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ROYAUME DU MAROC

البرلمان

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CHAMBRE DES CONSEILLERS



مجلس المستشارين

**Report of the Second Legislative Year
(2022-2023)**

Legislature 2021-2027

Executive Summary



كَرِهُنَا الْجَلَالَةَ الْمَلِكَةَ بِمَتَمِّهِ الْقِتَالِ مِنْ نِكْرِهِ إِلَهٌ

General Introduction:

The Royal Speech on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the second legislative year of the eleventh legislative term, on Friday, 17 Rabi' al-Awwal 1444 AH corresponding to October 14, 2022, is a reference for the work of the House of Councillors during this year. It contains practical royal directives regarding the two issues it focused on related to the water and investment files, addressing current and urgent challenges on the one hand, and future aspects concerning achieving a qualitative leap in the field of promoting investment as a fundamental lever to revive the national economy on the other hand.

In addition, the House of Councillors continued to be guided by the insightful vision of His Majesty the King, which was translated into his royal directives to the government on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the first legislative year of this year to complete the major projects that have been launched. First and foremost, the generalization of social protection, considering it a major challenge that requires “a real qualification of the healthcare system, in accordance with the highest standards and in integration between the public and private sectors.”

It is essential to recall that our work coincides with a context marked by the growing risks facing the world, whether in terms of compromising international security and stability due to the Ukrainian-Russian crisis and its multidimensional repercussions or in terms of the global economic growth slowdown, due to the protracted consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the rise in energy prices, the cost of raw materials, the return of inflation, the weakened international response to the phenomenon of climate change and the resulting exacerbation of the issues of drought and the scarcity of water resources at the global level.

Additionally, there are some international concerns regarding these profound developments, as well as the prevailing uncertainty regarding the framework of relations between the members of the international community. This uncertainty has led to isolationism and excessive self-interest, as evidenced by the return of protectionist policies in international trade, and the decline in conviction of the efficacy of joint international action and its institutional mechanisms.

Whereas, although it is natural for our country, due to its geostrategic location, to confront these changes and deal attentively with their contexts, the strengths of this confrontation lie mainly in its components, historical experience, cultural weight, economic and natural qualifications, and social and political cohesion, thanks to the wise leadership of His Majesty on the diplomatic front on the one hand. On the other hand, it is thanks to His wise philosophy and sound foresight in strengthening the objective and subjective conditions for our political and economic immunity, safeguarding our development model, strengthening our social cohesion, and sustaining resilience against crises and fluctuations that have stirred the global scene in recent years. Such would be the recovery of our country with minimal damage from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the wise proactive policy of His Majesty, may God Glorify him, and the effectiveness of the structured and integrated programs activated under his direct supervision within the framework of the comprehensive reform dynamic in which our country has engaged.

Invoking the royal directives and the implications of the guiding frameworks guiding our work and guided by the deep meanings of His Majesty's philosophy of reform on various fronts, mutually supportive and multifaceted, we have succeeded, praise be to God, in achieving significant legislative, supervisory, evaluative and diplomatic achievements. These accomplishments are reinforced by a valuable stock of fruitful cooperation with constitutional institutions and civil society, deepening the House of Councillors' presence, and consolidating its constitutional identity as an institutional platform open to society and as a representative extension of the regions and territorial areas, and as a space for public debate and pluralistic societal dialogue on major issues that are of concern to the State and society.

Naam Mayara
Speaker of the House of Councillors



**Firstly
Legislation, Control, and
Evaluation of Public Policies**

The ratified texts during this year have stood out for their significant importance. Some of these texts are linked either to the generalization of social protection, investment, and competition, to the energy sector, particularly the production of electricity and its regulation. Other texts focus on the consolidation of guarantees of the judiciary's independence by enhancing the legal framework relating to the Supreme Council of the Judicial Power and the fundamental Statute of Judges. There are also some texts on Moroccan-African relations and Morocco's relations with various countries and international organizations.

Moreover, achieving the objectives of the social state and successfully implementing the generalization of social protection to Moroccan citizens requires the government and both chambers of the parliament to continue exerting efforts and enhancing cooperation. That is in order to complete the legal edifice necessary to implement the royal directives at this level.

Building upon our constructive approach to addressing social issues in particular, the House of Councillors, in its various components, contributed to the discussion, improvement, and approval of the draft law - the framework related to the national healthcare system. This law is pivotal in advancing the health sector in Morocco, developing it, and enhancing its performance. It also paves the way for a profound reform of the national healthcare system, as an urgent necessity and a consensus-driven priority, within the state's public policy. It aims to harness human capital in the field of healthcare and prioritize the health of citizens as a prerequisite for the success of the Kingdom's new development model.

As for monitoring the work of the Government and evaluating public policies, the House of Councillors sought to maintain the exceptional work pattern that characterized the first legislative year of the House of Councillors' term. This work pattern was characterized by the integration of its monitoring and evaluative mechanisms.

In order to communicate with all social groups, and in implementation of the provisions of the organizational law on the Amazigh language, this year saw the

initiation of interpretation of the House of Councillors' oral question sittings to and from the Amazigh language. This achievement is a result of a close coordination effort with the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture and with the Ministry delegated in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, under the supervision of the Head of the Government.

In the context of evaluating public policies, the House of Councillors has determined the public policy subject for evaluation during this year, by adopting an inclusive approach involving various components of the Council, which resulted in the selection of a theme that aligns with its composition and the aspirations of its members. The theme was 'Education, Training and the Reform Challenges', serving as the focus of the annual public policy evaluation session for the legislative year 2022-2023. For this purpose, a specialized thematic working group was formed, entrusted with preparing for this annual session. Their work culminated in the preparation of a detailed report that included an accurate diagnosis of the current situation, providing a set of relevant suggestions and recommendations.

Moreover, the House of Councillors also discussed another thematic report prepared by the Interim Thematic Working Group on issues of disabilities and programs aimed at addressing them. This program included a comprehensive treatment of the matter and the challenges faced by this segment of society.

In terms of its relationship with constitutional institutions, the House of Councillors continued to value constructive cooperation with the national institutional fabric by reaching and utilizing opinions and studies issued by a number of them. With the same concern to strengthen cooperation and exchange of knowledge, all reports, including the thematic ones received from these institutions, were disseminated to the Council's components, as well as participating in the communicative meetings organized during this year.

1- At the Legislative Level:

Regarding the legislative work, the deliberations concerning the proposed draft texts during the first session of this year were characterized by a spirit of cooperation and constructive debate with the Government. This was mainly evident in the unanimous approval of the vast majority of ratified texts that dealt with important topics that sought to regulate vital areas.

During the aforementioned session, the House of Councillors approved (42) legislative texts, including four (04) draft regulatory laws, two (02) draft framework laws, 19 regular draft laws, a draft law related to the ratification of a decree-law, fourteen (14) draft laws related to the ratification of international agreements, bilateral and multilateral, and two (02) proposed laws.

More than 88 per cent of the texts were unanimously approved by the House of Councillors, nine (09) of which were amended before their approval, after the Council's components submitted 930 amendments (two-thirds of which were related to the draft finance law and the draft laws related to the healthcare system), about 20 per cent of which were accepted, taking into account the amendments withdrawn after thorough discussions with the Council's components and the government members. It is worth noting that 14 draft laws related to the ratification of international conventions, which are not subject to amendments, were also part of the proceedings.

Highlighting the House of Councillors' positive contribution to building social welfare edifice and the completion of the royal workshops related to the generalization of social protection, three of the prioritized draft social laws, referred to the Council, underwent significant amendments before their approval.

Thus, the House of Councillors also approved Law No. 27.22 amending and supplementing Law No. 65.00 on the Basic Health Coverage Code, Law No. 60.22 related to the system of compulsory basic health insurance for individuals capable of bearing subscription duties and who are not engaged in any paid or unpaid activity. Furthermore, Draft Law No. 08.22 regarding the establishment of territorial health

groups, and Draft Law No. 09-22 concerning the fundamental guarantees granted to human resources in the healthcare profession, were also approved.

The House of Councillors attached great importance to the study of Law No. 03.22 as an investment charter, which is a basis for consolidating the foundations of effective and more dynamic national investment, as well as opening new horizons for our country in the post-Covid-19 world. This period has witnessed a global trend for countries and governments to align with their investment options with the nature of new challenges. Moreover, other fundamental texts were approved that align with the same direction, such as the draft law concerning industrial zones, the draft law concerning the Competition Council and the draft law concerning freedom of prices and competition. These two fall within the framework of a royal vision aimed at developing transparency in the business sector and establishing the foundations for legitimate competition in our country.

Among the other significant fundamental draft laws approved by the House of Councillors, we refer in particular to the Finance Law for the fiscal year 2023. This law encompasses crucial reform provisions, an important part of which aims to achieve tax justice in our country. This is achieved by enacting provisions related to reforming the income tax system and the corporate taxation. Additionally, the Finance Code for that year included important social provisions, most notably the reform of the system of support for Moroccan families for the acquisition of decent housing, an important reform aimed at rationalizing the support directed to Moroccans for the acquisition of housing suitable for them.

This is in addition to the House of Councillors' approval of significant regulatory draft laws, pertaining to defining the conditions and procedures for referring laws as unconstitutional, as well as the Supreme Council and the Judiciary and the Statute of Judges.

Within the framework of consolidating the relations of cooperation and partnership between Morocco and a number of sisterly and friendly countries, and enhancing its position at the continental and international levels, the House of Councillors ratified during the first session of this year fourteen (14) draft laws relating to multilateral

international agreements and bilateral agreements with countries that share a significant and multidimensional partnership relationship with the Kingdom of Morocco. This notably includes African countries, as well as agreements on regional issues, especially those of an African nature, and which reflect Morocco's earnest engagement in the fundamental issues of the African continent, particularly in matters concerning youth issues, education, and knowledge exchange.

Furthermore, in fulfilment of its international obligations to fight against illicit arms internationally, particularly chemical weapons, the House of Councillors unanimously approved the Law on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Storage, Use, and Destruction of Chemical Weapons.

In total, during the October 2022 session, the standing committees held a total of 70 meetings with a duration of approximately 236 working hours. Among these, 39 meetings were devoted to studying and voting on the draft finance law, with a total duration of 145 hours.

It is worth noting that the work of the standing committees continued during the inter-sessional period, as the Committee of the Interior, Territorial Communities and Infrastructure, after a deep discussion with the relevant ministry, approved a draft law on establishing multi-service regional companies, after incorporating a set of amendments into it.

Furthermore, in accordance with the provisions of Article 81 of the Constitution, the Finance, Planning and Economic Development Committee approved during the inter-sessional period a draft decree-law No. 2.23.102 concerning the dissolution and liquidation of the MCA-Morocco Agency.

The work of the House of Councillors in the legislative field was characterized by its connection and integration with legislative achievements of previous sessions. During this session, the House of Councillors ratified 23 draft laws, a number of which are linked to essential social projects, in order to complement the legal framework of our country's new social policy, based on the principle of generalizing social coverage for Moroccan citizens. This is aligned with the necessary development of the healthcare provision, the national healthcare system and its human resources.

We particularly highlight the approval of draft law No. 10.22 which pertains to the establishment of the Moroccan Agency for Pharmaceuticals and Health Products, draft law No. 11.22 concerning the creation of the Moroccan Blood Agency and its derivatives, draft law No. 23-23 through which the Mohammed VI Foundation for Science and Health was introduced, the in-depth discussions regarding draft Law No. 98.18 related to the National Order of Pharmacists, as well as the House of Councillors' approval of draft Law No. 08.22 for the creation of territorial health groups, and draft Law No. 09.22 concerning the healthcare profession, as part of a second reading.

As for the major economic projects in our country, which were a primary focus of the legislative work of the House of Councillors during this session. The House of Councillors approved a number of texts of strategic importance, including:

- Draft Law No. 83.21 concerning regional multi-service companies;
- Draft Law No. 40.22 regarding the determination of the number of independent administrators and the conditions and procedures for their appointment in public contracting entities;
- Draft Law No. 58.22 for amending and supplementing Law No. 41.05 on collective capital recruitment bodies;
- Liquidation Draft Law No. 11.23 related to the implementation of the Finance Law for the fiscal year 2021.

Additionally, important draft laws related to justice and freedoms were approved. These include draft law No. 44.22 which entails the amendment and alteration of Law No. 45.00 concerning judicial experts, as well as draft law No. 37.22 regarding the Higher Institute of the Judiciary, and draft law No. 15.23 establishing a temporary committee to manage the affairs of the press and publishing sector.

At the level of international cooperation, the House of Councillors approved, during the second session, eight draft laws aimed at approving international agreements pertaining to bilateral cooperation, Arab regional cooperation, and African and international cooperation. These agreements included other vital fields such as civil aviation, energy, investment and social protection. They are within the framework of the Kingdom's commitment to fulfil its international obligations, expand its partnerships

and diversify areas of cooperation with sisterly and friendly countries and regional and international organizations, especially within the African continent.

This required the submission of 257 amendments in order to refine their provisions, spread across 8 law projects out of the total 23 approved, knowing that 10 of them were non-amendable. The House of Councillors allocated seven legislative plenary sittings to vote on the aforementioned texts, out of 29 plenary sittings held during the April 2023 session, with a period of time of approximately 65 working hours for the total plenary sittings.

2. At the Control level

At the level of controlling government work, the House of Councillors held, during the first session of the legislative year 2022-2023, fifteen (15) weekly oral question sittings out of 35 plenary sittings. These sittings lasted about 60 working hours, in which 321 questions were programmed, including 107 immediate questions, and 214 regular questions, related to immediate and urgent issues of national public interest.

Regarding the sectoral distribution of the oral questions presented by the members of the House of Councillors during the aforementioned session, which amounted to 1060 questions. About (32%) of the questions focused on the social sector, while the economic sector received an equal percentage (32%), the internal affairs and infrastructure sector received (20%), the legal, administrative, and religious fields received (13%), and finally, the foreign affairs sector received about (03%) of the questions.

On the other hand, the government answered 378 written questions, while receiving a total of 2,317 written questions during the same period.

Regarding the programming of government sectors subject to accountability during the weekly sittings, in coordination between the Office of the House of Councillors and the Government, three government sectors continue to be identified during each session for questioning by parliamentary teams and groups and unaffiliated members of the House of Councillors. This enabled council members to monitor the majority of government sectors during the fifteen sittings.

Thus, during these sittings, 20 government sectors were questioned on urgent issues of a predominantly social, economic and territorial nature in light of a difficult global circumstance that had a significant impact on a number of sectors. This necessitated collaborative efforts to address these issues in order to preserve the purchasing power of citizens on the one hand and to protect the national economy from associated fluctuations.

At the societal level, the main topics on which the oral questions focused were related to healthcare coverage for citizens, especially in remote areas, rural areas and

mountainous regions, access to healthcare for this category of citizens, reforming the pension system, enforcing labour laws in companies, respecting the rights of employees, the activation of Framework Law No. 97.13 concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, measures to improve public schools, schooling in the rural world, the organization of private education, and others fundamental social issues.

At the economic level, the questions addressed issues related to the development of the Moroccan tourism sector, the difficulties and constraints of the current agricultural season, the prospects of the automotive industry in Morocco, and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises.

As for the territorial level, the questions focused on completing the implementation of advanced regional workshops, human resources for territorial communes, reconstruction, the water crisis in light of drought and climate change, the achievements and prospects of the National Initiative for Human Development and other current issues. These issues include the energy transition, reform and digitization of administration, higher education, basic infrastructure, the status of Moroccan women, the Moroccan diaspora abroad, the execution of judicial decisions, and improving the efficiency of Moroccan courts, especially after the ratification of the law related to the judicial organization in the last session of the previous term, and others.

In accordance with the Article 168 of the Internal Regulations of the House of Councillors, the Presidency of the Council received 26 requests to speak on an urgent topic at the end of the oral question sittings from various groups, formations and non-affiliated members, the government accepted 10 requests, which accounts for 38%, and was unable to respond to the remaining 16 requests.

Regarding the ministers' pledges during the oral question sittings, a number of commitments were outlined under which members of the government pledged to address several societal issues and demands raised in the questions by members of the House of Councillors in the short and medium term. These commitments primarily concerned sectors of higher education, digital transition and administration reform, industry and trade, transportation and logistics, solidarity and social inclusion, family, tourism and handicrafts, justice, and civic education.

The Presidency of the House of Councillors received responses from the Ministers of Justice, Equipment and Water, National Education, Primary Education and Sports, Higher Education Scientific Research and Innovation, Transport and Logistics, Youth, Culture and Communication, as well as Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of Relations with Parliament, and the Minister of Industry and Trade regarding the pledges made while responding to oral questions addressed to them during the oral question sittings for the October 2021 and April 2022 sessions.

During the October 2022 session, the House of Councillors also held two monthly sittings to provide the Head of the Government with answers to questions related to public policy in accordance with the provisions of Article 100 of the Constitution. These sessions were devoted to two fundamental and essential topics, in which the House of Councillors focused on the social challenges facing our country, namely:

- ‘Social dialogue, consolidating the concept of social justice and mechanisms for achieving economic development;
- ‘Activating health and social coverage workshops in Morocco to consolidate the foundations of the welfare state’.

Speaking of questions as a monitoring mechanism calls for noting the steadfastness of the members of the House of Councillors in regularly raising citizens’ issues. During the period between the October 2022 and April 2023 sessions, and at the same usual pace, they continued to submit written and oral questions. It is important to acknowledge the significant effort made by the Ministry of Relations with Parliament in its coordinating role regarding the answers to written questions, which amounted during the period between the October 2022 session and the April 2023 session only, a total of 1144 written answers received by The House of Councillors, noting that the number of written questions submitted during the same period amounted to 111 questions compared to 322 oral questions, bringing the percentage of responses to written questions during the October 2022 session and the intervening period to 63% (1522 answers out of 2418 written questions posed).

The beginning of the second session of this legislative year was characterized by the launch of the new electronic system for managing questions and answers between parliamentary groups and unaffiliated members of the Council on the one hand, and

the Ministry responsible for relations with Parliament on the other hand. This system witnessed several enhancements and developments that would improve the management of parliamentary time by adopting electronic signatures and preserving parliamentary memory, in addition to providing the browser with a set of real-time data and statistics for more effective and rational monitoring of Government activities.

During the thirteen (13) sittings held by the House of Councillors, 21 government sectors were questioned on urgent issues that affected various aspects of the social and economic life of the citizens and the Moroccan business in light of a year full of climatic and economic constraints, which had a direct impact on the standard of living due to inflation and high prices. This necessitated intensive support by the various actors, parliament and the government, to find appropriate solutions to overcome these challenges, especially in light of the positive indicators in the tourism and industrial sectors and the beginning of the recovery in public finances.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 168 of the Internal Regulations of the House of Councillors, the Presidency of the Council received several requests to address urgent topics at the end of the oral question sittings from various of its members, some of which the Government responded.

The Council held two monthly sittings to provide answers to questions related to public policy by the Head of Government in accordance with the provisions of Article 100 of the Constitution:

- The first on the theme of ‘National Tourism Policy’;
- The second is on the theme of ‘The Charter of Administrative Decentralization and the Challenges of Regional and Social Justice’.

During this session, the House of Councillors also continued to monitor the pledges made by the Ministers during the oral question sittings. A number of government commitments were enumerated, mainly in the sectors of equipment and water, economic inclusion, micro-entrepreneurship, employment and competencies, youth, culture and communication, health and social protection, transportation and logistics, investment, inclusivity and evaluation of public policies, higher education, and the Ministry in charge of budget matters.

The Presidency of the House of Councillors received responses from the Ministers of Justice, Youth, Culture and Communication, National Education, Pre-School Education and Sports, Equipment and Water, Transport and Logistics, regarding their pledges during the oral question sittings held during the October 2022 session.

A total of **445 oral questions** were received during the April 2023 session, of which **270** were answered by the Government during **13** plenary sittings, including **115** real-time questions and **155** regular questions.

Regarding the **sectoral distribution**, the questions of the members of the House of Councilors focused on the economic sector amounted to **(42%)**, the social sector received about **(29%)** of the questions, followed by the internal affairs and infrastructure sector about **(20%)**, the legal, administrative and religious field about **(08%)**, and finally, the foreign affairs sector had **(1%)** of the questions.

A total of **649 written questions** were received during the same period, while the Government responded to **485** written questions.

Regarding the work of **the standing committees**, a total of twenty-seven (27) meetings were held during this session with a total duration of about 60 hours, during which they discussed various issues, whether within the legislative framework or in the exercise of their monitoring roles on current issues. Additionally, special meetings were held, the most important of which are:

- The meeting of the Finance, Planning and Economic Development Committee to discuss the generalization of compulsory health coverage, with the presence of the Director General of the National Social Security Fund;
- A prior notification to the Finance Committee by the government regarding the opening of additional appropriations by decree for the General State budget;
- The joint meeting of the Finance Committees of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors for the presentation of the Ministry of Economy and Finance on the implementation of the Finance Act for the current year up to June 30, 2023, and

the general framework for the preparation of the draft Finance Act for the next fiscal year 2024;

- Field visit by the Committee of Productive Sectors on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, to the Tanger Med Free Industrial Zone and the Renault car factory;
- Meeting of the Productive Sectors Committee to study the situation of the agricultural sector and the challenges of farmers following successive years of drought.
- The referral of the annual report on the activities of the National Agency to Combat Illiteracy for the 2021-2022 reading session to the Education, Cultural and Social Affairs Committee for discussion in accordance with the agency's governing law.

3. At the public policy evaluation level :

Regarding the evaluation of public policies, in addition to the theme of the annual session for discussing and evaluating public policies related to education and training, two other thematic groups were formed to submit two reports to the House of Councillors, on the topics of ‘Integrated programmes for persons with disabilities’ and ‘Regional development and the business environment’ as one of the main outputs of the Parliamentary Forum of the Regions.

The selection of these themes as subjects for evaluation this year falls within the context of continuing the approach of interaction with the social and territorial issues of our country, which has always been adopted by the House of Councillors.

After the approval by the Bureau of the House of Councillors of the methodology and work programs of the thematic groups it formed on disability, education and training, regionalization and the business climate, these groups collected, through several stages, and analysed information. They received a set of statistics and data from relevant government sectors and from the High Commission for Planning. They also held meetings with the relevant ministers and scheduled field visits as part of their work program and for the purpose of gathering more information.

It is also worth mentioning the important communication activities organized in this regard during the inter-sessional period. The interim thematic group responsible for public policy evaluation on the subject: ‘Education, training and reform challenges’ organized a seminar on: ‘Parliamentary evaluation of public policies: framework and approaches’.

On the other hand, the thematic working group specializing in disability issues organized a seminar on integrated programs directed to this societal group. Additionally, this group also launched a wide consultation through the House of Councillors’ website, to gather the opinions of citizens on the constraints and difficulties that hinder the integration of this group in various aspects of life.

Furthermore, during the April 2023 session, the temporary Thematic Working Group responsible for preparing for the annual session to evaluate public policies in accordance with Article 101 of the Constitution, which was dedicated to public policies related to ‘education, training and reform challenges’, submitted its final report. This latter was the subject of evaluation and discussion during the annual session held on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, in the presence of the government represented by the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, Primary Education and Sports, and the Ministry of Economic Integration and Small Business, Employment and Competencies, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation.

In a similar context, the House of Councillors held another session to discuss the report of the temporary thematic group on ‘integrated programs for persons with disabilities, in accordance with Article 148 of the Internal Regulations of the House of Councillors. This meeting was attended by the government represented by the Ministry of Economic Integration, Small Business, Employment and Competencies, Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, and with the participation of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation.

4. The Relationship with constitutional institutions.

Regarding the relationship with constitutional institutions, the House of Councillors continued to enhance constructive cooperation with the national institutional fabric by reaching and utilising opinions and studies issued by a number of them.

In this regard, the Bureau received, in accordance with the provisions of the Organizational Law related to the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the report from the Prosecutor General on the implementation of criminal policy for the year 2021.

As for the House of Councillors' relationship with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the two Councils established an advanced methodology for cooperation. This includes periodically reporting to the Bureau of the House of Councilors on the agenda of the said Council at its regular and exceptional sessions. In return, the Bureau ensures the appointment of its members to represent it as observers at the sessions of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council.

As for the relationship with the Constitutional Court, the House of Councillors has received a number of decisions from this Court concerning the adjudication of disputes related to the election of its members. Additionally, the House of Councilors opened the door for all its components to express their opinions on the regulatory laws that have been submitted to the Constitutional Court to determine their conformity with the Kingdom's Constitution.

The election by the Council of a member of the Constitutional Court within the framework of the renewal of the second third of its members, in accordance with the provisions stipulated in Article 130 of the Constitution and the Organizational Law of the Constitutional Court, constitutes an important moment in this relationship during the first session of the legislative year 2022-2023.

As for the relationship with the House of Representatives, it was marked by the continued coordination on common issues, both within the framework of the joint committee and through regular communication between the speakers of the two Houses. This coordination facilitated the performance of both councils in multiple fields, especially during joint sessions, most notably the presentation of the draft finance law for the year 2023, and the joint session held on Monday, January 23, 2023, to respond to the positions of the European Parliament regarding our country. This ongoing coordination covers vital issues of concern to the members of both councils and aims to unify perspectives on fundamental issues, including the signing of a joint report on common topics in the internal regulations of the House of Representatives.

In addition, the two councils are informed of the proposed laws submitted to each other. This contributes to achieving the desired governance of the legislative initiative by the members of both councils, particularly in reducing the repetition of addressing the same topics.

Within the framework of consolidating cooperation relations with these institutions and other national bodies in various fields, whether through activities and forums organized by the House of Councillors or other entities, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Defense and Moroccan Expatriates, held an interactive meeting during which the Speaker of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council presented the opinion adopted on ‘Strengthening the generational bond with the Moroccans of the world - opportunities and challenges’.

During the second session of this year, the Council also continued to enhance coordination with the House of Representatives on various common issues, especially the discussion of the reports from constitutional institutions. On Tuesday, May 02, 2023, the two Councils held a session to present the presentation of the First President of the Supreme Court of Auditors on the activities of the financial courts for the year 2021. Additionally, a plenary session was held in the House of Councillors with the House of Representatives to discuss the thematic distribution of the axes related to the aforementioned presentation in the plenary session held on June 21, 2023, with the participation of Ten (10) government sectors.

In the same vein, all reports, including the thematic reports received by the House of Councillors, were disseminated during this session from constitutional institutions, to participate in the communication meetings organized by these institutions to present study projects and opinions issued by them. In addition, it should be noted that the House of Councillors received a number of reports from various constitutional institutions, including the annual report of the National Council for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Morocco for the year 2022, the annual report of the Kingdom Ombudsman for the year 2021, and the annual report of the Competition Council for the year 2022.

Furthermore, the House of Councillors’ Bureau is in the process of coordinating with the House of Representatives to adopt a unified approach on how to deal with these reports in accordance with the relevant constitutional provisions and the jurisprudence of the constitutional judiciary.

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**Second:
Parliamentary Diplomacy**

In line with the dynamism of parliamentary diplomacy and the mobilisation and the mobilisation and contribution of all components of the House of Councillors this year was marked by the continued strengthening of the process of joining regional, continental, and international parliamentary unions and assemblies as well as at the bilateral level, within the framework of the national diplomatic system, in defence of strategic issues and vital interests of the Kingdom of Morocco, in particular first and foremost the national cause.

Furthermore, it is important to mention The House of Councillors' eagerness to sustain its presence, and the effectiveness of its contributions at the level of international cooperation, consolidating its approach in managing parliamentary diplomacy on various fronts in a way that promotes dialogue and exchange. That is following its conviction in the importance of the pioneering role played today by regional blocs in a world of increasing transformations and changes. An initial orientation that is fully consistent with the strategic choice of our country under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, by strengthening cooperation and solidarity at the global level, particularly South-South cooperation.

In addition, it should be noted that this year's intersessional period was marked by a significant achievement. Namely the recent decision of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), reached unanimously by its members, to remove the Kingdom of Morocco from the Enhanced Surveillance, known as the 'gray list'. That is after evaluating the alignment of the national system with international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, since the implementation of the action plan of the Kingdom of Morocco by FATF in February 2021.

This decision, which deserves to be cherished by our parliamentary position due to the esteemed contribution of the House of Councillors in the reforms that led to it, will strengthen Morocco's standing and reputation at the international level with regard to the adequacy of the legislative framework related to combating money-laundering and terrorist financing. Moreover, it will also strengthen Morocco's cooperation and negotiating stance with international financial and multilateral institutions, as well as increase foreign investment inflows.

At The International Level:

This year has known, at the regional, continental, and international levels, the participation of parliamentary organizations in the opening events of the second session of the Parliament for the year of 2022 of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria. During this occasion, it was stressed that this participation falls within the historical trajectory of relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the countries of West Africa. That is under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, based on deep cultural, spiritual, and civilizational ties, as well as shared values of development, solidarity, mutual respect, and collaborative efforts aimed at strengthening peace and stability. These relations have been further strengthened by His Majesty's visits to several countries of the group, resulting in the concluding and signing of several cooperation agreements within the framework of strategic, multidimensional, and multisectoral partnerships. These latter are based on common solidarity, inclusive development, and strengthening South-South cooperation, all under the patronage of His Majesty.

Moreover, the importance of enhancing cooperation between the House of Councillors and the ECOWAS Parliament was also emphasized as well as investing all available opportunities and possibilities to consolidate and deepen this institutional parliamentary cooperation. The role of parliamentary diplomacy was highlighted in strengthening cooperation and unifying positions on bilateral and regional issues, as well as in developing economic, trade, and cultural relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and West African countries.

These events were marked by the presence of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Mr Muhammadu Buhari, the President of the Economic Community of West African States, the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Umaro Sissoko Embaló, were an opportunity to hold bilateral meetings between the Speaker of the House of Councillors and the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Mr. Sidi Mohamed Tonis, and the Speaker of the Pan-African Parliament, Mr. Chief Fortune Charumbira. These meetings focused on ways to

enhance joint African efforts and explore prospects for cooperation, in order to address multi-dimensional challenges at the regional, continental, and international levels.

The first session of this year also witnessed participation in the meeting of the Forum of Shura Councils and Similar Councils in the Islamic World, which was held in Bandung, Republic of Indonesia. The Chairman of the House of Councillors delivered a speech in which he stressed that the House of Councillors' participation falls within the framework of strengthening cooperation with its counterparts, the Shura Councils, and similar councils in the countries of the Islamic world. That is in addition to strengthening relations at the level of Islamic parliamentary organizations, guided by the wise approach and high directives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, to consolidate The role of the Kingdom of Morocco in supporting all just causes of the Islamic Ummah, foremost of which is the Palestinian cause and Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

It was emphasized that this participation also aims to support all initiatives aimed at achieving the endeavor of strengthening Islamic cohesion in the face of the growing challenges related to multidimensional regional and international transformations. They include unprecedented crisis in the fields of food, energy, and health security, in addition to the challenges of combating extremism and terrorism.

It was also reaffirmed that the Kingdom of Morocco places the Palestinian cause and Al-Quds Al-Sharif at the top of its priorities. It considers it its primary national cause after the issue of territorial integrity. That is through the wise leadership and wise directives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, in supporting and advocating for the Palestinian cause. That is based on His Majesty's role, may God Glorify him, and his capacity as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, in continuing to call for the preservation of the special status of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and respect for the freedom to practice religious rites for followers of the three monotheistic religions. That is in addition to the protection of the Islamic character of the Holy City and the sanctity of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two qiblas and the third of the Two Holy Mosques.

Additionally, the important role played by the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency as an executive mechanism of Al-Quds Committee was also mentioned. This agency, under the supervision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, continues to implement concrete health, educational, housing, and social projects and programs for the benefit of the population of Jerusalem. That is so as to provide them with a decent livelihood, support their resilience, and improve their social and living conditions.

During the same period, the Speaker of the House of Councillors, along with a delegation from both houses of Parliament, participated in the 146th General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held in Manama, the capital of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The assembly revolved around the theme **‘Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Inclusive Societies: Combating Intolerance’**.

Moreover, a series of bilateral discussions and meetings were held with heads and delegations of national parliaments and regional unions participating in the event. These meetings were led by the Chairman of the Shura Council, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Speaker of the National Council of Palestine, the President of the Senate, the Vice-President of the Republic of Uruguay, the Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Speaker of the Arab Parliament, the Speaker of the Pan-African Parliament, and the Speaker of the Latin American Parliament and the Caribbean Parliament.

These meetings focused on ways to enhance parliamentary dialogue between the House of Councillors and national, continental, and regional parliaments. That is in addition to strengthening its presence in international parliamentary forums, serving the higher interests of our country. These meetings also highlighted the Kingdom’s stands on regional and international issues under the wise and insightful leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him.

During this period, **the House of Councillors delegation** participated in the events of the second session of the parliamentary conference ‘Russia-Africa’ held in Moscow, the thirty-first session of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, the winter session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for

Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the emergency meeting of the Palestine Committee of the Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. That is in addition to a visit to the British House of Lords as part of the Moroccan-British Friendship and Cooperation Group.

The second session of this year witnessed the participation of the Speaker of the House of Councillors, as the head of the Association of Senates, Shura Councils, and Similar Councils in Africa and the Arab World. He also participated in the tenth consultative meeting of this regional parliamentary organization, held in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The meeting focused on the topic of ‘inflation resulting from the multiple crises faced by African and Arab countries and the importance of the green economy in achieving sustainable development in the two regions’. This meeting saw the participation of 20 African and Arab countries, including seven (07) African Senate and Shura Council Presidents.

During his speech, the President emphasized the role entrusted to national parliaments in contributing to addressing the successive economic crises that the whole world has witnessed during the past three years, especially in the Arab and African regions.

Moreover, he also held bilateral discussions with parliamentary and government officials of the Kingdom of Eswatini, during which they stressed the quality of bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Kingdom of Eswatini. These relations are based on friendship, cooperation, mutual respect, and a shared desire to establish a genuine and advanced partnership.

The strategic importance that the Kingdom of Morocco attaches to strengthening its relations with African countries was emphasized. That is on the basis of dynamic, rich, and renewed cooperation, within the framework of the strategic vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him.

During this visit, the Speaker of the House Councillors and the President of the Eswatini Senate signed a memorandum of understanding, which is part of the efforts of the Kingdom of Morocco to strengthen relations between the two friendly countries and strengthen bilateral parliamentary cooperation.

Moreover, this also opened an opportunity for coordination discussion meetings with Presidents and Heads of Delegations participating in the association's meetings. The aim was to mobilize support for the autonomy initiative in the southern provinces of the Kingdom of Morocco, as the one and only solution to this artificial conflict.

During this period, the Speaker of the House of Councillors also participated in the opening session of the second sitting of the sixth legislative session of the Pan-African Parliament through an invitation from the President of the Pan-African Parliament. The session was held in Midrand, Republic of South Africa, under the chairmanship of His Excellency the President of the United Republic of Comoros, Chairperson of the African Union.

The Speaker delivered a speech on behalf of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, in which he presented the major initiatives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, toward the African continent's countries. He also shed light on the concept of 'co-development', which embodies the principle of South-South cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco under the leadership of His Majesty, may God Glorify him.

He also held a series of bilateral talks with the President of the Republic of Comoros, the current Chairman of the African Union, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and the representative of the ECOWAS Parliament. During these talks, the importance of the major African initiatives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, was emphasized, such as (food security, health sovereignty, energy security, development of continental industrial platforms, exchange of best practices with African sister nations, training, and supervision...).

Additionally, he held talks with the President of the Pan-African Parliament, during which he expressed the aspiration that our country, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, will keep pace with the institutional and reform projects taking place in the Pan-African Parliament. He also acknowledged the pride of the entire continental institutional community in the pioneering role undertaken by His Majesty in order to establish peace and security in the African continent, enhance

the dynamics of development and promote the prosperity and progress of the African peoples.

The second session of this year was marked by **the inauguration of the expanded space of the King Mohammed VI Library at the headquarters of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament**, on the occasion of the working visit of the Speaker of the Chamber of Councillors to the Republic of Panama, in response to the kind invitation of the Speaker of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, Mrs. Silvia del Rosario Giacoppo.

This event, attended by the First Lady of the Republic of Panama, was a historic moment worthy of His Majesty's honor of this space, by kindly naming it after His Royal Highness. This was reflected in the speech of the President and the President of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, who, on behalf of all components of this regional parliamentary body, renewed her great appreciation and great gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, and support him for honoring this space.

This space serves as a platform to introduce the cultural and historical heritage of the Kingdom of Morocco and a venue to consolidate the shared cultural and human heritage based on the common values and denominators between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Latin American and Caribbean countries. In addition to the official portrait of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, it includes a complete map that encompasses all the regions and provinces of the Kingdom of Morocco, as well as pictures highlighting the tourist and heritage landmarks and development initiatives within the twelve regions of the Kingdom of Morocco under the wise leadership of His Majesty, may God Glorify him.

This event was distinguished by remarkable guests, including several members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Republic of Panama: the President of the Senate of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union, the Deputy President of the Pan-African Parliament, a parliamentary delegation from the Parliament from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the President of the Central American Parliament,

the Acting President of the Mercosur Parliament. In addition, there were several parliamentarians representing various national and regional parliaments from the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

This visit also included participation in the third Summit of the African, Latin American, and Caribbean Parliamentary Forum (FOPALAC). During this meeting, the Speaker highlighted that His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, is a pioneer in enhancing South-South relations. That is embodied in the development and solidarity initiatives of the Kingdom of Morocco in the African continent and the Latin American region, under the direct instructions and patronage of His Majesty the King, may God Glorify him.

The Speaker also held discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama. During this meeting, he emphasized that the Moroccan autonomy initiative in the southern provinces under the national and territorial sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco is the only and most suitable solution to the artificial regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara, stressing the need to rectify the misconceptions and misunderstandings of some countries regarding the reality of this conflict, in order to establish strategic partnership relations with the Kingdom of Morocco.

This visit culminated in a speech on behalf of the House of Councillors of the Kingdom of Morocco before the General Assembly of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament. The speech emphasized that South-South cooperation is a pivotal dimension in the development vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, and that the Moroccan Parliament's membership to this significant regional parliamentary body reflects Morocco's firm conviction of the importance of the pioneering role played today by regional blocs.

In this regard, the Speaker stressed that this decision is in line with the strategic choice of our country, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, to strengthen South-South cooperation, which was embodied in the historic visit of His Majesty to several Latin American countries in 2004.

He also sought to further strengthen the role of the House of Councillors of the Kingdom of Morocco in the work of the Parliament of the Mediterranean and to engage in its initiatives and program to achieve development and stability in the region.

The Speaker also held discussions with government officials and parliamentarians from the Republic of Italy and the Republic of San Marino. These discussions aimed at strengthening cooperation and coordinating positions and visions at the bilateral and multilateral levels, serving the higher interests of our country, foremost of which is the issue of the territorial integrity of the Kingdom, and highlighting our country's stances on regional and international issues.

On their part, the national delegation and the delegations of the House of Councillors participated this year in the 78th session of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union and the 44th session of its Conference, the interactive dialogue as part of the fourth round of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, held at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. They also took part in the mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to observe the midterm elections in the United States of America, the session of the Pan-African Parliament and the meetings of the standing committees, and the parliamentary meeting held on the occasion of the twenty-seventh session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), and the meeting of the Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean.

They also participated in the ninth Global Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations, the parliamentary seminar of the Women Parliamentarians Network of the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie, the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and a meeting of the Committee on Political and Democratic Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Additionally, they participated in the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, the meeting of the Legal Team and its Sub Committee, the Arab Parliament, the first phase of the 2023 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the regular session of the Central American Parliament, the Committee on Economic, Financial, Social and Educational Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the 17th session of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States.

Furthermore, there were also engagements related to the responsibilities of the members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union's European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg. These efforts aimed at strengthening parliamentary cooperation between the two legislative bodies, countering hostile maneuvers against our territorial integrity, and organizing a working visit by the Chairperson of the Friendship Group between the House of Councillors and the French Senate to France.

Moreover, the second session of this year witnessed participation in several events. This includes: the meeting of the Committee on Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie, the second phase of the regular session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean. Adding to that participation in the tenth consultative meeting of the Association of Senates, Shura Councils, and Similar Councils in Africa and the Arab world, and the mission of the Parliament of the Mediterranean assembly to observe the general elections in Turkey, The 29th session of the Regional Assembly for Africa of the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie, the meeting of the Committee on Cooperation and Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie. Moreover, there were meetings of the committees and the fifth session of the third session of the third legislative term of the Arab Parliament, the third phase of the regular session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the 30th session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the 48th session of the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie.

In the context of reviewing its actual presence and effective interaction with the international parliamentary blocs, it should be noted that the House of Councillors will continue to enhance its involvement in regional and international parliamentary unions and assemblies aiming to advocate for the vital interests of the Kingdom of Morocco through the positions it holds in the decision-making bodies of these parliamentary organizations.

At the level of bilateral relations:

At the bilateral level, during the first session of this year, the Speaker of the House of Councillors held bilateral meetings with government and diplomatic figures, as well as with heads of national parliaments, and regional, continental, and international parliamentary unions. Most notably: the visit of the President of the Senate of the Republic of Burundi to the Kingdom of Morocco, during which he held important talks with government officials and parliamentarians on ways to activate and enhance Moroccan-Burundian parliamentary relations within the framework of the two countries' efforts to consolidate and expand their bilateral cooperation, especially in the economic and institutional fields.

During this visit, it was stressed that the strong relations between the two friendly countries and peoples must be a catalyst for further efforts to strengthen institutional cooperation and exchange experiences and expertise in all areas of common interest. In this context, the Speaker of the House of Councillors expressed the Council's readiness to put its expertise and experience in dealing with vital sectors at the disposal of its friends in Burundi. This is especially with regard to administration, renewable energies, decentralization, and expanded regional development, in which our country has reached significant progress.

Regarding the subject of the Kingdom's territorial integrity, the Speaker reiterated our country's appreciation for Burundi's positive stance towards the Moroccan Sahara issue and its continued support for the Kingdom's efforts to find a permanent solution to this artificial conflict.

In this context, the President of the Burundian Senate visited **Laayoune**, during which he met with local officials and elected officials and was briefed on a series of socio-economic projects in the city.

The President of the Senate of the Republic of Burundi praised the level of development and dynamism witnessed by the southern provinces of the Kingdom, especially the city of Laayoune, expressing his admiration for the quality of infrastructure and innovative development projects in various fields, especially health, education, and sports.

The Speaker of the House of Councillors highlighted the reality of economic and social development in the southern provinces of the Kingdom and the achievements made in the region, within the framework of the new development model for the southern provinces, launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him. He also stressed that these efforts are a source of pride for the inhabitants of the Moroccan Sahara.

The Speaker also received a delegation from the Senate of the Republic of Uruguay, led by its Vice-President. He held discussions with government officials and parliamentarians, during which he reiterated his great appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him. He also praised Morocco's strategic position in its regional and continental environment, stressing the desire to open a new chapter in strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the country.

These meetings were an opportunity to review the development and reform projects initiated by the Kingdom of Morocco under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him. These initiatives have made Morocco a unique model in its regional and continental environment, worthy of trust in building a South-South cooperation model between the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Uruguay and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Speaker also received the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chilean Senate, during which they stressed the need to elevate parliamentary cooperation to the level of good political relations between the two countries and to develop the economic and trade aspect, which still falls short of the aspirations of the two friendly countries and peoples.

In this regard, the Speaker renewed his proposal to establish a parliamentary economic forum between the two councils as an institutional mechanism that would enhance economic relations between the two countries. That is since the qualitative composition of the House of Councillors, especially the economic component, helps give life to this proposal.

This visit was an opportunity to express the great appreciation of the Kingdom of Morocco for Chile's firm position on the question of the Moroccan Sahara and to showcase the economic and social development achieved in the southern regions.

The House of Councillors also received, within the framework of a working visit to our country, the President of the Parliament of the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR), which was an opportunity to study ways to strengthen the existing relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the States of the South American Common Market, recalling in this context the historic royal visit of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him, to some countries of the region in 2004, which had a positive impact on the paths of cooperation with these countries.

He also stressed the House of Councillors' firm desire, based on its economic, professional, social and territorial components, to align with governmental cooperation with the countries of this significant economic bloc.

During his meetings with officials in our country, the President of the Parliament of the Common Market of South America expressed his appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him, and supported him for his pioneering role in promoting dialogue, understanding and rapprochement with South American countries.

The visit culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding by the Moroccan Parliament and the Parliament of the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR), aimed at enhancing channels of parliamentary communication and cooperation. That is through the exchange of visits, experiences, information, and documents between the two parties. This signing is within the framework of our commitment to dialogue and joint endeavour to strengthen the existing friendship and cooperation between the two legislative institutions, reinforce solidarity among peoples, and capitalize on opportunities in the political, economic, and cultural fields. Moreover, an annual parliamentary economic forum between the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Parliament of the MERCOSUR was agreed upon.

The Speaker also held bilateral meetings with the Chairman of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the President of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, the President of the African Parliament, the President of the

Arab Parliament, the President of the African Parliamentary Union, the President of the Senate of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the President of the Mediterranean Parliament, the President of the Global Parliamentary Forum for the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund, the Chairman of the Estonian-Moroccan Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Yemen, and the President of The National Assembly of the Republic of Malawi, a delegation from the French Senate, the Chairperson of the Korean-Moroccan Parliamentary Friendship Group, and the Deputy-Chairperson of the European Parliament's Renew Europe Group.

This year, the Speaker of the House of Councillors received a delegation of Palestinian figures representing various Islamic and Christian religious authorities, professors, artists, businessmen, and youth. They visited our country to participate in the silver jubilee of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency. The Speaker also received the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of Guatemala, the Rapporteur for Morocco from the European People's Party group in the European Parliament, and the Vice-President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Upon the kind invitation of the President of the Polish Senate, the Speaker of the House of Councillors paid a working visit to the Republic of Poland, leading a delegation from the Council. He paid a working visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt upon the kind invitation from the President of the Egyptian Senate. This visit served as an opportunity to consolidate the exceptional relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Arab Republic of Egypt under the patronage of **His Majesty King Mohammed VI**, may God Glorify him, and His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

The House of Councillors received the President of the Canadian Senate accompanied by a significant parliamentary delegation, as part of a working visit to the Kingdom, and the first of its kind. This occasion was an opportune platform for fruitful discussions with government officials and parliamentarians in our country. These discussions focused on the quality of Moroccan-Canadian bilateral relations and ways to promote them in various fields and areas of mutual interest.

The President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Eswatini was also received and discussions were held on the need to develop parliamentary cooperation and exchanging experiences between the two legislative institutions, in line with the level of strong relations between the two countries.

At the Latin American level, the House of Councillors received the President and members of the Uruguayan-Moroccan Friendship Group, led by the Deputy President of the Uruguayan Senate. During this meeting, they reviewed the most significant steps that characterized the course of parliamentary relations between the two countries and stressed the importance of exchanging parliamentary visits.

Furthermore, the Speaker also held bilateral meetings with governmental and diplomatic figures, as well as leaders of national parliaments and regional and international unions. He received, within the framework of a working visit to the Kingdom of Morocco, a delegation from the Senate of the Republic of Chile, led by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. This occasion was an opportunity to consolidate the distinguished friendship between Morocco and Chile, which is based on common historical and cultural ties, and to emphasize the need to strengthen these relations, especially in their parliamentary and economic aspects, and to capitalize on the opportunities for cooperation available in a number of fields.

Moreover, this period witnessed the reception of a parliamentary delegation from the British House of Lords, who visited the city of Laayoune. This reception was an occasion during which the Speaker commended the quality and vitality of the long-standing bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the United Kingdom. These relations are characterized by a strong friendship and the shared values of mutual respect and understanding. He also emphasized that the bilateral relations between the two countries have witnessed, in recent years, significant development and dynamism in many fields. Additionally, he expressed his hope to enhance and enrich the existing partnership between the two countries, especially after Brexit. This is to be achieved by strengthening economic cooperation and progressing in many fields such as agriculture, industry, and renewable energies. Morocco stands as one of the leading countries in this field.

In the same vein, the House of Councillors received the President of the Central American Parliament and the members of the Executive Bureau. During this meeting, it was emphasised that the priority given by the House of Councillors to enhancing relations with Latin American parliaments was not just a circumstantial choice, but a firm conviction based on a strategic decision of the Kingdom of Morocco to strengthen South-South cooperation, a decision led by **His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him.**

The President of the Parliament of the Common Market of South America (MERCOSUR) was also received, accompanied by members of the executive Bureau of this influential regional parliamentary bloc. This occasion was an opportunity to exchange viewpoints on ways to implement the memorandum of understanding signed at the headquarters of the House of Councillors in November 2022 between the Moroccan Parliament and the Parliament of MORESCUR. That is so as to enhance channels of parliamentary communication and cooperation and contribute to the development of economic and trade relations.

The visit of the delegation of the MERCOSUR Parliament was an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the existing and potential links between the African, Mediterranean and Latin American regions.

Moreover, the Speaker held bilateral meetings with a delegation from the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the Republic of Niger, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, a parliamentary delegation from the Republic of Peru, led by the President of the “Support Group for the Moroccan Autonomy Plan” within the Peruvian Congress, a delegation from the Research Agency of the People’s Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia, a delegation from the American Jewish Committee, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China, and the CEO of the Abraham Accords Peace Institute and President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti.

Together with Mr Rachid Talbi Alami, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and on the occasion of the parliamentary conference on interfaith dialogue in Marrakech,

the Speaker of the House of Councillors held discussions with the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Cape Verde, the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the President of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Eswatini, the President of the Senate of the Republic of Burundi, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Tanzania and the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of the Gambia, The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the President of the Parliament of Tuvalu, the President of the African Parliamentary Union, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Secretary General of the Union, the Deputy-Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, the Head of the Delegation of the People's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Head of the Israeli Knesset Delegation, and the Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowments of the Republic of Djibouti.

Hosting Regional and International Events:

At the level of organizing regional and international events, the House of Councillors organized, during the first session of this year, the first edition of the ‘Marrakech Parliamentary Economic Forum for the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf Region’, in partnership with the Parliament of the Mediterranean.

This forum was marked by the presence of representatives and speakers of national parliaments, members of the Parliament of the Mediterranean, the Gulf States, executive directors, and experts of various specialized agencies and U.N programs and conventions. Notably, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Environment Program /Mediterranean Action Plan. In addition to representatives of the public and private sectors, businessmen from different countries, academics, and a number of important figures and guest delegations were present. Including the guest of honor of this edition, the delegation of the Senate of the Republic of Uruguay.

The Forum represents a platform for discussion on major economic and environmental issues in the Euro-Miditerrean and Gulf regions. The first edition was characterized by the organization of six thematic plenary sittings, covering various current issues on the regional and international agendas. First and foremost are ‘Economic, Trade and Financial integration’, ‘Investment Support’, ‘Energy Security’, ‘Food Security’, ‘Climate Change’, ‘Empowerment of Women and Youth’, and ‘Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization’.

In an opening speech of the Forum, the Speaker of the House of Councillors stressed the full readiness of the Kingdom of Morocco, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, to contribute to all the dynamics that would strengthen economic partnerships between the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions. This stems from Morocco’s robust strategic partnerships with the two regions,

as well as the shared cultural heritage and alignment of perspective on several regional and international issues.

This forum culminated in a closing statement and the presentation of a set of conclusions and recommendations that aimed to encourage governments to establish an economic and energy community between the two regions. A community capable of mitigating the impact of the current energy crisis, within the framework of a green transition, and supporting economic growth and prosperity in the long term. Participants expressed their support for the strategic project of the gas pipeline between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Kingdom of Morocco. A project that emerged thanks to the wise perspective of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him. This project holds a Euro-Mediterranean dimension aimed at promoting regional economic integration.

Furthermore, the House of Councillors also hosted the meeting of the Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges Between Civil Society and Culture Committee under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean. The meeting's theme was: **'Towards a Greener Future for All'**.

This meeting, which embodied the shared aspiration of countries belonging to the Mediterranean region, aimed to enhance cooperation and cultural integration, for a more sustainable and environmentally friendly sector. It was an occasion to emphasize the efforts of the Kingdom of Morocco in increasing its contribution to the culture and environment fields. A contribution embodied in the Kingdom's commitment and engagement in a set of initiatives and programs that place the cultural dimension at the heart of sustainable development. It is also embodied in Morocco's efforts to elevate the status of culture by including it as a core element within the framework of the new development model and in the government programs being implemented, in addition to its significance within the provisions of the Kingdom's constitution.

Moreover, to enhance parliamentary exchange and dialogue on both shores of the Mediterranean, the House of Councillors hosted the seventeenth General Assembly of the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. It dealt with topics and issues of great current importance to the region, foremost of which are migration, security, terrorism,

organized crime, human trafficking, geopolitical and security developments in the region, the financial and economic crisis, artificial intelligence, energy efficiency, and water security.

This significant event was marked by the election of the Speaker of the House of Councillors, Mr. Naam Mayara, as Head of this regional parliamentary organization for the period 2023-2024. This election stands as a recognition and appreciation of the role played by the Kingdom of Morocco, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, in promoting common values, dialogue, and understanding among the countries of the Mediterranean. These efforts contribute to the peace, stability, coexistence, development, and prosperity of the peoples of the region.

The second session of this year witnessed a very important and unprecedented international parliamentary event, organized by the Moroccan Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue. The theme was: **‘Interfaith Dialogue: Working Together for Our Common Future’**, held in Marrakech. This conference marked the first of its kind on interfaith dialogue, with the support of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Mohammadia League of Religious Scholars.

The opening session was marked by the Royal Message addressed to the participants, serving as a reference and guidance document. In this message, the Commander of the Faithful, His Majesty the King emphasized that “interfaith dialogue, the dedication to positive coexistence among religions, understanding and cooperation towards humanitarian goals will be an essential lever to spare humanity the evils of strife, pain, and suffering.”

For this main reason, His Majesty stressed “the importance of creating a mixed mechanism, coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, that seeks to make interfaith dialogue a noble shared goal among the components of the international community. It should be advocated in international forums and considered one of the criteria for

democratic governance in parliamentary practice and as an indicator of respect for pluralism and cultural diversity.”


The proceedings led to the adoption of the “Marrakesh Declaration”, in which the emphasis was placed on ensuring that all religions, beliefs, and religious organizations enjoy fair treatment free from any discrimination before the law. That is by highlighting the importance of establishing dialogue with religious leaders and groups to contribute to enhancing solidarity and addressing the major contemporary challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate imbalances, conflicts and wars, addiction, patterns of excessive consumption, and digital technologies including negative uses of artificial intelligence. Additionally, it recommended the forming of working groups or parliamentary committees at the level of national parliaments concerned with interreligious and intercultural dialogue for peaceful coexistence, social inclusion, and facilitating cooperation among these groups or committees.

The same declaration also highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation and communication with the United Nations, other international organizations, and civil society, exploring the possibility of adopting UN strategies and resolutions related to interreligious and intercultural dialogue to redress the gap in implementation at the national levels. Moreover, the declaration emphasized the need to ensure that holidays granted on the occasion of religious holidays or other official events commemorating important occasions for a religion or a belief group reflect religious diversity and pluralism of beliefs within the country.

4- Diplomatic Capacity Building

The Moroccan Parliament organized, in the first session of this year, two seminars, within the framework of the activation of the partnership agreement between the Moroccan Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates, represented by its Diplomatic Academy, and in line with the High Royal Directives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, May God Glorify Him, aimed at the need for coordination and integration between parallel diplomacy and official diplomacy. The first seminar focused on the ‘Foundations of the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Morocco’, and the second on the topic of: “Morocco’s Foreign Policy towards Africa.”

The second session witnessed the organization of four seminars on the ‘Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Morocco’. The first seminar was led by the Director of the European Union and Mediterranean Affairs at the Ministry. The second seminar was conducted by the Director of Asian and Pacific Affairs, the third by the Director of European Affairs, and the fourth by the Director of American Affairs.

The background features a complex geometric pattern of interlocking lines in white and light beige. Overlaid on this are several large, stylized arrows pointing towards the right. One arrow is light beige, another is green with a white outline, and a third is red with a white outline. The text is centered within the beige arrow.

**Opening up to the
surroundings and revitalizing
societal dialogue.**

In line with the institutional openness approach it has been following since the beginning of the new constitutional phase, the House of Councillors continued to strengthen its communicative and radiative dynamics by organizing and hosting a series of dialogue and intellectual events. That is done as part of its engagement in the major reform projects launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, and in response to the High Royal Directives on national and international strategic issues.

Thus, under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify him, the House of Councillors organized, on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, in partnership with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the Association of Moroccan Regions, Moroccan Association of Chairs of Provincial and Prefectural Councils and the Moroccan Association of Chairs of Municipal Councils, the **Fourth Parliamentary Forum of Regions under the theme ‘Institutionalizing the contractual approach: a Fundamental Pillar for Accelerating the Implementation of Advanced Regionalization’**.

This forum was an opportunity to explore ways to enhance and support the advanced regionalization system, with the aim of consolidating its foundations and highlighting the broad horizons that this great reform initiative opens up for the progress and prosperity of the Kingdom.

Moreover, the House of Councillors, in coordination and partnership with the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, organized a regional thematic seminar on the topic of **‘Advanced Regionalization and the Challenges of Integrated Territorial Development: the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Region as a Model’**.

This regional thematic seminar, which witnessed significant attendance from both male and female counsellors, along with the governor and president of the region, as well as the heads of foreign representations of central services, elected officials, university representatives, and civil society actors, dealt with three topics of great importance. These topics include “Exercising Self-and Joint Competencies in the Field of Economic Development”, “The Reality of Decentralized Administration in the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Region” and “Management of Local Cultural Affairs”.

The House of Councillors also organized, under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Glorify Him, **the Seventh Edition of the International Parliamentary Forum on Social Justice, under the theme of ‘Human Capital: a fundamental lever of social justice’**. This event was in line with the continuous institutional interaction of the House of Councillors with the sound royal directives on social justice issues, as well as within the framework of scientific support for the project to establish a new development model that triumphs over the principles and values of freedom, social justice, equality and solidarity, and is based on basic foundations that are necessary to win the economic and social bets.

Given its unique and diverse composition, the House of Councillors, on the eve of concluding the second session of this year, organised the founding session of **the Parliamentary Forum of Professional Chambers under the slogan ‘Professional Chambers and the Challenges of Promoting Investment**. The organization of this forum was part of the practical embodiment of the institutional responsibility of the House of Councillors in aligning with the major reform projects launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in various fields and in response to the High Royal Directives calling for establishing a new perspective to promote the roles of professional chambers.

Through this unprecedented initiative, the House of Councillors aimed to contribute to the effective involvement of professional chambers in the development of strategic plans and options with regard to their activities at the national, regional, and local levels, in parallel with their participation within the boards of directors of public institutions, active in the sectors they represent, as well as those of the agencies and offices that manage public facilities and services within their territorial jurisdiction. Additionally, they would participate, as stipulated by law, in the councils of universities and regional academies for education and training. and vocational training institutions.

The forum was organized into four simultaneous workshops on topics covering the areas of interest of the four categories of professional chambers. The deliberations revolved around ‘Challenges of promoting the sectors of industry, trade and services and the integration of the informal sector’, ‘Agricultural collectivization and establishing an innovative approach to the marketing of agricultural products and extending social protection to farmers: fundamental approaches to the implementation of the Green

Generation Strategy’, ‘The reality and prospects of the fishing sector and the challenges of economic and social development’, and ‘Challenges and prospects of qualifying the handicraft sector and enhancing its contribution to development’.

Moreover, the House of Councillors also participated in this year’s 28th edition of the **International Book and Print Fair** organized in Rabat. Thus, the House of Councillors continued to emphasize and highlight its responsible openness and communication through its interaction with visitors at the fair. This interaction contributes to assessing the components and achievements of parliamentary work and raises political awareness among citizens.

The participation of both houses of the Parliament in this important annual cultural event comes within the framework of the commitment of the legislative institution to devote transparency and the effective implementation of the constitutional right related to access to information and facilitate the understanding of the Parliament and its two chambers, in terms of their composition, structures and functions, and its vital role in the development of democratic practice.

The Parliament’s hall at the International Book and Print Fair received a significant number of visitors, including researchers, university professors, intellectuals, political and institutional figures, as well as students of all ages. These visitors had the opportunity to closely acquaint themselves with the legislative institution’s work through its archives, its various publications, and activities.

In order to enable visitors, especially researchers, to access legislative institution’s bibliographic and documentary resources, a digital application has been placed at the disposal of those interested. This application enables them to browse and read the parliament’s publications, as well as download them smoothly and easily. Users can access the various daily snapshots of visitors, and the application itself facilitates access to the parliament’s digital portal on the Internet and explore its content in Arabic, Amazigh, French, English, and Spanish. This feature was well-received by many visitors.

This year, the House of Councillors has participated in some academic events, especially those organized by some faculties, such as the seminar organized by the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences in Mohammedia on the topic of ‘The Role of the House of Councillors in Defending of the National Cause’. That is in order to enhance the House of Councillor’s openness to the academic environment, in addition to continuing to receive student delegations from various Moroccan universities, providing technical and literary support to students researching parliamentary affairs, as well as providing a suitable environment for students who have chosen to undertake academic training at House of Councillors’ facilities.

During this seminar, we signed a partnership agreement with the same faculty with the aim of encouraging research and studies on issues related to parliamentary work.

In addition, the House of Councillors also attended the lecture organized by the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Tangier on the topic of the ‘Trade Union Movement in Morocco’.

This year also witnessed the organization of dozens of events, including study days and roundtable discussions by parliamentary groups, standing committees and thematic working groups addressing highly important topics. All of these efforts serve to improve the work of the House of Councillors and advance its competencies, in a way that contributes as a supportive mechanism to the House of Councillors to the aspirations and concerns of citizens.