

THE GLOBAL DIWAN'S

Newsletter

CONNECTING
EAST-WEST
LEADERS



Port of Tangiers, source Tanger Med 2016

EDITORIAL

Founded in 2020, The Global Diwan is as always committed to expanding its multilateral initiatives that transcend our core focus on Europe and the Arab world (mostly GCC-Middle East).

Newsletter 19, we highlight strategic efforts that underscore our dedication to promoting cooperation across diverse regions, including North Africa and India. Our partnership with the Indian Business Club, epitomizes the growing significance of cross-continental relationships between Europe, the GCC countries, and Asia -Pacific as such.

Aligned with this mission, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), represented by M. Gérard Mestrallet under the guidance of French President HE. Emmanuel Macron perfectly illustrates this framework. The IMEEC initiative aims to strengthen ties between these regions, offering a powerful platform for economic growth that aligns with our goal of encouraging strategic global partnerships. M. Gérard Mestrallet delves into the ambitions of this maritime corridor in his insightful article. Maritime cooperation is indeed a critical component of The Global Diwan's strategic goals for the years to come.

As we look ahead to our upcoming event in Morocco in 2025, maritime collaboration will take center stage. The Global Diwan Maritime launched in Athens this June 2024 with our friends and partners of the Athens Riviera Forum (ARF) aims to unite key

stakeholders from the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the wider Arab world, setting the stage for significant developments in maritime cooperation, around Monaco serving as a pivotal first milestone for key marinas and yacht-clubs.

This 19th issue celebrates Morocco's 25th anniversary of HM. King Mohammed VI's reign, offering an opportunity to reflect on the country's reforms achievements but also ambitious development perspectives. We are pleased to feature two insightful articles, including a diplomatic perspective from M. Othman El Kachtoul, a French diplomat and an introduction to Morocco's Professional Association of Leaders (APD) by her brilliant founder Ms Farida Jirari.

This interconnectedness emphasizes the importance of multilateralism as shows our motto "Connecting East and West Leaders" as HE Riadh Ben Slimane, a distinguished Tunisian ambassador, reflects on this vision in his article, stressing the importance of multilateral cooperation in creating sustainable growth opportunities across regions.

Éric Schell

Executive Chairman of the Global Diwan

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MONACO, FRENCH RIVIERA, ATHENS, RED SEA, TANGIERS...

The Global Diwan aims to establish itself as a crossroads for exchange between the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Éric Schell 

IN JUNE 2024, I HAD THE PLEASURE WITH FRANÇOIS GOUYETTE, FIRST VP SENIOR ADVISOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, OF LAUNCHING “THE GLOBAL DIWAN MARITIME” DURING THE ATHENS RIVIERA FORUM, AN INITIATIVE AIMED AT ENHANCING COOPERATION AND CONNECTIVITY AMONG MARINAS IN EUROPE AND THE ARAB WORLD. THIS PLATFORM IS DESIGNED TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE, EXCHANGE OF BEST PRACTICES, AND BUSINESS COLLABORATION ACROSS THE MARITIME INDUSTRY, FURTHER SOLIDIFYING TIES BETWEEN THESE TWO DYNAMIC REGIONS.

Our goal with The Global Diwan Maritime is to create a robust network that supports the development of marinas and promotes cultural and economic exchanges. By bringing together key players from both Europe and the Arab world, we will foster a deeper understanding and cooperation in the maritime field, setting the stage for a future sustainable and fair growth and partnership opportunities.

The Athens Riviera Forum provided the perfect backdrop for the launch of our new common initiative. This outstanding event gathered maritime professionals, policymakers, and business leaders to discuss the current state and future of the industry. It was a significant opportunity for The Global Diwan to showcase our commitment to promoting international maritime relationships and to engage with influential figures from across the sector.

During the forum, we explored the potential for new collaborations, shared insights on market trends, and discussed the critical role that infrastructure development plays in enhancing regional connectivity. The Athens Riviera Forum also highlighted the strategic importance of integrating Mediterranean and Gulf marinas into a cohesive network, an objective that The Global Diwan Maritime is committed to pursuing.

Building on the success of the Athens Riviera Forum, we are excited to announce a series of future initiatives aimed at further strengthening our network and expanding our reach. In collaboration with our partners, including the Athens Riviera Forum and the Yacht Club de Monaco, we are planning several key events to keep the momentum going.

THE GLOBAL DIWAN ANNUAL FORUM

Healthcare Ecosystem



Bertrand de Lavenne 

FOLLOWING THE IMPRESSIVE SUCCESS OF THE PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF ITS ANNUAL FORUMS IN SEPTEMBER 2022 AND JANUARY 2024, THE GLOBAL DIWAN PROUDLY GATHERS ONCE AGAIN FOR ITS 3rd ANNUAL FORUM, AROUND TOPICS RELATED TO THE HEALTHCARE ECOSYSTEM (IN EUROPE AND MENA COUNTRIES).

The health situation in MENA and EU countries is diverse and varies significantly due to factors such as economic status, political stability, cultural practices, and the availability of resources. The regions include both high-income countries with advanced healthcare systems and lower-income countries facing significant health challenges. The aim of 2025 Health Forum will be to share best experiences and propose a well-connected platform to support academic, governmental and business exchanges. All speakers, participants and sponsors will have a unique opportunity to meet and discuss their challenges, solutions and wishes. Indeed, the healthcare situation in MENA countries varies widely across the region due to differences in economic development, political stability, infrastructure, and governance. However, several common challenges affect healthcare systems across many MENA countries. Let's look at the general situation and key challenges.

Situation of Healthcare in MENA Countries

MENA's healthcare market is projected to grow at 11.7% from \$185.5 billion in 2019 to \$243.6 billion in 2023. The healthcare systems in MENA countries range from highly advanced to underdeveloped. Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar, have well-funded, advanced healthcare systems with modern infrastructure and technologies. They offer high-quality healthcare services to their citizens, often provided by a mix of public and private sectors. In contrast, countries like Yemen, Syria, and Libya, suffering from

prolonged conflicts, have healthcare systems that are severely weakened or nearly collapsed. The lack of infrastructure, resources, and skilled healthcare workers in these countries severely limits access to basic health services. Middle-income countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, have more developed healthcare systems, but they still face significant challenges in terms of funding, infrastructure, and equitable access to services. Some countries, particularly in the GCC, have made significant strides toward achieving universal health coverage. However, in many MENA countries, especially those with lower incomes or ongoing conflicts, universal health coverage remains a distant goal due to funding constraints, resource limitations, and political instability.

Roberts et al. in their textbook "Getting health reform right: a guide to improving performance and equity" proposed the control knobs framework for assessing health systems and facilitating health reform. This framework (The Flagship Framework) assigns five key mechanisms or processes (knobs) that can be adjusted or changed to design effective health reform and improve health system performance as illustrated in Figure 1. These five knobs include Financing, which involves all the resources, including the mechanisms and activities intended to gather funds for the healthcare system such as insurance premiums, health-related taxes and out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses (Roberts M, Hsiao W, Berman P, Reich M. Getting Health Reform Right: A Guide to Improving Performance and Equity. New York: Oxford University Press (2008)).

Figure 1: Visual illustration of the elements of the Flagship Framework



Several MENA countries have seen improvements in **key health indicators (Figure 2)** such as life expectancy, maternal and child health, and immunization coverage. For example, the life expectancy in the GCC countries is comparable to that of many high-income countries. However, there is still significant variability, with countries affected by conflict and poverty lagging behind. From a clinical standpoint, there is a growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases. This is largely due to lifestyle changes,

including poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and high rates of obesity. The prevalence of NCDs is particularly high in wealthier countries in the GCC, where sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy diets are common. Some countries in the region continue to face challenges with communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and, in certain areas, malaria. In countries experiencing conflict or humanitarian crises, outbreaks of diseases like cholera and measles are common due to poor sanitation, overcrowding, and lack of access to clean water and healthcare services.

Figure 2: Selected health indicators for some countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

	Life expectancy at birth (years) (2019)	Adult mortality rate ^b (both sexes) (2016)	Infant mortality rate ^c (both sexes) (2020)	Hospital beds (per 10,000 population) (2017)	Medical doctors (per 10,000 population)	Nursing and midwifery personnel (per 10,000 population)
Algeria	77.13	95.03	19.46 (18.47–20.52)	19 (2015)	17.19 (2018)	15.48 (2018)
Bahrain	75.81	56.81	5.78 (4.34–7.73)	17.40	9.26 (2015)	24.94 (2015)
Djibouti	65.81	244.50	47.18 (28.17–76.07)	14.00	2.24 (2014)	7.29 (2014)
Egypt, Arab Republic	71.82	164.60	16.65 (11.31–24.23)	14.30	7.46 (2019)	19.26 (2018)
Iran, Islamic Republic	77.35	80.13	11.14 (6.53–18.92)	15.60	15.84 (2018)	20.77 (2018)
Iraq	72.42	173.50	21.32 (16.4–27.48)	13.20	9.66 (2020)	23.87 (2020)
Jordan	77.87	110.50	12.92 (9.35–17.66)	14.70	26.61 (2019)	33.47 (2019)
Kuwait	80.97	79.22	7.58 (7.04–8.16)	20.40	23.42 (2020)	46.83 (2020)
Lebanon	76.44	95.62	5.97 (2.77–12.04)	27.30	22.07 (2019)	16.74 (2018)
Libya	75.78	150.30	9.53 (5.58–16.16)	32.00	20.91 (2017)	65.31 (2017)
Morocco	72.99	69.06	16.02 (11.36–21.85)	10.00	7.31 (2017)	13.89 (2017)
Oman	73.90	96.25	9.45 (8.38–10.68)	14.70	17.74 (2020)	39.38 (2020)
Qatar	77.17	61.76	4.93 (4.42–5.5)	12.50	24.85 (2018)	71.97 (2018)
Saudi Arabia	74.31	89.13	5.99 (4.61–7.94)	22.40	27.38 (2020)	58.17 (2019)
Sudan	69.15	223.90	39.92 (29.96–53.04)	7.40	2.62 (2017)	11.46 (2018)
Syrian Arab Republic	72.67	301.10	18.45 (9.58–24.45)	14.00	12.87 (2016)	15.41 (2016)
Tunisia	77.04	91.00	14.29 (12.64–16.09)	21.80	13.03 (2017)	25.14 (2017)
United Arab Emirates	76.08	73.95	5.62 (4.95–6.4)	13.80	26.01 (2019)	57.46 (2019)
Yemen, Republic	66.63	221.30	45.71 (23.97–81.09)	7.10	5.25 (2014)	7.85 (2018)

^aMost recent data from the World Health Organization Global Health Observatory Indicators Index Data. Source of data: (25).

^bAdult mortality rate is defined as the probability of dying between 15 and 60 years per 1,000 population.

^cInfant mortality rate between birth and 11 months per 1,000 live births.

Challenges Facing Healthcare in MENA Countries

1) IS IT ALL ABOUT FINANCES?

Economic disparities among the MENA countries lead to significant differences in healthcare funding and quality. Wealthier countries like those in the GCC can allocate more resources to healthcare, resulting in better facilities and services. In contrast, poorer countries or those in conflict may struggle with inadequate funding, leading to poorly equipped hospitals, lack of essential medicines, and limited access to care. Furthermore, political instability, conflict, and violence in several MENA countries, such as Syria, Yemen, Libya, and formerly Iraq, have severely damaged healthcare infrastructure. Hospitals and clinics have been destroyed, healthcare workers have been displaced or killed, and there is a severe shortage of medical supplies and medications. This situation exacerbates health problems and limits access to even the most basic healthcare services.

2) IS IT ALL ABOUT CAPABILITIES?

There is a shortage of qualified healthcare professionals in many MENA countries. This issue is exacerbated in countries affected by conflict or economic hardship, where skilled professionals may emigrate in search of better opportunities. Furthermore, there is often a lack of ongoing training and development opportunities for healthcare workers to stay updated with the latest medical practices and technologies. Access to healthcare services is therefore not uniformly distributed, particularly in rural and remote areas. Urban centers often have better access to healthcare services, while rural areas may lack adequate facilities, equipment, and personnel. This urban-rural divide in healthcare access is a significant challenge in countries like Egypt, Morocco, and Sudan. In many MENA countries, the public health infrastructure is underdeveloped, leading to poor health outcomes. Challenges include inadequate water and sanitation facilities, lack of public health education, and poor surveillance and response systems for communicable diseases. This is especially problematic in countries with large refugee populations, where overcrowded living conditions can lead to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

3) IS IT ALL ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

Governance and management of health systems are issues in some MENA countries. This includes a lack of clear policies and regulations, inadequate planning and resource allocation, corruption, and inefficiency. Weak governance can result in poor service delivery, inequitable access to care, and mismanagement of resources.

4) IS IT ALL ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGY?

While some countries, particularly in the GCC, have made significant investments in digital health and health technology, many others lag. **There is often a lack of investment in health information systems, electronic health records, and telemedicine, which limits the ability to provide quality care, especially in remote or underserved areas.**

5) IS IT ALL ABOUT CULTURE?

Cultural beliefs and practices can sometimes hinder the delivery of healthcare services. For example, there can be stigma attached to mental health issues or certain diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, which can prevent people from seeking care. Additionally, gender norms may limit women's access to healthcare services in some contexts.

OUTLOOK: IT IS ALL ABOUT POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION.

Many MENA countries are working on reforms to strengthen their healthcare systems, improve service delivery, and expand coverage. This includes investing in healthcare infrastructure, increasing healthcare spending, and developing human resources for health. For instance, the **GCC countries are implementing ambitious healthcare strategies to enhance healthcare quality, improve access, or promote medical tourism.** Saudi Arabia has published a full plan to be executed for 2030.

There is as well a growing focus on public health and preventive care to address the rising burden of non-communicable diseases and other health issues. Initiatives include promoting **healthy lifestyles, encouraging physical activity, implementing anti-smoking campaigns, and improving access to vaccines and immunizations.** Countries are also working to improve maternal and child health through programs aimed at expanding access to prenatal care, nutrition support, and vaccinations.

Achieving **universal health coverage** remains a goal for many MENA countries. Some, like Qatar and the UAE, have already made significant strides toward this goal, while others are in the process of expanding coverage and improving access to essential health services. However, achieving UHC is particularly challenging in conflict-affected countries or those with limited financial resources.

Many MENA countries, especially in the GCC, are exploring the potential of **digital health technologies** to improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes. **Telemedicine, electronic health records, and mobile health applications** are being implemented to enhance access to care, especially in remote areas. Investment in digital health is seen as a way to address some of the challenges related to access and quality of care.

CONCLUSION

The healthcare situation in MENA countries is characterized by **significant disparities**, with some countries having well-developed healthcare systems and others struggling due to conflict, economic constraints, or inadequate infrastructure. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including improved funding, better governance, investment in health infrastructure and technology, capacity-building for healthcare workers, and addressing social and cultural barriers to healthcare access. Coordination between governments, international organizations, and the private sector is also crucial to overcoming these challenges and improving health outcomes across the region.

Building resilient health systems that can withstand shocks, such as **pandemics, conflicts, and economic downturns**, is a priority for many countries in the region. This includes strengthening health infrastructure, improving emergency preparedness and response capabilities, and fostering collaboration with international organizations and partners.



Tunisia

INTERVIEW WITH TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR

Riadh Ben Sliman on The Global Cooperation and Multilateralism

As a former Tunisian Ambassador with extensive experience in key international arenas, including diplomatic missions in London, New York, and most recently Sweden and Denmark where he was acting as Ambassador, Mr. Ben Sliman brings a wealth of knowledge to this discussion. His missions with the United Nations and his expertise in peace and security issues further enrich his understanding of the complexities of global diplomacy. Moreover, his acute familiarity with Western, Arab, and Indian contexts—bolstered by his academic background in India—aligns seamlessly with the mission of The Global Diwan, which aims to foster cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation between East and West. In this interview, conducted by our new Director of Operations, Martin Roy, Mr. Ben Sliman offers valuable insights into how global cooperation and multilateralism can be strengthened to address the pressing challenges of our time.



MR : Ambassador Ben Sliman, what are the main objectives of the upcoming efforts to address global challenges?

RBS: The main goal is to foster a new common understanding of the current global challenges facing humanity and to set the tone for effective global cooperation. At a time of profound global transformations, we need a recommitment to multilateralism to tackle issues such as climate change and global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

MR: Why is there a need to recommit to multilateralism now?

RBS: For years, there has been a loss of confidence in the effectiveness and relevance of multilateralism. Yet, working hand in hand with a multitude of actors and stakeholders is crucial. This collaboration stems from an enlarged vision of peace and security that goes beyond traditional definitions from the post-World War II era.

MR: How can we address these broad definitions of peace and security?

RBS: Effective multilateralism requires tackling existential threats like climate change and pandemics. It's not just about state cooperation but forging robust partnerships between international programs, governments, civil society, NGOs, academia, and the private sector. This networked and inclusive approach is essential for modern multilateralism.

MR: Can you elaborate on the role of private enterprises in global cooperation?

RBS: Unlike a half-century ago, companies and private enterprises now play a significant role in addressing social, developmental, and environmental challenges. They understand that operating without a sustainability agenda or corporate responsibility is no longer viable in our complex world.

MR: How do current geopolitical rivalries affect efforts for global cooperation?

RBS: Despite growing geopolitical rivalries and the return of war spectres, there are signs that core aspects of globalization remain resilient. Technological advances and innovations have created a more integrated global economy, making it almost impossible to dismantle our interconnected world despite political and economic fragmentation.

MR: What emerging trends do you see shaping the future of international relations?

RBS: We are witnessing a shift from traditional international relations towards a geopolitical revolution. A constellation of national, multinational, and transnational structures is emerging. The future global system will not be governed by a single center but by dynamic cooperation among countries seeking both national and collective interests.

MR: How do new emerging nations fit into this future global system?

RBS: Emerging nations, which make up nearly half of the global economy, are experiencing unprecedented growth and increasing their share in global trade. These countries are gaining more geopolitical clout and cultural influence, contributing to a multipolar world where they play a vital role in addressing global challenges.

MR: What lessons have been learned from the COVID-19 pandemic regarding international cooperation?

RBS: The pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of our world and the weaknesses in international cooperation frameworks. It underscored the urgent need to reprioritize health care systems and achieve equitable access to vaccines and treatments. While not all challenges were met, the pandemic did accelerate interstate cooperation and efforts within international institutions like the WHO and the EU.

MR: What role does the Global Diwan play in fostering global cooperation?

RBS: The Global Diwan is dedicated to facilitating inclusive dialogue and cooperation. It brings together a wide array of distinguished individuals from business and politics, creating an environment characterized by high interconnectivity and innovation. Our platform aims to bridge gaps and foster understanding and cooperation among diverse stakeholders.

MR: What is the ultimate goal of these efforts for global cooperation?

RBS: The ultimate goal is to foster collective action to respond to current and future challenges, ensuring a sustainable world for future generations. Platforms like the Global Diwan aim to facilitate inclusive dialogue and cooperation, bringing together diverse voices from business and politics in an interconnected and innovative environment.

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Effective multilateralism requires tackling existential threats like climate change and pandemics. It's not just about state cooperation but forging robust partnerships between international programs, governments, civil society, NGOs, academia, and the private sector.



DOSSIER

Morocco

Morocco under Mohammed VI

Othman El Kachtoul 



Sources : éditions Bibliomonde, Othman El Kachtoul, diplomate (France), agrégé d'arabe, islamologue

OTHMAN EL KACHTOUL French Foreign Affairs Advisor, Middle East.

Within the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, he has served in various roles, including postings in Iraq (2005-2006), Sudan (2008-2012), and Oman (2012-2016). He was Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 2016 and 2018, and served as Deputy Director for Central Africa from 2018 to 2022. He teaches at the Institute for Islamic Studies and Societies of the Muslim World at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS, Paris). Prior to joining the ministry, he was responsible for a purchasing group in a major retail company. His doctoral thesis, defended in 2019, received the first scientific prize in the "Thesis" category from the Institute of Higher National Defense Studies (IHEDN, France) in 2020. It was published in August 2023 as part of the "Land and People of Islam" collection (Karthala/IISMM) under the title "Rendez-vous à Dābiq. The Apocalyptic Theology of the 'Islamic State' Group."



SINCE 1999, MOROCCO HAS EMBARKED ON SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS, MARKING A DECISIVE TURNING POINT IN ITS DEVELOPMENT. THESE REFORMS, INITIATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY, AIMED TO LIBERALIZE THE ECONOMY AND IMPROVE THE BUSINESS CLIMATE.

The progress made, supported by a strong political will from King Mohammed VI and the commitment of economic and social actors, has resulted in a notable improvement in global rankings, particularly in the "Doing Business" report, where Morocco moved from 128th place in 2009 to 53rd place in 2019. By comparison, France ranks 31st and Italy 58th. According to the Government Action Monitoring Observatory, Morocco's gross domestic product (GDP) more than tripled between 1999 and 2024, rising from \$50 billion to \$140 billion. This growth is attributable to the diversification of the national economy, which no longer

relies solely on phosphates, agriculture, and tourism but now includes industrial sectors such as automotive and extractive industries.

For example, the phosphate sector has evolved from exporting raw materials to exporting high value-added products, such as fertilizers and seeds, generating around \$12 billion in 2022. In parallel, the Moroccan automotive industry, now one of the most competitive in the world, saw its exports reach 700,000 vehicles, with revenues exceeding 120 billion dirhams and even greater growth potential in the coming years.

The rapidly expanding aeronautics sector



DOSSIER

Morocco

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The reforms and strategies deployed over the past 25 years have positioned Morocco as a model of economic and social development in the region, investing in infrastructure, diversifying its economy, and focusing on renewable energy, while ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth for its population.

has more than 250 factories across the country and employs over 40,000 people, generating a turnover of 45 billion dirhams. Tourism, another pillar of the economy, has also seen impressive growth, rising from 4 million visitors in the 1990s to 15 million today, with the ambitious goal of reaching 26 million tourists by 2030.

Morocco has also committed to an energy transition. Iconic projects such as the Noor Solar Power Plant in Ouarzazate and wind farms, notably in Tarfaya, have enabled the Kingdom to position itself as a pioneer in renewable energy, with the goal of achieving 52% of its energy production from renewable sources by 2030.

The increase in foreign direct investment, from \$2.1 billion in 1999 to \$3.6 billion in 2019, illustrates this dynamic of transformation. These initiatives have enabled Morocco to make significant progress on the international stage and enhance its attractiveness to foreign investors. In 2022, the country set

even more ambitious goals: to mobilize 550 billion dirhams in investments and create 500,000 jobs by 2026. The new investment charter and the reform of the regional investment centers further strengthen this dynamic, consolidating the Kingdom's position as a major player on the global economic scene.

Behind these figures lies a profound reorganization of the economic ecosystem, driven by administrative reforms and a decentralization process, leading to the creation of 12 new regions with expanded powers. These efforts have strengthened regional development, stimulated local initiatives, and consolidated national investments.

This transformation has allowed Morocco to demonstrate exemplary resilience in the face of global crises, notably the 2008 financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. In response to the latter, the Kingdom introduced a new development model in 2021 aimed at making growth

more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient to shocks. This model embodies a collective ambition to improve the quality of life for Moroccans while ensuring sustainable economic prosperity and social progress. Of course, not everything is perfect: the development imbalance between the Atlantic coast and the country's interior has widened, and social inequalities persist despite the efforts made. Nevertheless, it is clear that the reforms and strategies deployed over the past 25 years have positioned Morocco as a model of economic and social development in the region. By investing in infrastructure, diversifying its economy, and focusing on renewable energy, the Kingdom is on track to consolidate its role as an economic leader on the African continent, while ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth for its population in the decades to come.



DOSSIER

Morocco



25 Years of King Mohammed VI's reign: a kingdom in transformation

Farida Jirari

FOR 25 YEARS, MOROCCO HAS STOOD OUT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE AS A LEADING INVESTMENT DESTINATION, "THANKS TO THE BOLD VISION OF H.M. KING MOHAMMED VI". THE REIGN OF THE BUILDER KING HAS NOT ONLY MODERNIZED THE COUNTRY BUT HAS ALSO SHAPED A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT, WHERE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS HAVE FOSTERED SUSTAINED AND DIVERSIFIED GROWTH.

From the moment he ascended to the throne in 1999, H.M. implemented strategic reforms that profoundly transformed the Kingdom's economic fabric. The modernization of infrastructure is one of the major pillars of this transformation. Tangiers Med Port, now one of the world's largest maritime hubs and the first in Africa, along with the expansion of the highway network and the launch of Africa's first high-speed train, exemplify the scale of this metamorphosis. These structural projects have made Morocco a leading logistical and commercial platform, linking Europe, Africa, and the Americas while boosting economic competitiveness and attracting significant foreign investment flows, especially from Europe, with France as the Kingdom's historic strategic partner. Key sectors like automotive and aeronautics have seen rapid growth, turning the Kingdom into a global player in these cutting-edge industries. The success of major international groups operating in Morocco, such as Renault, Stellantis, and Boeing, showcases the reliability and competitiveness of the Moroccan industrial ecosystem. The development of renewable energy, with flagship projects like the Noor solar complex in Ouarzazate, has also allowed Morocco to become a continental leader in energy transition, a sector offering new prospects for sustainable investment. This stable business climate, supported by world-class infrastructure, offers investors unparalleled growth opportunities. The tourism sector, another key driver of Morocco's economy, has also benefited from the reforms and strategic investments under the reign of

H.M. King Mohammed VI. In 2023, Morocco recorded a historic high of more than 13.5 million tourists, generating substantial revenue for the sector. This growth is due to the diverse tourism offerings, ranging from cultural tourism to luxury destinations, beach, and business tourism. Iconic projects such as the Essaouira seaside resort and the development of Marrakech as a global brand have played a significant role. Additionally, investments in airport and hotel infrastructure, which have attracted major market players, have solidified Morocco's position as a must-visit destination in Africa and globally. For investors, tourism in Morocco represents a golden opportunity, with growth potential supported by increasing international demand and an ever-denser air travel network.

The Green Morocco Plan has repositioned agriculture as a strategic lever of the economy. Thanks to modern agricultural reforms, productivity has increased, allowing Morocco not only to ensure food security in several sectors but also to boost exports, particularly to European markets. The transformation of the OCP Group, a world leader in phosphates and a global exporter of fertilizers, enables the Kingdom to play a key role in global food security. Moreover, the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), launched by H.M. in 2005, also demonstrates the royal commitment to including all Moroccans in this dynamic of prosperity. With more than 105 billion dirhams

invested, the INDH has significantly reduced poverty and improved living conditions, thus creating a skilled workforce and a social environment conducive to business development.

Farida Jirari, through the Association for the Progress of Leaders (APD), has created a platform that facilitates exchange, sharing, training, and networking for Moroccan and African leaders. Over the past 19 years, she has expanded APD Morocco and APD International, now connecting over 100,000 Moroccan leaders and involving 4,500 companies in more than 600 events. She also maintains strong ties with a network of over 450 global experts.

Farida is an alumna of Sophia Antipolis University and acquired her skills in the banking sector with Wafa Bank. Notably, she was involved in Morocco's bid for the 2010 World Cup, and in 2008, she played a key role in organizing the 12th centenary of the Kingdom. Her career continues to emphasize networking, knowledge exchange, and leadership development, while promoting a platform that helps leaders connect globally. This year, all Moroccans are celebrating a key milestone in the modern history of the Kingdom: a quarter-century of the "Glorious Reign of H.M. King Mohammed VI", the builder king of modern Morocco, which has experienced a true dynamic of transformation on all fronts.

invested, the INDH has significantly reduced poverty and improved living conditions, thus creating a skilled workforce and a social environment conducive to business development.

Internationally, Morocco's return to the African Union in 2017 has strengthened its position as a regional leader. H.M. the King has consolidated partnerships with African countries and initiated intercontinental energy integration projects, such as the Morocco-Nigeria gas pipeline, which promises to have a major impact on Europe's energy supply. The Atlantic Initiative and the new port of Dakhla embody the royal ambition to extend Morocco's economic influence far beyond its borders and build win-win partnerships with all its partners.

Today, Morocco presents itself not only as a regional economic hub but also as a land of opportunities for investors looking to capitalize on an expanding market with privileged access to African, European, and American markets. The Kingdom's international successes, such as being awarded the co-hosting of the 2030 FIFA World Cup, only reinforce this status.

In 25 years of reign, H.M. King Mohammed VI has undeniably positioned Morocco as a premier investment destination, endowed with a clear economic vision and leadership that inspires confidence among investors worldwide. A bright future lies ahead for those wishing to join this dynamic growth and participate in the continued economic transformation of the Kingdom.



A BRIDGING INITIATIVE SUPPORTED
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION.

The India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)

By **Gérard Mestrallet**

French Special Envoy for the IMEEC project

THE INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEEC) IS A PROJECT FOR AN ECONOMIC AND LOGISTICS CORRIDOR CONNECTING ASIA TO EUROPE, VIA THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN INITIATED ON THE SIDELINES OF THE G20 SUMMIT IN NEW DELHI IN SEPTEMBER 2023, DURING WHICH EIGHT PARTICIPANTS SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: INDIA, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, SAUDI ARABIA, THE EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY AND THE UNITED STATES.

IMEEC is aiming at being one of the greatest infrastructure and connectivity projects of the 21st century. It strives to redefine faster, safer, more efficient and greener trade routes, as well as creating new interconnections to foster regional integration. This project covers fields as varied as railways, shipping, energy and digital technology.

France is one of the key players in the project placing the port of Marseille at the heart of this strategy. The objective is to position Marseille and its future green hydrogen hub as the corridor's main entry and exit point in Europe and the Mediterranean.

IMEEC will be fundamental in supporting the strong growth in trade between Asia, the Middle East and Europe, reinforcing the strategic autonomy and economic development of all participating countries.

This long-term megaproject also opens up considerable business opportunities for various sectors. Progress has already been made in the preliminary study phase, and France remains committed to encourage the project development on the international front.

I am convinced that IMEEC will be a key instrument for development, progress and peace.



Gérard Mestrallet is the Special Envoy of the French President for IMEEC, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. He has been appointed by Emmanuel Macron in late November 2023 a few months after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the Republic of India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Germany, Italie and the United States of America (USA). Previously, M. Mestrallet served as Executive Chairman of the French Agency for AIUla (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) cultural, heritage and tourism development in cooperation with the Kingdom from 2018 to 2023.

Gérard Mestrallet is a prominent figure of the French private sector after acting more than 21 years as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of GDF SUEZ (now ENGIE; CAC 40 index) after the merger between SUEZ and Gaz de France on July 2008. In 2015, he was appointed by the government Chairman of the Business dialogue of the COP 21 which has contributed to the final agreement of the climate conference.

He has held various positions at the Treasury Department and at the Cabinet office of the Minister of Economy and Finance (J. Delors) at the beginning of his career, before joining Compagnie Financière de SUEZ in 1984. In 1991 he served as Chairman of the Management Committee of Société Générale de Belgique. In 1995, he became Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Compagnie de SUEZ.

Gérard Mestrallet has been a member of the Board respectively of the Société Générale, Siemens, AXA, Saint-Gobain and the Saudi Electric Company (SEC) and remains the honorary Chairman of SUEZ and of ENGIE. He was member of the Shanghai and Beijing Mayors' International Economic Advisory Council and he is member of the Chongqing Mayor's International Economic Advisory Council. He was also member of the International Council of JP Morgan Chase and has been Chairman of Paris EUROPLACE for 12 years.



INDIAN BUSINESS CLUB

Announcing Le Launchpad 2025

ACCELERATING STARTUP GROWTH WITH UNIQUE MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT LE LAUNCHPAD 2025, TAKING PLACE IN PARIS IN EARLY FEBRUARY 2025, IS A BOUTIQUE EVENT AIMED AT FAST-TRACKING THE GROWTH OF PROMISING STARTUPS OPERATING IN THE INDO-FRANCE ECOSYSTEM OR HAVE INDO-FRENCH ROOTS.



Organized by the Indian Business Club (IBC), in partnership with CCIFI (Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie Française en Inde) and La French Tech India, the event offers a unique platform for startups to access expert year long mentorship, industry insights, and essential resources, all designed to propel their businesses to the next level. What makes Le Launchpad 2025 distinctive is the tailored mentorship provided through the extensive and established networks of the IBC, CCIFI, and La French Tech India. Startups are paired with a mentor who not only understands their business challenges but also has the experience and network to maximize opportunities for success. This strategic mentorship provides startups with the tools they need for long-term, sustainable growth.

Key Benefits

1. Guidance through mentorship: Through the combined network and expertise of the partners, startups are matched with a mentor with the specific experience and connections relevant to their business vertical to help accelerate their growth.

2. Providing Visibility: Participating startups will gain media coverage, as well as exposure to investors, partners, and ecosystem leaders, which can open doors to new markets and funding opportunities.

3. Valuable Perks: Legal, Accounting and Domiciliation packages to simplify market entry and scale operationally with minimum hassles.

4. Creating Long-Term value: By fostering connections between mentors, associates, and industry leaders, Le Launchpad builds the foundation for sustained growth, beyond the event itself.

Applications will open early November 2024, Ten startups will be shortlisted by early Jan 2025, and finally three winners will be selected by an eminent and experience panel in February 2025 at Le Launchpad in Paris.

More details of the event will be available soon on the Indian Business Club website

<https://indianbusinessclubfrance.com>

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to have contributors sharing their insightful and challenging views in our columns. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with us if you wish to share your work with our audience.



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LEADERS

Editor-in-chief
Karima Anbar , Martin Roy
Publication Director
Éric Schell
contact@theglobaldiwan.org

www.theglobaldiwan.org