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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Morocco *

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its first session from 7 to 18 April 2008. The review of Morocco was held at the fourth meeting held on 8 April 2008. The delegation of Morocco was headed by H.E. Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, Minister of Justice. For the composition of the delegation, composed of 18 members, see the appendix below. At its twelfth meeting held on 10 April 2008, the Working Group adopted the present report on Morocco.

2. On 28 February 2008, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Morocco: Romania, Madagascar and France.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1, the following documents were issued for the review of Morocco:

- (a) A national report submitted in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/1/MAR/1);
- (b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/1/MAR/2);
- (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR, in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/1/MAR/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and Latvia was transmitted to Morocco through the troika.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. At the fourth meeting of the Working Group on 8 April 2008, the Minister of Justice, H.E. Mr. Abdelwahad RADI, introduced the national report of Morocco. Morocco had adopted a participatory approach for the preparation of this report, involving all stakeholders, in accordance with the guidelines of the Human Rights Council. The consultations and dialogue had been constructive, and it is planned to institutionalize this collaboration by establishing a standing consultation committee, which would bring

together relevant stakeholders. Morocco's approach to the promotion and protection of human rights involved reinforcement of the Constitution, harmonization of legislation and the establishment of a truth, justice and reconciliation commission, the Equity and Reconciliation Instance (*Instance Equite et reconciliation* - IER). Furthermore, this approach involves the ratification of relevant international human rights instruments, and cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedures.

6. With regard to accession to international human rights treaties, Morocco noted its recognition of the competence of the respective committees provided for in articles 14 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and the withdrawal of its reservations to article 20 of CAT and 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as to certain provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It also highlighted that the process of adherence to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Optional Protocols to CEDAW and CAT is under way.

7. Since the 1990s, Morocco has developed an institutional infrastructure, including by creating a national institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, the *Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme* (CCDH), the establishment of a Ministry for Human Rights, Administrative Courts of Appeal, the *Diwan Al Madhalim* (Ombudsman), the High Authority of Audiovisual Communication, the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs and the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad.

8. Regarding standard-setting and reforms, initiatives to harmonize domestic legislation with international standards included the adoption of a new Code of Criminal Procedure; the Family and Labour Codes; and the Law on political parties. Amendments were introduced also in the Criminal Code, including the criminalization of torture. The reform of the Communal Charter aimed at strengthening local democracy and streamlining the management of communal resources is currently in discussion. The reform of the Press Code is the subject of a broad debate involving all stakeholders; it aims at meeting international standards and striking a balance between public and private rights and human dignity, and the freedom of expression. Currently, discussions focus on the limited number of prison sentences provided for in the draft press code. In this context, Morocco stressed the importance of individual and collective freedoms for the preservation of a social equilibrium, and noted that an increasing number of associations were founded and assemblies were authorized, and that efforts were made to support the work of human rights defenders throughout the entire national territory. Reforms adopted to implement the legislative framework covered civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The protection of individual freedoms, the presumption of innocence and fair trial standards were the underlying principles of the new Criminal Code. In the framework of the National Charter for Justice, the judiciary had undergone a reform strengthening its independence and efficiency. As to the fight against terrorism, Morocco, which has been a victim of this plague, has adopted legislation in accordance with international standards unanimously by the Parliament. Relevant departments were bound by this legislation.

9. Furthermore, Morocco highlighted its efforts to promote a culture of human rights, both through school curricula and through the media and training courses for law enforcement personnel. At the international level, Morocco, together with Switzerland, had initiated the elaboration of a United Nations declaration on human rights education and training.

10. Morocco paid special attention to the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as to children, including by establishing the Parliament of Child (*Parlement de l'enfant*) and the adoption of a national plan of action. A number of initiatives had been adopted with a view to empowering women, such as a national strategy for the integration of a gender perspective in development policies, and measures to promote the role of women in political and economic life, which had led to an increased representation of women in Parliament and Government.

11. The approach adopted by Morocco to facilitate the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights was consistent with sustainable development, and was limited only by available economic resources. It focused on issues such as restoring regional balances, the protection of property rights, strengthening of infrastructures and policies to facilitate access to housing, medical benefits and education.

12. The Equity and Reconciliation Commission has been set up to address past human rights violations and to achieve the four strategic goals of transitional justice: (a) establishment of the truth on these violations; (b) compensation for damages suffered by victims, including through financial compensation, medical coverage and rehabilitation, social reinsertion and community reparation; (c) reconciliation through public debate; and (d) recommendations on reforms aimed at ensuring non-repetition and fighting impunity. The CCDH was tasked with the follow-up of the implementation of the various recommendations emanating from the Commission, in close cooperation with the Government and other stakeholders. The process facilitated public debate on human rights and thus contributed to democratic transition.

13. His Majesty King Mohammed VI launched in 2005 the National Initiative of Human Development (INDH), which constitutes an action plan for the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights by placing the human being at the centre of development efforts. The initiative aimed at promoting the full realization of the right to development, and is characterized by its participatory and collaborative character involving a number of stakeholders.

14. While noting its important achievements in the field of human rights, Morocco is at the same time aware of remaining deficits in light of its own ambitions. Finally, the delegation underlined the care with which the national report had been prepared and that its composition demonstrated the importance Morocco attached to the UPR exercise.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

15. During the ensuing interactive dialogue, statements were made by delegations.

16. Palestine recalled that Morocco is an old civilization that remains a bridge between the North and the South. Morocco had paid special attention to education, free at all levels, which places it at the forefront of educational development. Palestine further noted that Morocco promotes cultural, economic and social rights, with women participating in a large number of fields related to human rights. Noting that the majority of the Moroccan population are children, Palestine reminded that Morocco was a party to all relevant conventions including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Noting that Morocco was faced with an increased migratory flow, Palestine enquired about the extent to which the countries of origin and destination contributed to facing this challenge.

17. Kuwait praised the political will of Morocco to protect all human rights, political, civil and social and economic, and to consolidate the role of civil society, noting also its close cooperation with international mechanisms and all parties at all levels. With reference to the National Plan on Childhood for the period 2006-2015 Kuwait requested further information on the objectives of this programme.

18. Pakistan reiterated the unique position of Morocco in the UPR process as Morocco was the architect of this mechanism, and praised Morocco's respect for pluralism, tolerance and diversity. Pakistan referred to INDH, Morocco's network of voluntary associations, steps it has taken to harmonize national laws with international instruments to ensure gender equality, and its engagement with the human rights machinery. It referred to the economic constraints, such as drought, faced by Morocco, which stresses the Government's need for assistance. Morocco was requested to explain steps undertaken to oppose and fight terrorism through the early warning system.

19. The Russian Federation, while commending Morocco on the considerable progress achieved and the political will to move forward, emphasized the need to continue to take concrete steps in implementing economic, social and cultural rights. As regards measures taken to implement a gender perspective, Morocco's annual reports on gender issues, since 2005, also focus on gender budgeting. The Russian Federation requested further details on this innovative practice which according to CEDAW is used in only 40 States.

20. The Syrian Arab Republic highlighted Morocco's implementation of all its commitments to promote human rights through a constructive and frank dialogue with the United Nations. It requested more information on the steps taken by Morocco to lay the foundation for a human rights culture, especially within its institutional framework, and recommended that Morocco pursue its efforts in disseminating and consolidating a culture of human rights.

21. Senegal commended Morocco's efforts to incorporate international norms into its domestic legislation and invited Morocco to provide information on the latest progress regarding the rights of women and the situation of Moroccan citizens living abroad.

22. Mauritius commended Morocco on the wide-ranging legislative and institutional measures it had undertaken. It highlighted, as an example of best practice, the IER and its pivotal role in redeeming the victims of gross human rights violations. Mauritius requested further information on the status of the draft law on violence against women and to what extent it will take into account domestic violence and protection of the victims of such violence. Finally, Mauritius referred to the INDH and enquired about its main achievements and the kind of support it obtained from the international community to implement the Initiative.

23. Malaysia, commending Morocco on its strong commitment to promote and protect human rights, noted the obstacles and the challenges it faced, in particular the economic constraints which are severely hampering the implementation of national policies and actions in the field of human rights.

24. Yemen noted the achievements made by Morocco in its consolidation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and its commitments to the implementation of human rights. It referred to the new measures adopted by IER and asked about the procedures for collective compensation that were envisaged.

25. Ghana welcomed the harmonization of domestic legislation with international instruments and Morocco's willingness to honour treaties to which it is party through cooperation with the special procedures. Ghana highlighted the adoption of an anti-corruption plan that will contribute to maximizing national wealth and suggested that Morocco share its experience on the implementation of these measures. It also suggested that Morocco's National Human Development Plan be referred to as a good practice to be shared. Finally, in view of the constraints and challenges faced by the country, Ghana supported Morocco's request for assistance.

26. In reply to the questions put forward by various delegations, the representative of Morocco referred to migration as a global issue. Morocco is a host country, a transition country and a country of origin, which poses a threefold problem for Morocco. Despite the heavy burden to harbour migrants Morocco remains a hospitable country and manages migrant issues with an integrated approach, incorporating co-development and shared responsibility. Morocco was an initiator of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the first country to initiate a dialogue between European and African countries on migration and to provide, in this process, a collective response to this issue.

27. In response to Kuwait's question on the situation of children, Morocco shared its hope to improve the situation of children for their full enjoyment of rights to access to education and protection. Morocco has made budgetary allocations to protect children under the National Plan of Action given the importance Morocco placed on human development. In conformity with its international obligations, it has amended its legislation on child labour and developed programmes to ensure that children do not stay on the street. A reference plan was also elaborated that would lead to a national strategy to ensure equality between girls and boys. Morocco has established equality between men and women in the budget in the context of its economic reform. In 2008, Morocco carried out a budget analysis with the support of UNFPA, and has worked towards improving its national capacity.

28. With regard to terrorism, Morocco referred to how terrorism had struck the country and to the resources it had mobilized to combat it. Moroccan counter-terrorism laws were no different than other laws, apart from including the right to inspection, freezing and confiscation of property and money used to finance terrorism of those convicted for terrorism. Morocco endeavoured to involve citizens in combating terrorism and in these programmes. Morocco stated that it had proposed financial compensation for victims of

serious violations of human rights in the past and was undertaking an ambitious programme to propose collective compensation. Morocco has also set up national archives to maintain a collective memory, in particular in regions where violations took place, in order to raise public awareness. Finally, Morocco referred to its plans for the consolidation of a human rights culture since the adoption of a national programme in 1994 that generated a dynamic movement to promote human rights and to raise awareness of Moroccan citizens. Morocco believes that working through schools will help shape the society of the future. Thus, Morocco has optimized this platform with the participation of all stakeholders.

29. Egypt praised Morocco's pioneering role in the UPR process. It raised the issue of adequate housing and the need for further information on the efforts undertaken to increase the number of persons benefiting from decent housing.

30. Bangladesh noted with particular attention the creation of IER, CCDH and the Ombudsman. It requested information on actions taken to promote and implement child rights and on how the INDH will help implement economic, social and cultural rights. Bangladesh recommended that the request by Morocco for technical cooperation be included in the report of the Working Group.

31. Saudi Arabia welcomed the reforms and commitment of Morocco to the promotion of human rights, and recommended that Morocco's achievements in the field of human rights be included in the report. Saudi Arabia also asked for further clarification on the INDH.

32. Oman asked for further information on the initiative with Switzerland related to human rights education, and on local actions taken in this respect.

33. Germany noted the achievements of the IER and that the Constitutional Council on Human Rights will ensure follow-up to the Commission's recommendations. Germany expressed satisfaction at the high priority given to these recommendations, specifically the strengthening of human rights guarantees in the Constitution and other laws, and requested more information regarding the follow-up and activities generated as a result of these recommendations. Germany enquired about the adoption of the *code de la presse* and, when drafting this law, how the importance of protecting freedom of expression will be incorporated.

34. Mali thanked Morocco for its contribution to the development of the UPR mechanism and its efforts to promote and protect human rights. Mali was in particular attentive to the rights of the child and found the reply to its questions on the content of the plan "Morocco Worthy of its Children", satisfactory.

35. Bahrain, noting Morocco's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, asked about the steps Morocco has taken to adapt its national legislation to the Convention.

36. Belgium noted the role of the Ambassador of Morocco as facilitator of the establishment of the UPR mechanism, and welcomed the institutional steps taken by Morocco to promote and protect human rights, particularly the reorganization of the CCDH on the basis of the Paris Principles. Belgium also welcomed the establishment of the Ombudsman responsible for considering complaints by persons seeking redress. While highlighting the Family Code of 2004 and the progress made by Morocco in the area of equality between men and women, Belgium noted that the Family Code was not well known among the judiciary, as pointed out by CEDAW, and inquired what measures Morocco envisaged to take to raise the awareness of judges of the Code in all regions of the country.

37. Canada welcomed the establishment of the IER and Morocco's commitment to protecting human rights. It also noted that violations still exist: journalists risk prosecution, prison and prohibition of their publications if they report on certain subjects. Canada enquired about legislative reforms, and wanted to know whether Morocco is planning to enact legislation concerning defamation and libel. Concerning the reform of the 2004 Family Code, Canada requested information on how Morocco will train and educate the judiciary in order to raise their awareness of the rights of women. It noted that the figures reveal an alarming situation and asked about the measures Morocco intends to take to address this emergency and to comply with the recommendations of CEDAW.

38. France commended Morocco's transparency, spirit of cooperation and commitment. It noted the role of the Ambassador of Morocco in defining the UPR modalities, and the organization, with the support of OHCHR, of a seminar in Rabat on UPR. Morocco's report and statements illustrate that it has taken firm steps on human rights, in particular with the establishment of the IER and the National Council for Human Development. France requested information on Morocco's needs in regard to technical cooperation and highlighted the following issues: micro-projects in communities, exchange of best practices, support from OHCHR for the preparation of a national action plan, and training aimed at facilitating access to rights.

39. Sweden noted that Morocco's presentation showed an impressive number of institutions and legal initiatives promoting respect for human rights. Sweden asked Morocco to share the legal reasoning on which its fight against terrorism is based and the relation to its international human rights obligations. Sweden holds that Morocco's clarification is particularly relevant regarding its provisions on detention and the definition of terrorism in the 2003 anti-terrorism law. Sweden also requested information regarding the future reform of Morocco's press legislation.

40. Guinea expressed interest in the recent progress of the IER, and hoped that Morocco will increase its cooperation with the Human Rights Council and benefit from its recommendations.

41. Mexico commended Morocco on its progress in the promotion and protection of human rights. Mexico requested information on the conclusions and work of the IER and the difficulties encountered by Morocco in bringing to justice individuals responsible for violations, enforced disappearances and torture. Mexico was also interested in the commitments Morocco has made to overcome such difficulties. It recommended that Morocco continue to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants, irrespective of their migratory condition, and in particular those in a vulnerable position. It also recommended that Morocco ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

42. Indonesia noted Morocco's promotion of measures aimed at ensuring the respect for fundamental freedoms and of strategies that integrate human rights at local and national levels. Indonesia applauded Morocco for its independent national press, and highlighted strategies aimed at promoting gender equality. It asked if Morocco considers the rights of women as the major challenge to their efforts to modernize the application of human rights, and requested information about Morocco's long-term commitments to gender equality and how international human rights mechanisms will help to achieve them.
43. Mauritania welcomed the steps taken by Morocco to promote and protect human rights, and noted the reform of the Family Code, the press code and the establishment of the IER, which was a first for the Arab-Muslim world.
44. Brazil recognized the progress made regarding equality and discrimination of women, children, civil liberties and right to a fair trial. It expressed concern at the implementation and results of measures taken, specifically with regard to gender equality. It asked how Morocco assessed the results of its initiatives meant to ensure women's rights, and welcomed Morocco's ratification of CEDAW.
45. Italy expressed satisfaction that Morocco has, since 1994, maintained a de facto moratorium on the death penalty.
46. India was impressed with the initiatives undertaken by Morocco to protect and promote human rights. It noted Morocco's design of a national strategy and plan of action for human rights education. Also noting the addition of the Office of the Ombudsman, responsible for the consideration of cases of human rights violations, to the CCDH, India asked how the Ombudsman's mandate differs from that of the CCDH. It highlighted the success of Morocco's initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of women in politics and asked which legislative changes and aspects of the voluntary quota system made this possible.
47. The United Kingdom highlighted the new Family Code, changes to the Nationality Code, which both carry improvements to the legal protection of women, and the legislative elections open to international observers. It recommended that Morocco set a date to sign and adopt the Optional Protocol to CAT. The United Kingdom was concerned about issues of censorship, restrictions of the media, and the prosecution of prominent journalists and asked what steps Morocco is taking to ensure freedom of expression and speech, especially for media personnel. Prison conditions are also an issue for the United Kingdom, noting that the Moroccan Prison Observers reported extreme overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions. The United Kingdom encouraged Morocco to continue its efforts to improve these conditions and is interested in further initiatives planned in this area.
48. The United Arab Emirates noted that Morocco attaches importance to international treaty mechanisms and cooperation with treaty bodies. It thanked Morocco for its efforts to improve the circumstances and provide a better standard of living for women and children. It is convinced that Morocco is on the right track for the promotion and protection of human rights, and noting that the INDH, resulting from commitments to the United Nations, is a good example, asked for more information about it.
49. In response to various questions, Morocco provided the following answers. Regarding collective reparation, programmes adopted on the basis of a rights-based and participatory approach, taking into account a gender perspective, have been set up and implemented with the participation of all stakeholders. Budget resources are allocated for these programmes, including several projects to combat poverty, with a participative approach. The delegation also gave information and explanations on the INDH. It also gave information about promoting adequate housing rights. Concerning the freedom of the press, Morocco referred to the Constitution and the press code which regulates this freedom. The press code is now under review with the participation of all stakeholders. Journalists are not prosecuted for expressing their opinions but for committing crimes, such as defamation; and there is no censorship in Morocco. As regards the family, there are special courts for family affairs. The Family Code is evaluated annually, at the anniversary of its adoption. With reference to IER, compensation has been granted to victims of ill-treatment. Regarding prisoners, there is legislation prohibiting torture, and trainings are organized for prison guards with the support of several partners. The overcrowding of prisons can be dealt with through budgetary or legal measures, or by identifying alternatives to prison terms. For the first time in Morocco, a definition of torture in accordance with CAT has been adopted and many measures have been taken to prevent torture. Regarding technical cooperation needs, Morocco referred to the national report, which provides some ideas by way of indication, and added areas such as the elaboration and implementation of training programmes. Another example is the organization of meetings on best practices regarding the preparation of national reports, and support to the publication and dissemination of documentation for the general public and adapted to different age groups. A further example is the support to the development of specific radio and television programmes in the area of human rights, and the organizations of training seminars for law enforcement officials. As for human rights education, human rights are now part of schools' curricula. In this respect, Morocco recalled its initiative in collaboration with Switzerland, which led to the adoption of the Human Rights Council resolution on human rights education.
50. Belarus noted the consultation and broad participation of civil society actors in the preparation of the report, and Morocco's institutional structure to promote and protect human rights. Belarus invited Morocco to share its positive experience with the work of the CCDH, especially where recommendations have been implemented by the Government.
51. The Islamic Republic of Iran appreciated the valuable contribution of Ambassador Loulichki to the UPR process, and commended Morocco's commitment to the UPR process and its valuable efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights. It asked Morocco to elaborate further on the steps taken by the Government to promote a culture of human rights.
52. Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed appreciation for the contribution of the Ambassador during the institution-building process. It referred to the fact that the Moroccan judiciary has confirmed the primacy of international human rights law over the domestic law in a number of decisions, and asked for clarifications on the status of international human rights instruments vis-à-vis national law, especially CEDAW, as well as on the definition of the principle of equality and the definition of discrimination on the basis of sex.
53. The Netherlands made comments, in addition to the questions submitted in writing to Morocco. It encouraged Morocco to closely look at remaining IER recommendations. The Netherlands recommended that Morocco extend a standing invitation to all special procedures. It also commended Morocco on its efforts to bring its national legislation in line with its international human rights

obligations and recommended that Morocco further harmonize its domestic law with international standards in areas such as the press code and the right to privacy.

54. Jordan noted Morocco's efforts regarding the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as legislative reforms. It asked for further information on measures adopted to include human rights education in the school curricula.

55. Benin welcomed the progress achieved in the field of human rights and referred to the workshop organized on the UPR mechanism in Rabat.

56. Djibouti stated that the report highlighted progress in implementing human rights in Morocco.

57. According to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, promotion and protection of human rights are cornerstones in Morocco. The Constitution protects various rights, including the right to education and gender equality. It noted that the CCDH is a real accomplishment and that gender equality is a primary concern for the country as well as the issues of illiteracy and disability.

58. Nigeria welcomed the cooperation with all stakeholders in the preparation of the national report and Morocco's commitment to harmonize national legislation with international law. It recommended that the Human Rights Council consider the various constraints faced by Morocco in its efforts towards the progressive realization of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights.

59. Zambia recommended that the issue of torture raised in the report of the 28 stakeholders be addressed by Morocco when it presents its fourth periodic report to CAT which it is currently preparing.

60. Ethiopia asked for more information about specific modalities to promote compensation to victims of human rights violations.

61. Sudan highlighted the economic constraints in implementing human rights. It commended Morocco on the measures put in place to eradicate rural poverty and to supply rural areas with electricity and drinking water. It also welcomed the contribution to rural development by applying "community compensation" as a method of transitional justice.

62. Slovenia requested further information on how the Government will implement the recommendations to establish a standing consultation and dialogue mechanism with civil society. It recommended that Morocco communicate as soon as possible to the Secretary-General the withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW, and requested further information on the status of ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.

63. According to Chad, Morocco shows that Africa is a reference for the respect of human rights. It further noted that Morocco is one of the few developing countries to tackle human rights violations and to provide compensation to victims. It also referred to economic difficulties which impede the country to fulfil its obligations, particularly regarding economic, social and cultural rights. Chad requested further information on how Morocco integrated gender in budgeting, and on the posts in the Government which are attributed to women.

64. Qatar welcomed the cooperation of Morocco with international mechanisms, the establishment of the IER and efforts to address the situation in prisons and to eliminate child labour. It commended the initiative by Morocco and Switzerland on human rights education and requested further information on adequate housing.

65. Latvia noted the cooperation with special procedures. It recommended that Morocco consider extending a standing invitation to special procedures.

66. Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the comprehensive report submitted by Morocco, which reflects its commitment to the promotion and the protection of human rights. It also welcomed the work of the IER and requested clarification on compensation measures to victims of moral damages and persons with disabilities.

67. Sri Lanka welcomed the comprehensive report and invited Morocco to provide details on measures to be taken to implement Human Rights Council resolutions related to human rights education.

68. The Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that the national report highlighted efforts made by Morocco to comply with its human rights obligations, including institutions and standard-setting, law reforms and efforts in the field of economic, social and cultural rights. It requested Morocco to provide further information on the global strategy and human resources to achieve development growth, measures to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas, and how it intended to maintain and channel the contribution of the diaspora to the country's development.

69. Tunisia noted with satisfaction the promotion of the rights of women and the family and the reforms to improve the status of women, including the reform of the Family Code.

70. Norway recognized Morocco's will to address past abuses through the IER and the follow up thereto by CCDH. It also welcomed the reform of the Family Code. It noted the existence of a vital media landscape but expressed concern about freedom of the press and the judicial prosecution of journalists, and requested whether the reform of the press code will provide for increased freedom of expression for the media in Morocco.

71. Australia was interested to hear from Morocco its views, approach and support for national human rights institutions and asked what role the national human rights institution has played in the country.

72. Switzerland underscored the efforts of Morocco to harmonize its legislation with international norms. It referred to the joint programme with Morocco on human rights education and to the setting up of IER to fight against impunity and on that point

encouraged Morocco to continue its efforts to provide justice to victims. It recommended that Morocco ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and continue training of law enforcement officials, based on the request for technical cooperation contained in paragraph 152 of the national report.

73. Lebanon referred to the seminar in Rabat on UPR. The interactive dialogue has helped to understand difficulties faced by Morocco in promoting human rights. It asked for further information on activities and programmes to enhance human rights awareness, particularly in rural areas.

74. Following the interactive dialogue, Morocco referred to amendments to its national legislation to comply with international human rights instruments with regard to the rights of the child. It indicated that a programme on persons with disabilities has been launched, and that a national strategy has been adopted and a national observatory set up on violence against women. Morocco also affirmed that the principle of equality is embodied in the Constitution and that jurisprudence has confirmed the primacy of international law. The CCHR is an independent body in accordance with the Paris Principles. Concerning freedom of the press, Morocco mentioned that no journalists were arrested in 2007 except for one, that the press code is under revision and that this process is open to all stakeholders. Through compensation, the State has also rehabilitated the victims and recognized the harm caused to them. A council for the Moroccan community living abroad has been established in 2007. Finally, Morocco thanked all delegations, noted all comments, questions and recommendations made and expressed its will to follow up on them. It affirmed that it will continue the path of strengthening the implementation of all human rights. The UPR is an opportunity for Morocco, which will continue to play an active role in the Human Rights Council.

II. Conclusions and/OR recommendations

75. In the course of the discussion, the following recommendations were made to encourage Morocco:

1. To ratify the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Mexico);
2. To sign the OP-CAT (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
3. To communicate to the United Nations Secretary-General the withdrawal of its reservations to CEDAW (article 9, paragraph 2, article 16, paragraph 1 (h), and article 16, paragraph 2, as well as its declaration on article 15, paragraph 4) (Slovenia);
4. To continue its achievements in the field of Human Rights (Saudi Arabia);
5. While recognizing the efforts of Morocco to promote a culture of human rights and human rights education and training, to carry on with its efforts to disseminate and consolidate the human rights culture in the country (Syrian Arab Republic);
6. To continue, as it has done, to ensure respect for the human rights of all migrants (Mexico);
7. To continue its efforts to improve prison conditions (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
8. While recognizing achievements of the *Instance Équité /Reconciliation* (IER), to continue to implement the remaining recommendations of the IER (Netherlands);
9. To continue the harmonization of its domestic law with regard to its international obligations on human rights (Netherlands);
10. Several States requested that Morocco's needs in respect to technical cooperation, as included in paragraph 49 above and paragraphs 144-152 of the national report, be addressed (Senegal, Ghana, Bangladesh, France);
11. To continue with the training of law enforcement officials, based on the request for technical cooperation contained in paragraph 152 of the national report (Switzerland).

The recommendations listed above enjoy the support of Morocco.

76. Other recommendations noted in the report in paragraph 72 and paragraph 65 above, will be examined by Morocco which will provide responses, if any, in due time. Both will be noted in the outcome report to be adopted by the Human Rights Council.

III. VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS OF THE STATE UNDER REVIEW

77. Reference is made to the commitments made by the State under review in its national report to the UPR.

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Morocco was headed by H.E. Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, Minister of Justice, and composed of 18 members:

Dr. Omar Hilal, Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs;

Mr. Mohammed Loulichki, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations Office at Geneva;

Mr. Abderrazzak Laassel;

Mr. Najeb Khaddi;

Mr. Mohamed Abdenabaoui;

Mr. Khalid El Mokhtari;

Mr. Driss Najim;

Mr. Mohamed Ouzgane;

Mrs. Naïma Benyahya;

Mrs. Farida Khamlichi;

Mr. Mohamed Baalal;

Mr. Mohamed Samir Tazi;

Mr. Mohamed Zdmari;

Mr. Ahmed Saadi;

Mr. Mouley Ahmed Mghizlat;

Mr. Omar Kadiri;

Mrs. Fatimatou Mansour.
