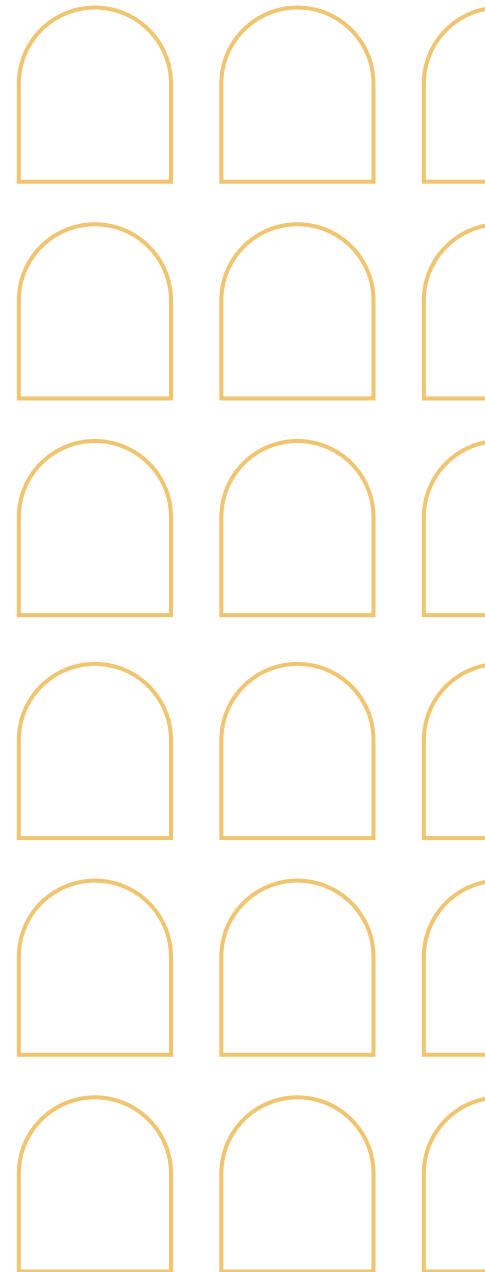


# POLICY BRIEF

## Morocco's New Development Model: Lessons for Libya?

### Abstract

This paper examines a new developmental model in Morocco on the initiative of King Mohamed VI, one for addressing the multiple challenges that the country faces. The paper reviews the mechanisms used to elaborate this new vision, the proposals issued by experts to boost the country's development, as well as the challenges ahead in the implementation of this new strategy. The author asks whether the model can provide lessons for other countries facing similar challenges, and whether it might even be a useful model for Libya despite obvious differences in contexts. In particular, the Moroccan experience provides a case-study in how Libyans could create together an inclusive and participatory roadmap. That roadmap might offer a common vision for Libya, despite its demographic diversity and political divisions.



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## Introduction

On 19 November 2019, King Mohamed VI established an advisory body known as the Special Commission on the Development Model, which was tasked with preparing a comprehensive report on the current state of development in Morocco and proposing a new middle- and long-term development model to address various challenges that Morocco has faced in social, economic, territorial, and environmental spheres. The king appointed Chakib Benmoussa<sup>1</sup> as president of the commission, which included 35 people of different backgrounds and approaches, including 10 women and Moroccans living abroad, who were chosen on the basis of their professional experience and qualifications.<sup>2</sup>

The king gave the Special Commission a six-month period to submit its report to him, but the COVID-19 pandemic threw a wrench in the process at both the national and international level. The period for the commission's work was therefore extended in order to take into account new priorities imposed by the pandemic and to address additional dimensions stemming from this new reality.

After more than a year and a half of meetings, Benmoussa submitted the commission's report<sup>3</sup> to King Mohamed VI on 25 May 2021, at an official audience held at the Royal Palace in Fez, which was attended by the head of government as well as a number of ministers and party leaders and representatives of various constitutional institutions. Immediately after, the king issued his directives to the government and to the country's institutions to contribute to implementing the recommendations laid out in the report. He stated that the report represented "a new outlook and vision for development" in Morocco, according to a statement from the Royal Court.

In this paper we will discuss the general economic and social context that prompted King Mohamed VI to reevaluate the Morocco's twenty-year-old development model and to establish a commission to set a new course across different fields. We will also examine how the commission prepared the report, the approach it adopted, and materials and models it drew upon. We will then detail the proposals made by the commission and its perspectives on obstacles to development in Morocco and how to overcome them. We will also address how different sectors of Moroccan society have received the report.

In view of the originality of the Moroccan experiment, which offers lessons to other countries, we will conclude with some recommendations for Libyans to draw upon. In particular, Libyans may find interesting: the guiding role played by state institutions in the Moroccan experiment; its participatory dimension; and its mindfulness of the country's diversity.

## Contextualizing the Report of the Special Commission on the Development Model

During the last twenty years of King Mohamed VI's rule, Morocco has experienced two rounds of reforms to its political institutions and to both economic and social spheres.

The first series of reforms was launched at the beginning of the first decade of the twenty-first century, particularly through the process of national reconciliation. In 2001, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission was established to address human rights violations, killings, detentions, and torture that had occurred since independence in 1956. This reform movement also involved economic and social affairs. In the economic sphere, Morocco launched

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1 Chakib Benmoussa has held several positions in Morocco, including as interior minister from 2006 to 2010 and president of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (CESE) from 2011 to 2013. He was also appointed the Moroccan ambassador to France in 2013, a role he held while serving as president of the Special Commission on the Development Model. Benmoussa has been the Minister of National Education, Primary Schooling, and Sports since 8 October 2021.

2 Among those appointed to the commission were Driss Jettou, the former prime minister of Morocco and president of the supreme audit institution; Ahmed Reda Chami, the president of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (CESE); and Mostafa Terrab, CEO of the OCP Group, the largest state-owned company in Morocco. The commission also included specialists in digital technologies, economics, and the social sciences, as well as heads of private corporations, writers, and artists.

3 "The New Development Model: Releasing energies and regaining trust to accelerate the march of progress and prosperity for all", General Report, April 2021: [https://csm.d.ma/documents/CSMD\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](https://csm.d.ma/documents/CSMD_Report_EN.pdf)

“megaprojects” to modernize its infrastructure, including airports, seaports, roads, and railways, as well as developing the national economy through privatization and liberalization. It also launched new sector-based strategies, including agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, fisheries, etc. This new momentum galvanized the Moroccan economy and a new middle class emerged as work opportunities were created for youth. There were also a variety of social initiatives launched to reduce inequality and fight poverty and precarity, such as the National Human Development Initiative, expanding health coverage, etc.

The second round of reforms was launched during the “Arab Spring,” and was influenced by the social movements that sprung up in Morocco during this time, particularly the 20 February Movement. A new constitution was established in 2011, which gave the government and parliament broader authority, limited the powers of the king, and strengthened regulatory and oversight bodies and regulatory laws.

However, the country suffered from a lack of public trust, particularly in its elected political institutions, and as a result of its slowing economic growth, which fell from an annual average of 5 percent between 2000 and 2009, to 2.8 percent between 2018 and 2019. The economy was unable to create sufficient work opportunities to absorb those entering the labor market, especially youth. Meanwhile, the human development sphere continued to suffer from many problems, especially with regard to education, vocational training, and health. According to official statistics, the general level of education remained very low: two-thirds of students were unable to read upon finishing primary school, while other deficiencies continued to plague Moroccan universities. Things were not any better in the health sector, where official statistics indicated that 38 percent of the population did not have health insurance, and that half of Moroccan families were personally bearing the costs of doctors and medicines. Additionally, social inequality had worsened: the wealthiest 10 percent of the population was 11 times wealthier than the poorest 10 percent of society. The purchasing power of the middle class fell as a result of the high costs of education

and health services, which were provided by the private sector due to the decline in the quality of, and lack of trust in, services provided by the public sector.

All of these points were documented in official reports that the Special Commission for the Development Model drew upon in its work, and led Morocco to reexamine its path forward. It had become necessary to rethink the outlook for the future and find new ways to address these challenges. King Mohamed VI stated that it would be necessary to reevaluate the national development model when he addressed parliament on 13 October 2017, at the opening of the new legislative year. He warned that “the national development model has become unable to address the urgent demands of these times, and citizens’ growing needs. It is unable to reduce inequalities between socioeconomic classes and regional disparities or to achieve social justice.” The king called on the government, parliament, and various institutions, to “rethink our development model so that we can keep up with developments happening in the country.” He mentioned this again at the same podium a year later, when he announced in October 2018 that he had decided to form a special commission to accelerate reform, and which would “be responsible for gathering and organizing input, sharing its conclusions as part of a comprehensive and integrated strategy, and proposing a draft for a new development model to us, along with clearly-defined goals, avenues for change, and ways to implement this.”

## **The Commission’s Approach**

Since beginning its work in November 2019, the Special Commission for the Development Model decided that its report would not only summarize the work of experts and specialists from various fields of development, but would first and foremost gather input from the Moroccan people, as well as actors working in institutional, political, and economic spheres.

In order to carry out what the commission called its “participatory approach,” it invited all political parties, syndicates, professional associations, and representatives of civil society, without

excluding any elements, to participate in hearings with the commission's head and members. Some of these sessions were streamed live on social media platforms. The invitation was welcomed by all the aforementioned groups except the Democratic Way Party, which represents the radical left, and which has previously boycotted elections. During these sessions, the commission received all oral and written observations and remarks, and discussed these for months before writing its report.

In addition, the commission made field visits to various parts of the Kingdom in order to meet with the people and hear their perspectives. It also organized meetings with foreign researchers and experts from various countries in order to incorporate their expertise and analyses into the report. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the commission from engaging in further fieldwork. It was forced to rely entirely upon digital and remote communications. In addition to its daily interactions with Moroccans through social media websites, the commission launched a trilingual digital platform to receive input and ideas from citizens.

By adopting this approach, the commission was able to meet with more than 9,700 people directly and organized 1,600 hearings. The commission also received 6,600 written contributions (270 of which were sent directly, and 350 via its digital platform). It also received 1.5 million comments through Facebook.

The commission's final report included excerpts from this public feedback. These comments both commended the progress that Morocco had made, while also expressing concerns about the future, as well as a loss of trust in the capacity of institutions to serve the public interest. People criticized political and economic elites and affluent socioeconomic groups, and claimed that these groups had received undue privileges and were not committed to Morocco's future. The final report also including an appendix that included all the feedback and input from the Moroccan people and from representatives of various institutions, and was submitted to the king for his consideration.

There were also ongoing meetings with the press, and a general openness to the media throughout the commission's work, which explains why the commission received such regular Moroccan media coverage. There were 16,221 articles and stories published or broadcast between January and October 2020 that discussed the commission's work.

## **Obstacles to Development in Morocco: The Commission's Perspective**

After more than a year and a half of work, the Special Commission for the Development Model finished its report, which it submitted to King Mohamed VI. The report demonstrated that there were four main obstacles to economic growth and social development in Morocco, which can be summarized as follows:

1. **Lack of a comprehensive long-term strategic vision for Morocco**, which would be adopted by all entities implementing public policy, with clear and specific roles enabling each party to carry out its responsibilities. The report noted that Morocco did not have "strategic long-term benchmarks enabling it to define its key objectives and to mobilize the necessary means to reach these goals, and to ensure the coherence of public policy." According to the commission, efforts continue to go to waste because of this lack of coordination, which led to implementing reform without cooperation among the relevant parties. The authors of the report also argued that the lack of a coherent policy was evident in the failure to clearly define priorities for these strategies and programs by which to implement them, and that the available resources and actual capacities of the actors involved were not taken into account. The report also indicated that there were gray areas with regard to the distribution of responsibilities and the division between theory and practice, even though all of this was clearly laid out in the constitution. This raised the issue of how to translate the contents of the constitution into political reality.

2. **A faltering economic transition as a result of a poorly-regulated economy**, which the report claimed affected the ability of new investors to innovate and take initiative to create added value. The commission indicated that rents were preventing a successful economic transition, since there were still unjustified economic incentives, and preference given to private interests over the public good. Furthermore, the report demonstrated that the laws regulating the national economy did not encourage risk-taking, since there were various obstacles standing in the way of new actors. The report stated that complex administrative barriers as well as tacit agreements between the economic actors controlling certain sectors allowing them to benefit from permits, concessions, and privileges in these fields. This exemplifies the kind of practices that discourage competition and investment in Morocco. The commission also focused on the negative role that the informal sector has played in operating outside the law, undermining any attempts to create value, and preventing fair and open competition that would promote economic prosperity.
  3. **The limited capacity of the public sector to develop and implement its vision.** This is due to the fact that the public administration lacks incentives, does not attract qualified persons, and that its work is constrained by factors related to its set budget. This prevents it from achieving tangible results and objectives and providing quality services to citizens. The report also observed that there is a lack of initiative, leadership, and performance within the public administration. The prevailing culture of compliance produces frustration among administrative personnel and encourages employees to draw upon outside experience in preparing development strategies and programs. The report also focused on the weakness of regional implementation of public policies, since local municipalities implement decisions made by the central government, rather than making their own decisions in accordance with their own specific needs.
  4. **Moroccans are frustrated with a government they feel does not protect them and which they do not trust.** There is a lack of confidence in the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the convoluted nature of legal procedure, and limited avenues for public participation, in addition to concerns about the gap between the letter of the law and its implementation. The report presented a set of problems afflicting the Moroccan judiciary which have contributed to the lack of confidence in this entity, such as long delays in having a case heard, incompetence, lack of transparency, lack of ethics, etc. The report stated that these obstacles are also the result of an approach that views systematic oversight and centralized administration as the best path for development, does not see other entities that might contribute to development— including the people, youth, private sector, and civil society—as reliable partners, and conceptualizes tradition as being at odds with progress and societal realities.
- The report added that there were international factors that had exacerbated these challenges, since these transformations involved risks that Morocco needed to preempt and prepare for. Morocco needs to take advantage of the opportunities that these changes have provided, including the emergence of new geographic potentials for economic growth, in light of the anticipated drop in global value chains, as well as rapid technological changes in many fields, which place human capital, innovation, and progress at the forefront of development priorities. There is also a fundamental shift in the global energy arena, given the huge developments in renewable energy, as well as the growing risks related to the spread of pandemics, as Morocco has experienced during COVID-19. Finally, there are the escalating effects of climate change, especially regarding water resources and biodiversity, and its associated risks.
- Given all of these factors, the commission warned that change is an urgent necessity, and that maintaining the status quo would not ensure stability, but rather would set the country back.

## Four Strategic Options for Change

In order to get out of the current situation, and to overcome the obstacles to development mentioned in the report, the commission suggested focusing on the need to adopt new strategies, both through strengthening progress that has already been achieved, and leaving behind old ways of thinking to embrace new mentalities and visions for the future.

These strategic options are as follows:

- 1. Transform the Moroccan economy so that it becomes more dynamic, diverse, and competitive.** The economy must be able to create added value and opportunities for decent work, provide the resources necessary to meet societal needs, and affirm the sovereignty of the kingdom in certain spheres. In order to achieve this goal, the commission recommended that investment be directed towards productive activities by creating appropriate incentives for entrepreneurship and a suitable environment for workers that is open, secure, and able to anticipate change, while at the same time remaining subject to the law and to independent legal and regulatory systems. This will also require bolstering the competitiveness of the Kingdom through reducing energy and logistical costs through fundamental reforms in those two sectors, and through ensuring the fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth. The goal of all of this must be to develop the Moroccan economy from an “economy of weak added value, low productivity, and rent-seeking and protected economic activities, to a diversified and competitive economy.” The report added that this must be grounded in a “dense fabric of enterprise promoting innovation and flexibility.”
- 2. Build human capital and put it to the best use for the future** through developing the health and education sectors to carry out their necessary functions alongside their partners in the private sector. This also includes proposals for reforming organizations working in health, education, higher education, and vocational training. In order to empower all citizens to benefit fairly from education and health services, the report recommended adopting a new approach centered around improving the quality of services provided, determining objectives, having the relevant regional administrative entities oversee implementation, and expanding the autonomy of educational institutions, universities, and hospitals, while also placing these under periodic evaluation. According to the commission, the intended goal in this field is to establish a high-quality health system capable of withstanding future health crises through prevention and warning mechanisms, and through producing basic medicines and vaccines. Likewise, the educational system must focus on teaching students basic principles and developing their “civic sense so that they uphold the country’s values.”
- 3. Provide opportunities for social integration to everyone and strengthen social ties** through involving the people and especially youth in society and developing a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency so that youth can actively develop themselves and their country’s economy. To this effect, the commission recommended strengthening social protections for the most vulnerable groups according to principles for equitable participation, including affirming parity between men and women, and “mobilizing cultural diversity in Morocco as a pathway towards openness, dialogue, and cohesion” between different segments of society, as a testament to the historical complexity and depth of the country.
- 4. Enable regional administrative entities to act as key implementers of development** by ensuring that they become more sustainable and capable of success and better connected to structures around them. In order to achieve this, the report focuses on developing transportation and improving the standard of living through providing adequate housing, water services, and ensuring that local talent is used to empower regional entities, rather than gathering all skilled persons in the capital. Instead, they should become active in implementing

public policies at the local level. There is also a need to preserve and value natural resources, especially water resources. The report emphasized the need to reform the water sector and to ration use of this critical resource which has become increasingly scarce in Morocco.

In order to implement these strategies, the development model proposed a series of tangible and specific measures, as well as a number of practical projects across various sectors, including renewable energy, nontraditional uses of water resources, digital platforms, high-speed internet, developing transportation and logistics sectors, a capital market, financing the economy, prioritizing products that carry the “Made in Morocco” logo, developing the research and training sector, social safety nets, culture, and integrating youth into society. The commission also added a detailed appendix to the report to clarify the pace and practical steps that need to be taken in order to carry out reforms in different sectors. However, the head of the commission, Chakib Benmoussa, always said that the commission’s work was not to outline a roadmap for sector-level reforms, but rather to set forth a comprehensive philosophy and approach in order to enact change.

The commission designated 2035 as a target for reaching these goals, and outlined specific objectives, including doubling the country’s per capita income, having 90 percent of students attain proficiency in necessary competencies upon finishing primary school, reducing work in the informal sector by 20 percent, doubling women’s participation in political and economic life, and reaching 80 percent satisfaction with public administration and services.

## Means for Achieving Development Goals

In order to achieve the structural changes that the report recommended, the commission took into consideration the human resources and material and technical capabilities that could turn these plans into reality. The report argued that it was necessary to focus on five main avenues for launching this model, which are as follows:

1. **Digital technology as a key tool for change and development**, which would contribute to strengthening trust between the people, contractors, and the state, through creating more transparent and streamlined relationships. Such technologies would facilitate access to public services, and reduce bribery, corruption, and disparities between regions. The objective of this approach is to bridge divides between the Moroccan people and their country and to make information accessible to them. This would also contribute to “having many different voices take responsibility for shaping public opinion.” In order to achieve this, the report outlines in detail the steps necessary to mobilize the capabilities of digital technology.
2. **Build a new and modern administrative apparatus dedicated to the public interest.** To this effect, the report indicates that it is necessary to create a new generation within the public administration, its institutions, and enterprises, who care about high-quality work and are held accountable for delivering results. The report also emphasized that high-level civil service positions at both the local and national level need to be able to attract talent and empower well-qualified individuals to take initiative without being constrained by fears of taking risks or making their own decisions.
3. **Establish diverse and innovative funding mechanisms in line with the aspirations stated in the new development model**, and which follow through on the genuine desire for change. To this effect, the report indicates that resources must be directed towards developing human capital and integration in order to foster a new economic dynamic. With regard to searching for new funding sources, the commission proposed restructuring certain public economic institutions in Morocco in order to transform them into independent, anonymous corporations, through better evaluating their assets, and opening their capital accounts, wherever possible, to public contributions for development funding. This process would happen at the same time as certain

reforms in key economic sectors in order to enable citizens to obtain high-quality services at lower costs, and to strengthen the country's competitiveness. The report clarifies that it is necessary to undertake reforms in order to open Morocco to private investment, within the context of autonomous regulatory institutions working at the highest international standards, which can provide governance frameworks to reassure and attract investors.

4. **Focus on the role of Moroccans living abroad and mobilize their talents.** To this effect, the commission recommended pursuing new approaches more likely to attract highly-educated Moroccans living abroad who have a background in developing sectors such as new technologies, alternative energy, etc. The report also mentioned the need to engage with Moroccans abroad in order to mobilize capital and to promote Moroccan products and services.
5. **Liberalize and globalize the Moroccan economy,** contribute to the regional prominence of the Kingdom, and make the most of Morocco's status as a crossroads of cultures, in order to build and strengthen international partnerships that can contribute to Morocco's growth and progress.

## Oversight Mechanisms

Unlike official reports by various previous commissions, the Special Commission for the Development Model proposed oversight mechanisms for the implementation of the new development model, which would evaluate its impact on public policy. These mechanisms were as follows:

1. **Establish a national charter for development** which would function as a form of consensus around a common point of reference and shared goal for the future, which all actors in the field of development (political parties, constitutional institutions, the private sector, social partners, and regional entities) are committed to. The commission proposed that all parties officially

adopt this charter as a political commitment made before their king and country. The charter would also aim to establish the necessary conditions for understanding the main avenues for development in Morocco in the middle- and long-term. Two weeks after presenting the general report to King Mohamed VI, Chakib Benmoussa held various meetings with political parties, syndicates, professional organizations, and representatives of other entities with the goal of preparing this charter, determining a formulation that everyone could agree upon, and issuing it as soon as possible.

2. **Establish an oversight mechanism** under the auspices of the king to oversee the implementation of the model and to support future strategic projects and efforts to enact change. These mechanisms would ensure public agreement and coordination regarding the proposed strategies, promote future reform and transformation, and require actors to carry out their responsibilities.

## Reception of the Report

After the general report was released, the country expressed both positive and negative reactions to its contents and proposals. The general impression especially among political parties, syndicates, and professional and societal organizations was positive. They welcomed what the report had to offer, especially after the praise it received from the monarchy, and the king's call to engage with the report's proposals. Directly after the report was issued, the head of the commission, Chakib Benmoussa, held meetings with various parties to explain the contents of the report, respond to comments and criticisms, and prepare the national charter for development.

The report also received a great deal of attention in the national media. There were 2,554 articles devoted to the topic in the week after the report was published. The report's reception was generally positive: commenters praised how the commission had carried out its work and its courage in confronting the country's problems. Some felt that the report offered new hope for pursuing progress at the national and regional



levels, and for inviting all Moroccans, without exception, to join this new path forward and to participate in building the country's future.<sup>4</sup> Others expressed that the commission had succeeded in diagnosing the problems at hand and provided many possible avenues towards progress, using a discourse that sometimes drew upon the opposition's language.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite the generally positive response, there were also many questions raised, particularly about how this report was going to be implemented and whether political actors had the capacity to make this a reality. There were concerns that the report would be filed away and remain nothing but empty promises. The main concern expressed by many observers concerned the weakness of current political and party elites, and their direct responsibility for the problems highlighted in the report, as well as their likely inability to carry out the reforms necessary to address these challenges and to adopt new policies that could improve the current situation.

These criticisms were voiced by opposition movements outside parliament (such as Al-Adl wa Al-Ihssane and the Democratic Way Party), civil society organizations, and university professors, who criticized the report for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- It ignores potential political avenues for reform, particularly given the need to introduce changes to the constitution;
- It is reluctant to cross red lines, despite the king's request that the commission present the truth, no matter how harsh;
- The overwhelmingly technical nature of the report;
- It strengthens the monarchy in Morocco at the expense of political parties and other political actors.

## Conclusion

Morocco held legislative, local, and regional elections on 8 September 2021, in which three political parties prevailed (the National Rally of Independents, the Authenticity and Modernity Party, and the Istiqlal Party), while the Justice and Development Party (a Moroccan Islamist party – known as PJD) was defeated. In accordance with the constitution, the king appointed Aziz Akhannouch, head of the National Rally of Independents Party (the front-runner in the elections), to be the head of government, replacing Saadeddine Othmani (PJD). The three parties formed a coalition in order to form a government and divided amongst themselves the leadership of the various administrative bodies and mayorships of the major cities of Morocco.

This new political situation raised questions about the status of the new development model, its relationship with the governmental program, the promises made by the elected parties, and to what extent these different entities were on the same page or at odds with each other. The first answer came from King Mohamed VI during his speech before the new parliament, in which he emphasized that the new model was important because this was “not a development plan in the strict and traditional sense, but rather a general and flexible framework that sets new parameters for a brighter future for all.” He affirmed the government's role in implementing the plan and in finding the means to implement it. This was later echoed by Aziz Akhannouch, the head of government, when he presented the new government program to parliament and expressed a commitment to implementing the contents of the new development program. In his statement, he drew attention to various procedures and priorities outlined in commission's general report. From a political angle, Chakib Benmoussa, the head of the commission, seemed to be given the reins of national education out of a genuine desire to turn the commission's recommendations into a reality, so that they would not remain only wishful thinking.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance the edition of the newspaper *Al-Ahdath Al-Maghribia* of 27 May 2021.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance S. Ibn Aicha, “Namodhaj tanmawy binokhat al-mo'aradha [A development model with a flavor of opposition]” *Hespress*, 27 May 2021: <https://bit.ly/3FsHdFf>

To what extent can we learn from the work of the Special Commission for the Development Model in Morocco in order to better understand the situation in Libya?

Despite the historical and political differences between the two countries, and the different forms of government and kinds of political institutions in each, the Moroccan experience sets an important example. The monarchy in Morocco played a strategic role in drawing up ambitious plans for the country's future and ensuring that these long-term goals would be implemented. Here we highlight a set of conclusions that political actors in Libya might draw upon in developing a roadmap and philosophy for their own work:

- Priority should be given to the public interest, accepting differences in viewpoints and perspectives, listening to all sides, and including them in preparing a roadmap that provides an honest and impartial representation of the reality on the ground, even when this may seem harsh, and even if these perspectives are at odds with certain private or sectarian interests.
- Individuals who have proven themselves to behave with integrity and who have competence and capacity to work for the public good should be entrusted to oversee the preparation of this roadmap or comprehensive model for the country. These individuals must represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives, gender parity between men and women, and include participation from citizens living abroad who can enrich the discussion and bring new perspectives and approaches from their experiences and important roles they have held abroad.
- There is a need to meet with citizens from across the country and listen to their views. Solutions cannot be devised in the offices of experts or by hermetically-sealed commissions. The specific needs and regional variations of the population can only be understood through involving these communities in the process.
- Digital technologies and social media should be relied on as much as possible in order to connect with citizens, receive their feedback, and involve them in generating solutions.
- There needs to be openness to national and international media and transparency and integrity should be ensured throughout the work. In order for this to happen, fake news must be avoided so that public trust can be built towards official proceedings.
- The conclusions from the roadmap or model should be presented to the public for national discussion, in order to hear positive feedback as well as criticisms. Ongoing discussion of these conclusions and plans is the best path for implementing and continuing to engage with the proposed model.

## Middle East Directions

The MIDDLE EAST DIRECTIONS Programme, created in 2016, is part of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. It has the ambition to become an international reference point for research on the Middle East and North Africa Region, studying socio-political, economic and religious trends and transformations. The programme produces academic outputs such as working papers and e-books. It also liaises with policy makers with a wide range of policy briefs, policy report and analysis.

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The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS), created in 1992 and directed by Professor Brigid Laffan, aims to develop inter-disciplinary and comparative research on the major issues facing the process of European integration, European societies and Europe's place in 21<sup>st</sup> century global politics. The Centre is home to a large post-doctoral programme and hosts major research programmes, projects and data sets, in addition to a range of working groups and ad hoc initiatives. The research agenda is organised around a set of core themes and is continuously evolving, reflecting the changing agenda of European integration, the expanding membership of the European Union, developments in Europe's neighbourhood and the wider world.

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