



**Twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22),
twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting
of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 12) and first session of the Conference of the
Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1)
Marrakech, 15 November 2016**

**Opening address at the high-level segment by
Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

His Majesty the King, Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,
H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the United Nations General Assembly,
H.E. Mr. BAN Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
H.E. Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, President of COP 22, CMP 12 and CMA 1,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the high-level segment of COP 22, CMP 12 and now CMA 1.

Allow me once again to express my sincere gratitude to King Mohammed VI as well as to the Government and the people of Morocco for hosting this conference in this beautiful city of Marrakech. Your Majesty, the leadership displayed in hosting a second COP is unparalleled. It is an honour to be here.

I must also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. BAN Ki-moon, for his tireless and unwavering support for a universal climate change agreement. Mr. Secretary-General, you attended every climate change conference during your tenure and exercised unprecedented political leadership. The result is historic unity on a critical issue. Your legacy will make a positive difference in the lives of billions of people.

This historic day is marked by the first Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. This would not be possible without the dedication shown by many of you here today, and I thank you for that. We should celebrate, but we should also reflect on how to now accelerate climate action.

At the very centre of our work lies the vital need to make climate action a cornerstone of the transformation to truly sustainable development. This must guide us as we build a low-emission and resilient world.

We must strike a balance between the needs of societies and the need for a healthy planet. Finding this harmony will protect the one planet we all share and depend on. It will promote prosperity and the wellbeing of people, especially the most vulnerable.

Excellencies, this profound transformation will not be easy and will involve difficult decisions. Leadership is needed now more than ever. And the contribution to this transformation by business, subnational governments, indigenous people, youth, women and many others cannot be overlooked.

Those who answered the call of history last year are now called upon again to lead this transformation. And this is why I am so glad to have so many leaders with us today.

I thank you all for your commitment and enthusiasm, which continues to inspire so many people around the world.
