

FORWARD

Since its first edition in 2009, the international research seminar on autonomy, which the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations in New York has organized annually, in Dakhla, Geneva or New York, provides an excellent opportunity and a key meeting point for renowned international academicians, scholars and experts, to get informed and examine all the aspects surrounding territorial autonomy, through an exercise of analytical comparison of the systems of territorial autonomy in different regions of the world.

The fifteen seminars organized to date provided an opportunity to consider several aspects of the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative, presented by the Kingdom of Morocco to the Secretary General of the United Nations, on April 11, 2007, and to compare their relevance with the systems applied in other autonomous regions around the world.

The 2022 edition of this international seminar aimed to highlight the very important and pivotal question of the devolution of legislative powers in the autonomous regions. This latter constitutes an essential component that guarantees the success and sustainability of autonomy, as it is a founding principle of inclusive and participatory democracy and a very important aspect of the rule of law and good governance.

The Moroccan Autonomy Initiative for the Sahara region includes several provisions that enshrine the devolution of legislative powers. Articles 5, 12, 19, 20, 22 and 24 lay out, in a clear manner, the competences that the populations of the Sahara region will have, in terms of running their own affairs through legislative, executive and judicial bodies, enjoying exclusive powers, in in keeping with democratic principles and procedures.

The seminar concluded that, while each territorial case has certainly its own context, dynamics and specificities, the comparative study between the different models of autonomy reinforces the fundamental elements of Morocco's autonomy offer. More essentially, it demonstrates that the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative meets international standards, respects international legality and takes into consideration the socio-cultural specificities of the Sahara region. Finally, it fits perfectly with the systems of autonomy that are most democratic, participatory, viable, visionary, fair and compliant with international law.

This publication aims to make the proceedings of this seminar available to diplomats, politicians, academics, researchers and civil society representatives, in order to serve as a reference benchmark and a basis for reflection on territorial autonomy. In addition, it aspires to promote a convergence of practices in this area, in a comparative approach of the provisions of the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative with other autonomy experiences in the world, through focusing on the systems of devolution of legislative powers in the Canary Islands, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico and Rodrigues Island.

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