Believe in Morocco

www.uir.ac.ma
“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization”. **Mahatma Gandhi,** Leader of the independence movement in India (1869-1948)
Owing its ancient name to its geographic location, Morocco, is also known as Al Maghreb al Aqsa, meaning “the Extreme West” in Arabic, boasts a mix of indigenous Amazigh, Arab, Jewish, African and European influences.

Situated on the North-western tip of Africa and the region’s only monarchy, the Kingdom of Morocco has managed to fashion its rich cultural heritage into a modern, democratic state fostering allegiance to a mode of political governance that promotes universal values of multiculturalism, inter-faith dialogue, moderate Islam, gender equity and freedom of speech.

---

**Beauty**
The country inspires its beauty from natural and landscapes and coastal borders

**Diversity**
Language hospitality and ethnic hegemonies have forged a culture and a people whose prime faith is their daily fate.

**Openness**
Located at the cross-road of Europe (in the North) African (in the South), The Middle East (in the East) and the American dream (in the West) Morocco is an open space for glocal dialogues and agendas of world peace, prosperity and success.
Morocco has a strategic geographic location in Africa, reaching out east to the Arab world and comfortable at a stone's throw from Europe. Whether you are looking for mountains' hiking, desert baths and sand boarding or sun tanning in the yearlong sunny beaches, the serene coastlines, both on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, the high plateau, soft sandy dunes and the snowy Atlas Mountains, make your stay memorable and worthwhile.

The Moroccan landscape is unique in its diversity and provides amazing natural landscapes, a variety of weather and cultural richness, which have a great appeal.

**Where could one find such natural beauty untouched and unharmed?**

Morocco is divided into four different types of the natural landscapes:

- The mountains
- The plateau and valleys
- The Sahara Desert
- The beaches: Atlantic Ocean /Mediterranean Sea
Morocco is a country where authenticity and modernity peacefully co-exist. It is a country that is both profoundly traditional and strongly drawn to the modern world. This double-sided disposition gives Morocco its cultural richness.

**The modernity of yesterday is the tradition of today, and the modernity of today will be tradition tomorrow**

*Jose Andres Puerta, Spanish American chef, (1969)*

**AUTHENTICITY**

The cultural and artistic heritage of Morocco is incredibly rich and highly recommended far beyond its borders. It upholds our ancestors’ know-how and carefully preserved traditions still present and attractive throughout small towns and cities. Morocco’s arts and crafts constitute the privileged language of its history. Constant and particular attention has therefore been paid to the conservation of this heritage, to its continuity and the development of artistic talents.

**GASTRONOMY**

Morocco is a land of tradition, where eating habits, cooking art has have reigned for many centuries. The Moroccan gastronomy is the heritage of a mix of Phoenician-Berber-Arab-Andalusian-Jewish-African influences. The Berbers passed on a sense of simple and rustic dishes, the Jewish introduced the interplay of spices and colors, whereas the Arabs brought the refinement of the far Eastern tastes and the flavors of distant spices.

Inherited from Syria's Umayyads pastries with honey, almonds and orange blossoms, from Andalusians the taste of dishes combining sweet and salty ingredients, as in the famous "Pastilla".

Eventually, mint tea, the national drink, is a tradition which goes back to the XVIIIth century when the cargoes of British tea first landed on Moroccan ports.
Morocco, a Country in Constant Technological and Infrastructural Development

For over a decade, Morocco has launched large-scale projects aimed at elevating its technologies and infrastructure to international standards:

- **Ouarzazate Solar Power Station (OSPS)**, the largest solar power complex in Africa and the Middle East, located in the Souss-Massa-Drâa province, 10 km from Ouarzazate town. The first phase of the project "Noor Solar Thermal Project" which totals 160 megawatts (MW) in capacity was recently completed and connected to the country’s grid.

- **Tanger-Med Port**, the largest seaport on the Mediterranean and in Africa by capacity, entered into service in 2007 with a total capacity of over 3 million containers (8 million in 2016). In addition to professional real estate of over 2000 hectares, it complements the overall port infrastructure consisting of 11 ports meeting international standards.

- **The highway network** is connecting the 10 biggest cities in the country: (Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Tanger, Agadir, Dakhla, Laayoun, Fez, Nador, Oujda)

- **Tangier-Casablanca High-Speed Rail Line**, is a 350km long line which will link Morocco’s largest city, Casablanca, with Tangier. It will be the first high-speed rail line in Africa when completed in 2017. It will be operated by the Moroccan railway operator ONCF. It is expected to carry up to ten million passengers a year. ONCF also plans to extend the line from Casablanca to Marrakesh and Agadir in the near future.

- **Thanks to an Open Sky policy**, the 15 international airports in Morocco (the largest airport hub in the region) are used by a multitude of international companies and are connected to major cities and economic platforms of world affairs.

- **A wide network of Economic Activities Zones** (Integrated Industrial Platforms, Free Zones, Tourist Resorts, Business clusters...)

- **The Telecommunications infrastructure** is meeting international standards. With three global operators (landline, mobile, Internet and data), the telecommunications sector in Morocco achieves every year an intense and sustained activity beyond compare in the region.
The National Human Development Initiative is a program launched in 2005 by King Mohammed VI of Morocco with the objective of «ensuring a better distribution of the fruits of growth and to improve the living conditions of citizens.» May 18th 2005.

Human rights and freedoms are highlighted in the Moroccan Constitution as "immutable constants" of the nation (art. 175 of the Constitution). Taking into account the profound social changes that Morocco has experienced in the past decades, the Moroccan supreme law, adopted by the Parliament in summer 2011, actually imposes substantial challenges to all stakeholders, who shall bear the responsibility for translating its advanced standards and refined provisions into legislative and public policy measures.

The National Human Rights Council (CNDH) has allocated utmost importance to the constitutional principles of equality, parity and the fight against all forms of discrimination. It has helped address this constitutional promise through its contributions, mainly its proposals on the Authority for Parity and Fight against all forms of discrimination, provided for in articles 19 and 164 of the Constitution, and the legal framework for the fight against violence against women and girls.

Morocco today is a rapidly changing country. In legal terms, the country has developed and improved its laws to cope with the national policy and vision of a modern Morocco.

Several laws and regulations have been approved or amended to allow for more rights and liberties in Moroccan national legislations; namely, the Family Code (2004), the amendment of the Citizenship Code (2007), the amendment of laws on civil liberties (2002), the enactment of the Labor Code (2004), the gradual evolution of the Penal Procedure Code (2003, 2006) and the Penal Code, which criminalized torture in 2006 and sexual harassment in 2003, and the improvement of the judicial system with the suspension of the Special Court of Justice (in 2004).
GENDER EQUALITY
AND PARITY IN MOROCCO

MOROCCAN WOMEN ARE PRESENT AT EVERY LEVEL WITHIN THE WORK FORCE. HERE ARE A FEW SUCCESS STORIES

IN BUSINESSES

Moroccan women have stood out in the entrepreneurial world by being head of successful companies or running their own businesses. The Association of Women Heads of Businesses (AFEM) in Morocco is considered an important institution, with over 600 members and seven regional offices. AFEM is the nerve center and the flagship of female entrepreneurship in Morocco.

Meriem Bensalah Chaqroun
Moroccan entrepreneur and President of the Moroccan Association of Entrepreneurs

Meriem Bensalah Chaqroun is one of the most powerful businesswomen in the country. With an MBA degree in International Management and Finance from the University of Dallas, Texas, USA, Meriem Bensalah Chaqroun was elected on May 16, 2012 President of the CGEM (i.e.: the main Moroccan Association of Entrepreneurs), for OVER 23 years. She managed the mineral water companies Sidi Ali, Oulmes, and Bahia. She is the daughter of Abdelkader Bensalah, founder of the conglomerate Holmarcom, one of the most important industrial commercial and financial groups in the kingdom.

How can we hope to ensure society’s progress and prosperity while women, who constitute half of the population, have their rights denied and suffer injustice, violence and marginalization, in defiance of the right to dignity and equity granted to them by our holy religion?”

IN POLITICS

Long before and more so after independence, Moroccan women have always played a major role and shared their part of the political life. Nowadays, the representation of Moroccan women in political life in general and in local councils in particular has increased.

**Mbarka Bouaida**

Current Minister Delegate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

On October 10th, 2013, HM King Mohammed VI appointed Mbarka Bouaida Minister Delegate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Mrs. Bouaida holds an MBA from Hull University (England), a Masters’ degree in Communication from the University of Toulouse and a diploma from the School of Management of Casablanca. She was named “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum in 2012.

Since September 2011, she has acted as Vice-President of the International Parliamentary Forum for Democracy. She is also a member of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and “Munich Young Leaders” of the International Munich Conference on Security.

IN SOCIAL WORK

Moroccan women’s activism has been known long before independence. Since the mid-forties, women have been fighting for their rights starting from education till equal political representation. A case in point is Aicha Chenna, one of the well-known social activists in Morocco:

**Aicha Chenna**

Labeled as the Moroccan “Mother Theresa”, Aicha Chenna has vowed to defend the cause of single mothers and their children against all odds. “Solidarité Féminine”, an NGO founded by her in 1985, opens its doors to unmarried mothers offering them and their children shelter and varied forms of assistance. The hosted mothers have the opportunity to attend literacy classes and workshops where they acquire the practical skills needed to secure a regular and decent income.

In 2009, Chenna was awarded the world’s largest faith-based prize for entrepreneurship, the Opus Prize, for her life achievement as a social activist. Also made, in 2013, “Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur” a prestigious French distinction, for 52 years of services to the cause of single mothers and their children.
Long before and more so after independence, Moroccan women have always played a major role and shared their part of the political life. Nowadays, the representation of Moroccan women in political life in general and in local councils in particular has increased.

Fatima MERNISSI

(1940-2015), is a Morrocan sociologist, feminist and writer.

Born in Fez (Morocco) in 1940, Fatema Mernissi studied political sciences at the University of Rabat, the Sorbonne in Paris and Brandeis University (Massachusetts). She published several books on the position of women in the rapidly changing Muslim communities in Morocco. Raised in the harem of a well-to-do businessman in Fez, she had the possibility to describe this institution from the inside.

Already in her first books she expressly spoke for the emancipation of women. Since then most of her work was originally published in English or French. It has been translated in many languages and is widely read, also in Islamic countries. In the 80s of the last century she directed sociological research for UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA (Population Fund). This resulted in a book with selected interviews: Doing daily battle, 1988 (Le Maroc raconté par ses femmes, 1983). In the mid 90s Fatema Mernissi stopped working on women’s issues and switched to civil society as her major topic. She has served as a member in many national, pan-Arabic and international forums on women and development in the Islamic world. Presently she is Lecturer of Sociology at the Mohammed V University of Rabat, and Research Scholar at the University Institute of Scientific Research.

In May 2003 Fatema Mernissi received the Príncipe de Asturias Award for Letters.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society, 1975 (rev. 1987)
- Le Maroc raconté par ses femmes, 1983
- L’amour dans les pays musulmans, 1984
- Femmes du Gharb, 1985
- Le harem politique, 1987
- Shahrazad n’est pas marocaine, 1988 (rev. 1992)
- Sultanes oubliées, 1990
- La Peur-Modernité, 1992
- Women’s Rebellion and Islamic Memory, 1993
- Dreams of Trespass. Tales of a Harem Girlhood, 1994
- Les Aït-Débrouille, 1997
- Etes-vous vacciné contre le Harem?, 1998
- Scheherazade Goes West, 2001

Internet site: www.mernissi.net
Moroccan women are also making a big change in terms of science and research. They are academics, sociologists, doctors, astronomers, biologists and researchers in every scientific field.

**Asmaa Boujibar**  
A Moroccan Scientist

At the age of 27, the young Moroccan researcher from the Rif origin, up north of Morocco, was recently admitted to the laboratories of the famous American Agency of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) research center. Born of a Moroccan father, who is an architect, and a Tunisian mother, Asmaa Boujibar studied at Université Blaise Pascal – Clermont-Ferrand II in France where she worked for the Laboratory Puddles and Volcano. After she obtained her Master degree in 2010, she prepared a thesis at the University Blaise Pascal (Clermont-II), entitled "Study of Chemical Equilibrium between Mantle and Core in the Context of the Formation of Terrestrial Planets." Boujibar has published an academic article on the topic: "Metal-silicate partitioning of Sulphur, new experimental and thermodynamic constraints on planetary accretion," on Earth and Planetary Science Letters (EPSL).

**Nawal El Moutawakil**  
Ex-Minister of sports/member of the International Olympic Committee

Although she had been a quite accomplished runner, the victory of El Moutawakil, who studied at Iowa State university at the time, was a surprise. Late King Hassan II of Morocco telephoned El Moutawakil to give his congratulations, and he declared that all girls born the day of her victory were to be named in her honor. Her medal also meant the breakthrough for sporting women in Morocco and other mostly Muslim countries. She was a pioneer for Muslim and Arabic athletes in that she confounded long-held beliefs that women of such backgrounds could not succeed in World sports events - a male dominated sport, till then. In 1993 she started running for fun, a five km run for women in Casablanca that has since become the biggest women’s race held in a Muslim country, with up to 30,000 who came to run. Two years later, El Moutawakel became a council member of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), and in 1998 she became a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). El Moutawakel is a member of the International Olympic Committee, and she was the president of evaluation commissions for the selection of the host city for the 2012 and 2016 Summer Olympic Games.
IN EDUCATION

In the context of the reforms launched in order to serve the Moroccan citizen, the rehabilitation of education remains pivotal in achieving development and key in ensuring social openness and emancipation. It shields both society and individuals from ignorance, poverty, fanaticism and reclusiveness?” excerpt from King Mohammed VI’s speech on the 16th Throne Day, 30 July 2015

UNIVERSITÉ INTERNATIONALE DE RABAT (UIR) : A SUCCESS STORY

Since its first years of existence, the International University of Rabat has become an example of innovative and highly attractive institution, known for the high standards of its study programs, research oriented projects, academic excellence and thoroughness at the national and international levels. The University set the example of PPP (public-private partnership) in the field of higher education. This type of partnership enables the UIR to achieve all its goals of excellence, training, research and to contribute to the socio-economic development of the Moroccan Kingdom and the Rabat-Salé region and beyond. The efforts and the constant commitment of its foreign academic partners enable UIR to provide high level education and training for both national and international students within partnerships and cooperation with well-known schools and universities from around the world (Mississippi State University, Georgia Tech, ESC Rennes, Science Po Grenoble, Académie de Paris, etc...)

Fatima Muhammad Al-Fihri Al-Quraysh
(1940-2015), is a Moroccan sociologist, feminist and writer. founder of the Qarawiyin mosque and madrasa in Fes, in Morocco 859 CE, the very first and oldest academic university. The Madrasa is still in operation today as the University of Qarawiyyn, and the mosque is one of the largest in North Africa.
MOROCCO
A SAFE AND STABLE COUNTRY

Political and governmental reforms, alongside a rapidly improving business environment, have allowed the country to expand its influence both in the Mediterranean region, and more broadly, on the African continent.

Morocco is a very secure and stable country, and has been a fine example of solidarity and coexistence in the region for centuries. Moroccans are a peace-loving people and will stand strong together united and resilient against any group or individuals who attempt to dismantle peace. Morocco is among the most politically stable countries in the Arab world, according to Global Risk Map 2016, which is an authoritative guide to political and business risk.

Thanks to its insightful policies and strong security system, Morocco has managed to place itself among the safest countries in the world, playing a key role in helping other countries to fight off terrorism.

This is achieved as a result of good governance and well established policies, and also the result of an effective community.
MOROCCO
IN BRIEF

LOCATION
North-western part of Africa, on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, Morocco shares borders with Algeria and Mauritania.

POPULATION
34 Million

CAPITAL CITY
Rabat

AREA
710,850 km²

MAIN CITIES
Casablanca, Marrakech, Fez, Tangier, Oujda, Dakhla, Laayoune, Agadir

CLIMATE
Mediterranean

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
Arabic, Amazigh

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
16 regions

OTHER SPOKEN LANGUAGES
French, English, Spanish

TIME ZONE
GMT (GMT+1 during the summer)

RELIGIONS
Islam

CURRENCY
Moroccan Dirham (DH)
10 USD = 100 Dhs (Approx.)

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT
Democratic Constitutional Monarchy

INTERNATIONAL STATUS
Achieved independence from French Protectorate in 1956
Member of the United Nations
CONTACT INFO
Dr. Najib Mokhtari
Phone. Office : + 212 530 103 052 / Mobile : + 212 661 110 399
E-mail: Najib.mokhtari@uir.ac.ma
Website : www.uir.ac.ma