

Meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ms. Elina Valtonen and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of Morocco, Mr. Nasser Bourita

1. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland, Ms. Elina Valtonen, welcomed the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Mr. Nasser Bourita, in Helsinki for a working visit on August, 6th 2024.
2. The two ministers exchanged views on many topical international and bilateral issues and agreed that the relations between Finland and Morocco are excellent and beneficial for both countries. Ministers also reaffirmed their shared willingness to further strengthen and expand the bilateral relations, on this 65th anniversary of the Finnish-Moroccan diplomatic relations.
3. Finland highlighted Morocco's political stability and welcomed the reforms carried out by Morocco under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, for a more open and dynamic Moroccan society and economy, notably through the new development model and advanced regionalization.
4. Ministers reaffirmed their strong resolve to strengthen economic and trade relations between the two countries to reach their full potential and recognized Morocco's key position as a gateway between Africa and Europe. In this context, the parties agreed to expand their annual political consultations to include economic and business interests. Ministers agreed also to plan to hold a business seminar in 2025 to encourage cooperation between the economic actors of both countries.
5. The Ministers identified several key sectors, which would offer mutual benefits for both countries. Digitalization, particularly with regard to cybersecurity and the deployment of secure 5G networks, among other ICT infrastructure and services, was identified as a priority area. Both countries underlined the importance of secure networks for the national security, and as a factor for investment decisions for developing trust based digital economy.
6. The Ministers recalled the important agreed framework of their bilateral relations including the two Memorandums of Understanding signed between Finland and Morocco in the fields of renewable energy and integrated water resources and welcomed concrete steps for their continued implementation. In the water sector, Finland is well positioned to offer expertise in water related technologies and smart solutions in line with Morocco's priorities. The two Ministers agreed to encourage experts to look for new potential areas of common interest.
7. Ministers took note of both countries ambitious renewable energy targets and identified solutions to support the green transition, including through green hydrogen, as a key area for future collaboration. The Ministers also noted healthcare and wellbeing technologies as prominent areas of partnership especially in light of the current health sector reforms in Morocco.
8. Morocco expressed its appreciation for Finland's Africa Strategy and the willingness to contribute to the implementation of this strategy at the bilateral level as well as through tripartite cooperation with African countries.

9. Finland welcomed Morocco's efforts through various initiatives launched under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, to further peace, stability and socio-economic development in Africa, in particular, the "Royal initiative to facilitate access for Sahel countries to the Atlantic Ocean", as well as the "Atlantic African States Process".
10. Both ministers underlined that the EU and Morocco are longstanding strategic partners and that their cooperation is important in jointly addressing global and regional threats and challenges, affecting the security and prosperity of both regions. They also recognized the important role of Morocco in the EU-Africa partnership at large, as well as Morocco's key role in enhancing regional cooperation and stability in the region, fight against terrorism and cooperation on cross-border migration management.
11. The two countries are committed to uphold and further deepen their collaboration in multilateral fora such as the UN, especially in the UN Human Rights Council, which Morocco chairs for the year 2024, and of which Finland is a vice-chair. Ministers underlined the importance for both countries to engage in the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular the rights of women and girls and the youth. Both identified these as pivotal sectors for cooperation in the multilateral fora. They also agreed to aim at joint initiatives to promote human rights particularly of women, person with disabilities and youth. Both sides stressed the importance of intensifying their contacts with the aim of further coordinating their positions within regional, multilateral and international institutions.
12. Both Finland and Morocco affirmed their support for the UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy for the Western Sahara, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and his efforts to continue a political process aimed at reaching a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the aims and principles set out in the United Nations Charter. In this context, Finland considers the autonomy plan presented in 2007 as a serious and credible contribution to the UN-led political process and as a good basis for a solution agreed upon between the parties.
13. Ministers also exchanged views on other topical matters such as the challenges faced by the Sahel region as well as the security and humanitarian situations in both Sudan and Libya.
14. Both sides reaffirmed the paramount importance of a rules-based international order and the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They expressed their condemnation of any violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the use of violence. In this context, the Ministers expressed their grave concern at the repercussions of Russia's invasion of Ukraine of 24 February 2022 and the ongoing attacks, particularly on food security, energy, finance, the environment and nuclear security and safety. They renewed their commitment to address these global impacts and promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.
15. With regard to the situation in the Middle East, the two Ministers reaffirmed their countries' commitment to a two-state solution where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions. Both ministers expressed their grave concern for the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and reiterated the need for an immediate ceasefire as outlined by Security Council resolution 2735, enabling full and unhindered humanitarian access and the release of the hostages and prisoners.