



1959 - 2009

**Honorable advisors of His Majesty,**

**Honorable ministers,**

**Mr. General Manager of the International Monetary Fund,**

**Mr. President of the Arab Monetary Fund,**

**Mr. President of the African Development Bank,**

**Mr. President of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development,**

**Mr. President of the European Central Bank,**

**Distinguished governors,**

**Excellencies ambassadors,**

**Secretaries general,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you and to express to you, on behalf of all staff members of Bank Al-Maghrib, my heartfelt thanks and sincerest gratitude for being with us today in this symposium, organized in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our institution.

Morocco has always been a place for regional and global exchange and dialogue. Among the events that illustrate this, let me mention that Marrakech, a historical city which dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, hosted in 1989 the signing of the Treaty establishing the Maghreb Arab Union, and then in 1994 the signing of the founding agreement of the World Trade Organization.

The history of Bank Al-Maghrib is indeed a reflection of the contemporary history of Morocco. In fact, if we today celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bank Al-Maghrib, the creation of the Moroccan central bank goes back to well before that, exactly to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. That was on the occasion of the Algeciras conference, held between January and April 1906 with the participation of thirteen countries to determine the different reforms that would be



imposed on Morocco, particularly at the political, economic and financial level. It was then decided, by virtue of an international agreement, to establish the State Bank of Morocco, the broad lines of which were set. Later, in 1911 the bank was granted the privilege of issue. However, the international nature of the bank started to fade after the signing of the Protectorate Treaty in 1912.

After the independence, his late Majesty King Mohammed V inaugurated Bank Al-Maghrib in 1959, as the central bank of a sovereign country, with mission to issue currency and conduct monetary policy. At the same time, a number of national banking and financial institutions were set up to accompany Morocco's economic and social development.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

If the current crisis is unprecedented in its scale and consequences, the mechanisms and levels of addressing it are exceptional too. In fact, many countries took emergency measures to tackle the crisis by implementing huge stimulus plans and ensure the continued functioning of financial institutions and markets. They then sought to coordinate positions under the international forums, primarily the G-20, and the regional organizations and blocs, the aim being to define the policies able to restore financial stability and provide the appropriate conditions for an economic recovery. Central banks, in turn, injected large amounts of liquidity to restore money markets' stability, and substantially reduced policy rates to levels close to zero in some countries. In the same context, the international organizations took urgent steps to assess the spillovers of the crisis and brought their intervention mechanisms into play.

Morocco has managed to resist against the direct effects of the financial crisis, on the back of its solid fundamentals and structural reforms, as well as its sound banking and financial system and efficient exchange rate regime. Nonetheless, given its openness on the global economy, Morocco felt the impact of the economic crisis on the productive sectors linked to foreign demand, particularly from Europe, our first partner. In response, the Government has implemented a number of measures under the 2009 Finance Act to bolster domestic demand and investment, and put in place action plans to support the sectors hit by the crisis, while establishing committees to follow up and evaluate the results of the measures taken.



Morocco closely follows the development of the global economic situation, and continues to implement the structural reforms within the framework of a long-run vision that seeks to increase the growth rate, raise the competitiveness of the economy and improve the business climate.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Despite the positive, but vulnerable, indicators that we observed early 2009, we should carry on action to work our way out of the crisis as soon as possible. In addition, some questions have started to arise about the post-crisis era.

We have chosen for this symposium an issue of current concern in order to examine global and regional experiences. I am firmly convinced that our distinguished speakers and discussants will enrich the debates and contribute to analyzing and exchanging the experiences. It will also constitute a value added to the debate currently taking place internationally to make sure that such a crisis does not occur again and lay the foundations for decades of growth on a sound basis.

I would like to thank you once again for your presence, and invite you to seize this opportunity to enjoy the rich heritage of this city and feel its historical spirit.