

Remarks by Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Amina
2010 Global Congress Opening Session
7 June 2010

Praise be to God

May peace and blessings be upon the
Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Mr. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
Honorable Managing Director
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this Special Olympics Global Congress which brings together such a fine group of distinguished sport, political and social figures.

I should like, on behalf of you all, to express our gratitude and sincere thanks to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him, for kindly granting his high patronage to this event.

This attests not only to the high esteem in which close to 180 countries are represented, but also to the special care and interest he takes in the situation of people with special needs in all sections, particularly in sports.

We are delighted you have chosen the city of Marrakech as the venue for this world event. This is a source of pride not only for Morocco, but also for the Middle East/North Africa region.

By meeting in Marrakech, you are also showing how much you value the lofty initiatives His Majesty the King has taken to empower people with special needs.

Through his uniting endeavors to build democratic, solidarity-based society which is determined to achieve development, and consistent with the lofty values he believes in. His Majesty the King has illustrated his firm belief that the concerns of people with special needs constitute an integral part of human rights. Meeting these people's needs and expectations and safeguarding their dignity have been on of the main concerns of my country's public policies. This is why Morocco adopted advanced legislation in this area and adhered to the relevant international agreements.

As a result of this keen interest by His Majesty, this segment of our population has been playing a central part in the programs of the National Initiative for Human Development, which was launched by His Majesty the King and is being closely monitored by him. It aims to fight all forms of marginalization, social exclusion and precariousness.

The convening of the Congress in my country is yet another accomplishment for Special Olympics morocco, which I have the distinct honor of chairing.

The Achievements of Special Olympics Morocco include a larger community of members and athletes, better trained coaches and trainers, the introduction of new sports, ad a higher number of sports events organized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This important Global Congress provides a forum for discussion and exchange of views on ways to promote the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and to support the Special Olympics movement at regional level worldwide.

It is also an opportunity to take stock of all that has been achieved by Special Olympics International over this past decade – thanks to the sacrifices made and the generous efforts exerted – and to improve programs targeting people with intellectual disabilities in various areas, including health, youth affairs, education, family support, legislation and social attitudes.

Our conference's agenda includes important themes which will strengthen relations between national and regional Special Olympics officials, as well as between athletes, friends and supporters of the Special Olympics family.

I am sure we all look forward to a thorough discussion of the issues facing us within competence, and to the formulation of the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I avail myself of this opportunity to commend the Chairman and CEO of Special Olympics International, HE Timothy P. Shriver, and the Managing Director of Special Olympics for the Middle East/North Africa region, Eng. Ayman Abdel Wahab, for all they have been doing. I also wish to pay a warm tribute to the late Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics movement, and to say how grateful we are for her vision.

I extend a warm welcome to all participants in this Global Congress and wish you a very pleasant stay in the ochre city of Marrakech, which is as much a symbol of the time-honored Moroccan heritage as it is emblematic of harmonious coexistence between different cultures and civilizations.

Our deep commitment to preserving human dignity and championing the lofty ideals underlying the Special Olympics movement will, I am sure, inspire our proceedings and help us steer this international conference to a successful outcome.

Thank you.