

**International Conference on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the
creation of the Mediator Institution of the Kingdom of Morocco**

**Ensuring the development dimension of human rights effectiveness in public policies:
What Role for Ombudsmen and Mediators?**

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Introduction

As-salāmu ‘alaykum; Bonjour; Good Morning.

It is a great honour to join you in Rabat, Maroc at the prestigious Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco for the twentieth anniversary of the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco. I warmly acknowledge the highly distinguished speakers in this Opening Ceremony, my valued Ombudsman, Mediator and Venice Commission colleagues and all participants in this conference today. I take this opportunity to pay particular thanks to the Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco; His Excellency, the Chief of Government; the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco; and the Director General of the Postal Service for so graciously welcoming me to your historic and yet completely modern and extraordinary country; it is a great privilege and pleasure for me to be in Morocco.

The Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco

I think it goes without saying that very good Mediator and Ombudsman institutions embrace the universal principles of fairness and justice as well as respect for good governance, the rule of law and human rights, that underlie and inform their institutional practice. But the best institutions also do so with a deep respect for their history and the unique cultures of the citizens that they serve. This is the case with the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco. Indeed, your institution epitomizes modern Mediator and Ombudsman principles and practice, but does so in a way that continues to value and celebrate the richness, diversity and success of Moroccan culture and its long heritage.

No proper recognition of the many accomplishments of the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco could be complete without acknowledging the contribution that it has made, and continues to make, to the international Ombudsman and Mediator community and the citizens it serves.

The International Ombudsman Institute, or IOI, of which I have the great privilege of being President, represents over two hundred Ombudsman, Mediator, Public Defender and National Human Rights institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide across six global regions - Africa, Asia, the Australasian and Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America and North America.

The Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, besides being a world-leading institution, has a place of special significance for all other Ombudsman and Mediators and the IOI. The Kingdom of Morocco is responsible for the biennial submission of the United Nations Resolution on 'The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law'. The UN Resolution is fundamental to the work of the modern Ombudsman institution globally; indeed, in the third session of the conference, we will be considering the UN Resolution in detail.

Your support of the UN Resolution is a significant legacy that is clearly woven through the fabric of everything that is being achieved by the institutions of the Ombudsman and Mediator all around the world.

It is, therefore, a special pleasure for me to be with you in Rabat so that I can personally express my sincere thanks to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God Assist him, His Excellency, the Chief of Government, and the Mediator, for their support of the UN Resolution – this support is deeply valued by me, the IOI and all Ombudsman and Mediator institutions.

It very much follows that today is not just a commemoration of the institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, but a celebration of a country that places great significance upon, and provides clear support and leadership of, the importance of the role of the institutions of the Mediator and Ombudsman, both in Morocco, but also globally.

Morocco and Australia

Before concluding, I want to recognize, as Western Australian Ombudsman, that Australia and Morocco maintain very positive bilateral relations, including in the areas of trade and agriculture, valued at approximately 150 million dollars per annum. Australia established a diplomatic presence in Rabat in 2017 and I thank His Excellency Mr Michael Cutts, Australian Ambassador to Morocco for his strong engagement with the important relationship between our two nations. As such, on the occasion of your anniversary, I do not just bring you the deepest warmth from me personally, the IOI and Ombudsman from around the globe, I also bring the sincerest congratulations from my country.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco upholds the great principles of fairness, justice, good governance, fundamental human rights and the rule of law.

I thank the Mediator for being a champion of these principles for two decades. Your work of public service is as encompassing as it is impressive. The Mediator both works in service of, and provides great leadership to, the citizens of this country; the Mediterranean and African Ombudsman regions; the Mediator and Ombudsman of Francophonie countries and regions and, of course, in supporting the global institution of the Ombudsman. It is simply beyond doubt that these achievements are of the highest significance and profoundly worthy of today's celebration.

Mediator, I am deeply honoured that you have invited me to Morocco, truly one of the great countries of the world, and the historic City of Lights, Rabat, to join you in these celebrations. For your outstanding work over the last twenty years, for organising this valuable conference, and for your very kind invitation to join you today, I simply say this,

Shukran jazilan; Merci Beaucoup; Thank you.