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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ABDALLAH ZAGOUR, AMBASSADOR OF THE
KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, AT THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Belgrade, 3 and 4 December 2015

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like first of all to join previous speakers in expressing my sincere condolences on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco to the families of the victims of the terrorist attacks yesterday in the city of San Bernardino in the United States of America.

I should also like to express the thanks of the Moroccan delegation to the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship for the quality of its welcome, hospitality and excellent organization of this 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council meeting.

The Moroccan delegation congratulates Serbia and in particular His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić, current OSCE Chairperson, for the style, wisdom and ambition with which he has led the Organization in 2015. This year has been a pivotal one in the life of the Organization, marking the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final, Act whose principles and values are fundamental to the OSCE's mission, but also because this year has seen several regional and international events falling within the Organization's area of competence that have called for determined and effective intervention on its part.

Mr. Chairperson,

Morocco, drawing on the evaluations and recommendations of the Declaration on Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners adopted on 5 December 2015 at the 21st Ministerial Council meeting in Basel, is following with interest the implementation of the Helsinki+40 process, which consolidates the Organization's *acquis* and confirms its principles and future course and in particular highlights the link between security in Europe and in the Mediterranean.

Morocco strongly reaffirms its support for the values and principles that make the OSCE an exemplary organization working for peace and security in its area of competence. It

attaches great importance to the OSCE's activities to prevent and manage crisis situations and to its initiatives to alleviate tensions and consolidate regional peace and security.

Morocco believes that the diffuse and diverse nature of the threats that lie in wait today not only for Europe but also for the Mediterranean region and the rest of the world demands joint, urgent and united responses. For that reason, regional security, including Europe and the Mediterranean region, is urgently required more than ever to combat the activities of terrorist groups and mafia networks that are at work in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

There will also be a need to develop synergies at the regional level between all bodies and instruments concerned with co-operation and security, such as the European Union, OSCE, Council of Europe, NATO, the Western Mediterranean Forum and 5+5, and encourage them to incorporate into their respective agendas the concept of the indivisibility of security that links the two shores of the Mediterranean and merges them into a single area.

In that regard, the role of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) deserves to be highlighted as an appropriate framework for developing a multidisciplinary and multidimensional Euro-Mediterranean partnership to assist the OSCE and further its aims. It is true that the UfM is not currently operating at full capacity for reasons of which we are all aware, such as the Israeli-Arab conflict and the instability of certain southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, but it could clearly become a useful tool for promoting co-operation and security in the Euro-Mediterranean area, if only the parties were to firmly declare their political will to make it so, if the situation were to improve significantly and if sufficient resources were allocated to enable it to accomplish its mission to the full.

Morocco also believes that parliamentary co-operation is an essential component of the OSCE structure and participates fully and actively in the activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson,

Radicalism and religious extremism, based on a distortion of the principles of Islam and the perversion of its values, are today among the most serious threats faced by the OSCE. We have had proof, if any were needed, these last months in the form of the terrorist attacks perpetrated throughout the world, notably in Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey, France and Mali.

Morocco, which has condemned these barbaric attacks in the most vigorous terms possible, remains, as always, willing and open to all possible forms of co-operation, be it bilateral, regional or international, aimed at implementing the OSCE's fundamental principles and values and at eradicating all security threats, wherever they originate and whatever their reason or motivation.

It demonstrated this most recently by offering its full support to France, which was struck by the attacks in Paris on 13 November, and also by responding to the wish expressed by Belgium to strengthen bilateral security co-operation with Morocco. It also has agreements and security co-operation relationships with other OSCE participating States and partners.

As a specific measure illustrating the Moroccan approach to the joint and united fight against radicalism and religious extremism, Morocco, a land of moderate and tolerant Islam that has successfully implemented a policy of restructuring and assimilating the area of religion, has offered, under the Royal Instructions of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Commander of the Faithful, to train hundreds of imams from several friendly African countries on the basis of the religious precepts practised in Morocco that advocate peace and reject all fanaticism. Some European countries with sizeable Muslim communities have also expressed their interest in collaborating with Morocco in the training of imams. Morocco has obviously had to invest in expanding its existing training capacities and building new structures to ensure the best possible conditions for hosting and training the increasing number of applicants.

Mr. Chairperson,

Morocco believes that co-operation and security in the Euro-Mediterranean region will remain theoretical concepts as long as countries in the region continue to live in a situation of political instability and social unrest. It is therefore entitled to feel some pride at its modest contribution to the settlement of the situation in Libya by hosting talks between Libyan protagonists under the aegis of Bernadino Leon, Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, resulting in the Skhirat Agreement, which lays the foundation for the main national institutions and for the formation of a government of national unity in Libya.

Mr. Chairperson,

Everyone knows and recognizes today that the security threats and challenges in Europe and the Mediterranean are a product in particular of the proliferation of criminal organizations, the multiplication of networks of arms and drug trafficking, money-laundering and smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and of the terrorist groups spreading in the Sahel-Saharan region. A lot of countries on the African continent are also still confronted with political instability, internal conflicts and the handicaps of underdevelopment.

For that reason, any security approach in Europe and the Mediterranean should also include an African dimension.

Morocco, the African country closest to Europe, is a transit zone caught between two continents and the destination of choice for migrants attempting to reach Europe. Thanks to the exemplary and effective co-operation between Morocco and Spain, the migratory flows through Morocco have considerably diminished.

It is nevertheless the case that many sub-Saharan migrants who fail in their attempts to reach Europe settle permanently in Morocco, which is now increasingly changing from a transit country to a host country.

This state of affairs puts Morocco in an extremely complex and delicate situation in relation to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, origin of most of these migrants, and Europe, which seeks its collaboration and intervention to prevent them from illegally crossing the Strait of Gibraltar.

In the face of this situation, whose humanitarian dimension is evident, for several years Morocco has been implementing a policy of regularizing the residence on its territory

of these migrants living there illegally. Almost 30,000 migrants have been legalized in this way and today possess a residence permit for Morocco. They can work there, send their children to public and private Moroccan schools and benefit from the same health care as nationals.

At the same time, it is clear that Morocco cannot continue indefinitely to receive and shelter these tens of thousands of sub-Saharan migrants. There are limits to the spirit of solidarity with our fellow African countries and to the possibilities and resources available to assume this heavy burden.

There is therefore an urgent need to seriously address the migration crisis in its entirety, be it due to the current political instability of certain Mediterranean, African and Asian countries or simply to the economic and social reasons that drive young people to leave these countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, I should like to wish every success to the German Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016 and ensure it of the Kingdom of Morocco's continued attachment to its role as an OSCE Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation and to its advocacy of the Organization's principles and values, the promotion of democracy and the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Thank you.