



**Video Message from
MS. HAIYAN QIAN, DIRECTOR
DIVISION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**Conference on E-Government for Transparent and Efficient Government
Organized by the Morocco Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies
and Alumni Telecom ParisTech Maroc**

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Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First let me express my appreciation to ATAM¹ for inviting me to be part of this Moroccan conference on e-government development. It is a pleasure to join in this effort, and I regret that duties at Headquarters prevent me from being with you in person.

As many of you are in the telecommunications sector, I am sure you can appreciate the power of information and communication technologies to transform the way organizations function and, on a larger scale, accelerate economic and social development. Research shows that every 10 per cent increase in broadband penetration increases economic growth rates, on average, by a 1.38 per cent in low- and middle-income countries.² Ten years ago, there were only 8 cell phones for every 100 people in the developing world while today there are almost 90, opening opportunities for tens of millions of people in society who have felt marginalised or isolated to participate more fully and engage with others. And from mobile data collection apps to earth observation systems, ICTs are playing a central part in environmental monitoring and protection around the globe.

In the area of e-government, the gains from strategic ICT development are no less impressive. We have seen many exciting developments: e-government in the Republic of Korea, e-citizen in Singapore and Kazakhstan, data.gov in the United States, e-learning in Bangladesh, open government partnerships in South Africa, Jordan, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico and some 40 other countries. Almost everywhere there is a strong

¹ Alumni Telecom ParisTech Maroc

² World Bank (2009). Information and Communication for Development: Extending Reach and Increasing Impact. Washington, D.C.

consensus of the value of e-government and the role it can play in improving relations between the citizens and the State.

Where does a country like Morocco fit in this picture? In the recently released 2012 UN e-Government Survey, Morocco ranked 120th out of 193 Member States in overall e-government development up from 126th place in 2010. Almost all of the leading countries in e-government development in Africa saw improvements in their scores between 2010 and 2012 but slipped in the rankings compared to other nations.

Their improvements did not keep pace with those of other countries. There were two exceptions: Kenya and Morocco, which not only gained in absolute terms but also relative to others. What this signals is that Morocco has been slowly closing the gap in e-government development thanks to efforts of the national government in developing online applications, and promoting access to Internet and mobile telephones among the general population.

Looking at online services in particular – as opposed to telecommunication infrastructure and education levels, which are the other two principle factors in the UN's analysis – Morocco's profile more closely resembles Europe's than it does the African continent's. Government websites provide a wide range of information on public policies, laws and regulations, and link to other ministries, departments and branches of government. They deliver enhanced one-way or simple two-way communication with citizens and are often multilingual. And they are increasingly citizen-centric. Morocco is only one of twenty-five countries that provide information on online feedback received from citizens concerning service improvements.

Where Morocco tends to lag other countries is in the provision of transactional services – meaning online payments, forms processing, consultation on government policy and other types of two-way communication with citizens, businesses and other organizations. In order to close this gap and successfully implement “Digital Morocco 2013”, it is critical to increase the number of e-services offered both by national ministries and by local authorities – and to make sure that citizens know about them and can trust that they are secure. Special attention needs to be paid to vulnerable groups and to the use of mobile technology to foster equal access to public service.

This is not an easy task. Countries that have succeeded in moving from traditional operations to online services – including some of Morocco's major trading partners in Europe and the United States – are taking a whole-of-government approach. This means enhancing coordination among ministries and jurisdictions, reducing silos, introducing government-wide data standards, and nurturing e-government champions, or chief information officers, to carry the political vision forward.

It is also clear that governments cannot meet all needs on their own. Open data and crowdsourcing are becoming more common in both high- and middle-income

countries as governments come to appreciate the value of partnerships and innovation. As we note in one of our UN e-Government Surveys, open data enhances public sector efficiency by transferring some of the demands of government to NGOs, the private sector and the media, which have been found to combine data from various sources in original and inventive ways.³

If Morocco is to retain its position as one of most competitive economies in Africa,⁴ administrative modernization of this kind will be essential. Once connected to the Internet, preferably via broadband infrastructure, businesses will be more inclined to invest in industries that are strategically important, such as transport, tourism and energy, if G2B interaction is facilitated by responsive e-government. And, most importantly, continuing to consult citizens on their e-service priorities will contribute to ensuring a quality of life in Morocco that is among the best in Africa.⁵

One does not have to be as rich as the Gulf countries or the Asian tigers to make a high level of e-government development a reality – although of course it helps. Colombia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan are each middle-income economies demonstrating a notable commitment to advancing ICTs for national development and an improved public sector.

In conclusion, I would to leave you with three messages.

First, inadequate telecommunication infrastructure, in particular limited availability of broadband, may be holding the country back. Aside from facilitating delivery of more advanced e-services to citizens and business, technology plays an important role in competitive trade relationships. An enabling environment is needed to build national broadband infrastructure. This is already a priority of “Digital Morocco 2013” but it is worth stressing.

Second, skilled professionals are needed to develop the national ICT infrastructure and services that run on it. Human capital – education – is a second major area where the country may be behind its major partners, putting Morocco at a relative disadvantage. Educational opportunities need to be expanded, especially as far as e-government is concerned in ICT-related fields at post-secondary level.

Third, more user-friendly online transaction services are essential, not just to apply for a driver license or pay for permits, but also to provide opportunities for participation by all people in the conduct of public affairs. The idea, which has been applied by a few pioneer countries, is not only government for the people but also with the people.

³ UN E-Government Survey 2010, chapter 1, p. 16.

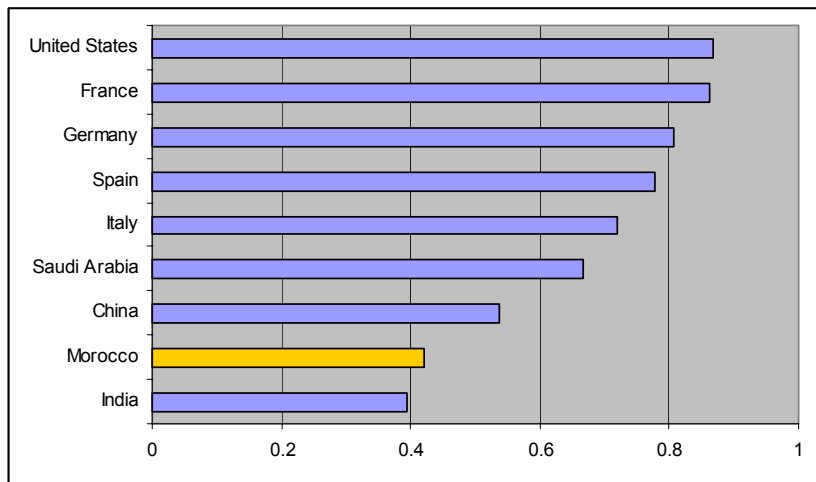
⁴ The World Economic Forum places Morocco as the 2nd most competitive economy in North Africa.

⁵ Morocco was ranked the 1st African country by the Economist Intelligence Unit's quality-of-life index, ahead of South Africa.

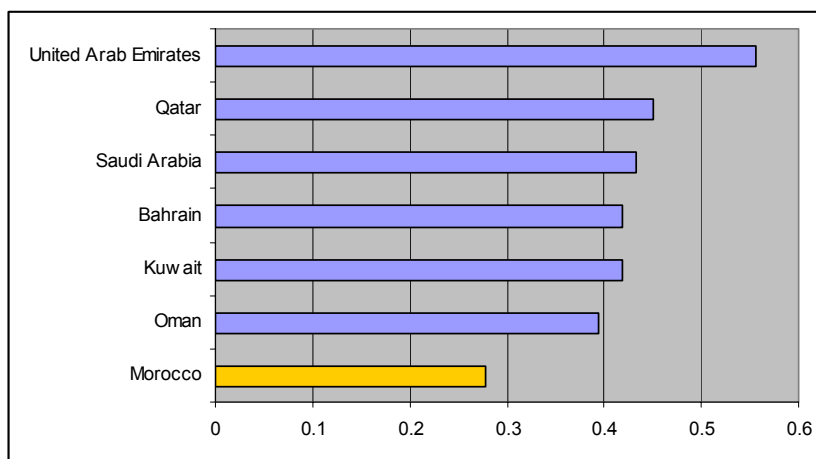
A country's commitment to a future of reform and modernization, a high quality of life and economic success depend on it.

Thank you. I wish you an enjoyable and productive session.

Morocco e-government score 2012 compared to its major trading partners



Morocco telecommunication infrastructure score 2012 compared to GCC countries



Morocco human capital score 2012 compared to GCC countries

