

**KOREA-MOROCCO PARTNERSHIP FOR BILATERAL ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AND TRIPARTITE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN
AFRICA**

**OPENNING REMARKS BY IRES' DIRECTOR GENERAL
M. MOHAMMED TAWFIK MOULINE**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you today to the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES), on the occasion of this conference co-hosted with our partner the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Kingdom of Morocco.

I would like to say special thanks to His Excellency the ambassador of Korea who made today's conference possible. This conference will be devoted to examining a number of issues of common interest, including, in particular, the levers to strengthen the economic bilateral relations.

On the basis of the Orientations contained in the Royal message of August 30, 2013, inviting the institute to devote more effort to the external relations of Morocco and to the diplomacy field, the dimension "External relations of Morocco" occupied a prominent place in IRES work program.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Morocco opted for openness to the world through opening up trade, whether it is in the multilateral WTO framework, or by signing free trade agreements with traditional and emerging powers as well as with developing countries. Despite geographical distance and cultural and linguistic differences, Morocco is trying to expand economic relations with Asia, in particular with South Korea.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Morocco and South Korea have established diplomatic relations in 1962. This year, the two countries are celebrating the 55th anniversary of their official bilateral relations. This celebration also constitutes an occasion for us to celebrate the ties that bond the two countries who share a number of common values such as democracy, commitment to international security and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The relations between Morocco and South Korea have generally been characterized by their positive development and the convergence of the two countries' views in the multilateral organizations. Bilateral relations between the two countries have been strengthened through the signature of a number of cooperation agreements on tourism, technical, scientific, economic and cultural dimensions.

Otherwise, the trade exchange the trade between Morocco and South Korea amounted to 140 million dollars in 2000 and increased to 540 million dollars in 2016. Despite the increase that took place during the last 16 years, the Moroccan-Korean trade represent only 0,9% of total Moroccan trade.

The non-diversification of the trade is one of the major obstacles to the Moroccan-trade relations. Morocco exports are mainly phosphates, textile, leather, clothing and seafood. The main imported products from Korea are mostly appliances, telecommunications equipment, digital devices, cars, auto parts, synthetic fibers and filaments.

In order to deepen their economic relations, it will be suitable to promote the cooperation in the field of new technologies, ship-building, ship maintenance. Furthermore, Morocco should look into some lessons from Korea`s industrial experience on focusing on the automobile industry and on following the Korean model of Industry 4.0

Ladies and gentlemen,

In parallel to the bilateral dimension, the expansion of the field of cooperation to areas of common interest, notably Africa, could give a new dynamic to the partnership relations between the two countries and give them a highly strategic character in a time where there is a growing importance of tripartite development cooperation in Africa in the perspective of the development needs of the continent.

The return of the Kingdom of Morocco to its African institutional family, tied with the large scale of development projects deployed by the Kingdom in several African countries, opens up real prospects, provided that the operators of the two countries pool their efforts and resources, through joint ventures that benefit all the stakeholders.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These are some introductory remarks at the opening of this conference. Thank you very much for your attention.