 2011, adopted resolution 7/18 appointing a Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for a renewable three-year period. The Special Rapporteur deals with situations where serious violations for human rights and international humanitarian law have occurred.

In most of his annual, thematic and country reports, the Special Rapporteur referred to the role of parliaments or lawmakers in transitional justice, reconciliation and guarantees of non-repetition, and drew special recommendations in their area of competence, such as the development of transitional justice and reconciliation laws in line with international human rights standards.

The UN Special Rapporteur on strengthening Truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition issues, shows clearly in his comments to States the importance of adoption and revision of national laws, regulations and policies in the area of guarantees of non-repetition and the establishment of a supervisory role on public policies guaranteeing rights, justice and security governance.

He regularly provides comments on the appropriateness of the normative and political developments of States with international norms and standards relevant to the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, all of which are aimed at providing rules for national reconciliation.

Unlike the reconciliations that followed bloody conflicts and wars, other experiences paved the way for democratic transition through transitional justice and the creation of truth bodies.

National reconciliation is one of the most important elements of any political settlement that establishes a relationship between the political and societal parties based on tolerance and justice in order to turn over the page of the past and achieve peaceful coexistence between the different sectors of society. It is a national project and plan, as well as a moral and human value that enables victims to identify offenders and then bring them to account. In addition, it concerns all citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious or political affiliations.

In the context of the great transformations witnessed by the world today, the issues of national reconciliation and transitional justice are at the center of national and international public opinion. Indeed, they have become a fundamental demand in today's world and have been adopted strongly during the last two decades of the last century as an expression of a historical trajectory that proved its worth, and has always been a standard recipe that can provide a solution to the problem of democratic transition.