

**Ministère de l'Énergie, des Mines, de l'Eau et de
l'Environnement**

**Allocution de Madame Amina BENKHADRA,
Ministre l'Énergie, des Mines, de l'Eau et de
l'Environnement**

à l'occasion de la visite de

**Monsieur Miguel SEBASTIAN,
Ministre espagnol de l'Industrie, du Tourisme et du
Commerce.**

Lundi 9 février 2009

Your Excellency Minister SEBASTIAN

Your Excellency Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain,

Distinguished members of the Spanish Delegation

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome your Excellency and the Delegation accompanying you in the Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment. The meeting of today intervenes a few days after we have met in Bonn on the occasion of the Founding Conference of The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and weeks after the ninth round of the high-level Moroccan- Spanish meeting which took place in Madrid on the 16TH of last December.

These meetings of high level can be considered as a useful tool to boost more our excellent cooperation, particularly in the fields of energy where our two countries have already built a strong relationship. So, I am delighted that we are meeting again today.

Excellencies

Ladies & Gentlemen

Morocco and Spain have a traditional good relationship facilitated by the geographical proximity, the affection existing between our two nations and the cultural heritage. In terms of trade and investment, Spain has become one of the most important partners of Morocco. This is illustrated by the rapid growth of our bilateral trade and the growing interest of the Spanish investors in many sectors, namely: energy, transport, health-care services, telecommunications, tourism and the

sector of renewable energies. With respect to this latter sector, I would like to congratulate your Excellency for your personal contribution to the success of IRENA as a common initiative of Spain Germany and Denmark.

Energy is one the most important sectors where Morocco and Spain are collaborating closely through the electrical interconnection and the GME for natural gas. Spanish companies are already present in the Moroccan energy sector: in the combined cycle power plant of TAHADDART where ENDESA has 20% stake, and in the wind farm of ESSAOUIRA built by GAMESA EOLIA. The cooperation between our two countries includes also other areas such as:

- Energy efficiency with the *Instituto de Diversificacion y de Ahorro de Energia* “IDAE”,
- Renewable energies and,
- Training.

Let me now give you a brief insight of the latest developments of the Moroccan energy sector. As you well know, the country is heavily dependant on abroad for its energetic needs. Our energy demand is satisfied at more than 95% by imports including electricity imports and our energy balance is still dominated by fossil fuels. We consider these constraints as challenges which have to be taken up in the frame of a renovated strategy for the energy sector. This strategy is based on four main orientations:

- Supply security through the diversification of energy sources,
- Optimization of our mix for the production of electricity ,
- Generalized access to energy at competitive prices, and
- Sustainable development regional and international integration.

The Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment has just finalized a study of the energy sector which allowed:

- to identify a series of actions to be taken in the short term in order to maintain the balance between supply and demand of electricity for the period 2008 - 2012, these actions are currently implemented in the frame of a National Plan of Priority Actions,
- to have a clear vision for the medium and the long terms taking into account a the supply security and a better use of local sources, namely renewable energies where the country has a substantial potential particularly in the wind and solar, oil shale and electronuclear opportunities.
- to reorganize the domestic electricity sector in the light of the growing introduction of the private operators in the production end distribution.

This strategy has been shared with all the stakeholders (public and private operators, political parties, professional organizations, unions, etc) and will be again shared with a largest public in the frame of the first national conference to be held on the next 6th of March.

Excellencies

Ladies & Gentlemen

As I have mentioned before, the regional integration is a key component of the Moroccan energetic strategy. Our two countries are considered as a good example of energetic integration in the west Mediterranean. I would like to reaffirm again the determination of Morocco to go on strengthening the cooperation with Spain in all the

areas of mutual interest, particularly in the energy sector. In this respect, **I reiterate the interest of Morocco to:**

- **Reinforce the existing electrical interconnection with a third power cable.** This reinforcement will enhance an increase of the trade of electricity between our two systems and will allow a better integration of respective markets. It is in this context that ONE of Morocco and Red Electrica of Spain have already initiated their negotiations in order to examine the practical conditions for the achievement of this third cable.
- **Facilitate our bilateral trade of electricity.** ONE, as an external agent of the Spanish market of electricity is obliged to pay the access tariff, the loss which occurs in the Spanish transport network and also the Value Added Tax on its purchases of electricity without having the possibility of recuperating it, when the other external agents are exempted. We wish the exemption of ONE as well.
- In the frame of the **optimization of the use of natural gas** in TAHADDART plant and other power plants, Morocco requests the **construction of a gas pipe Spain – Morocco** in order to secure a stable feed of our the said plants and to consider the construction of new power plants which will make possible the export of electricity to Spain;
- We are also interested in having a closer cooperation with Spain in the **renewable energies and in energy efficiency**, an area in which your country has a recognised expertise, Morocco and Spain participate actively in the promising Mediterranean Solar Plan launched a few months ago in the frame of the Union for the Mediterranean.

To conclude, I would like once again to welcome His Excellency Minister SEBASTIAN and the members of this delegation wishing them a good and fruitful stay in Morocco.

Thank you very much for your attention.