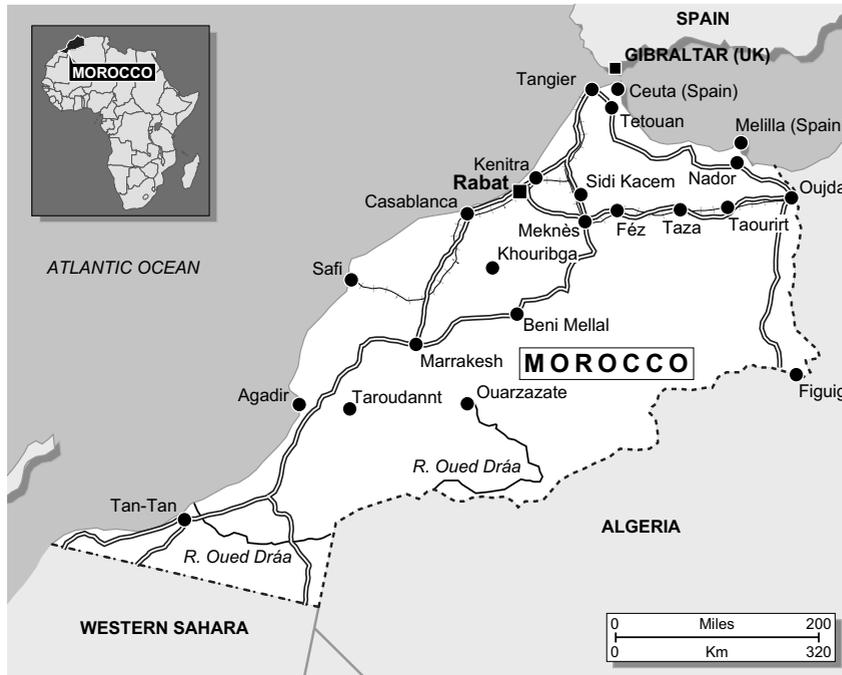


Morocco



In Morocco it was probably true to say in 2013 that there was no organised, effective force of opposition to King Mohamed VI. Opposition forces were not only silenced, but also found themselves ‘open to currents of disorganisation’ and, as one commentator described it, ‘fragmentation’. Morocco’s opposition, such as it can be so described, had entered a state of inertia, outflanked by the rising tide of the Islamists. Having neutered the opposition, the régime had subtly sought to re-integrate those opposition parties considered at least to have some kind of stature. Their visible presence on the political stage helped perpetrate the myth that in Morocco there existed some form of cogent and meaningful political debate. The coalition government that took office in January 2012 was led by the moderate Islamist Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) (Hizb al Adala wa at Tanmia) (Justice and Development Party), but also comprised long-time government parties such as the Istiqlal (Independence) Party. The challenge for the government was to know how far to allow the delivery of reforms that might prove to

be unacceptable for the régime but popular in the context of high social expectations. Whatever the parliamentary charade, the king remained in control, particularly where constitutional or economic policy decisions were in play.

If anything, the king’s presence was stronger than ever. His canny and well publicised attention to Morocco’s poorer social groups brought him into visible contact with his subjects, effectively countering the image of a tyrannical despot. Kindness appeared to have prevailed over fear. To his credit, since the beginning of his reign, King Mohammed VI had kept his distance and showed modesty rather than arrogance in the way he exercised power.

Thus 2012 saw Morocco’s government at least appearing to respond to the pro-democracy Arab Spring movements in neighbouring Tunisia, not to mention pro-reform demonstrations in Morocco itself. In June 2012 King Mohammed VI proposed a number of constitutional changes aimed at giving Moroccans substantial human rights guarantees. That was the good news; the less encouraging

KEY FACTS

Official name: Al Mamlaka al Maghrebia (The Kingdom of Morocco)

Head of State: King Mohammed VI (since 1999)

Head of government: Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane (appointed 29 Nov 2011)

Ruling party: Coalition, led by Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) (Hizb al Adala wa at Tanmia) (Justice and Development Party) with Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS) (Party of Progress and Socialism) and Mouvement Populaire (MP) (Popular Movement) (from 3 Jan 2012)

Area: 711,000 square km

Population: 32.52 million (2012)*

Capital: Rabat (official, diplomatic) Casablanca (commercial centre)

Official language: Arabic and Amazigh (the Berber language)

Currency: Dirham (Dh) = 100 centimes

Exchange rate: Dh8.43 per US\$ (Jul 2013); (roughly pegged at Dh10 per euro, which circulates widely)

GDP per capita: US\$2,999 (2012)*

GDP real growth: 2.99% (2012)*

GDP: US\$97.53 billion (2012)*

Labour force: 11.53 million (2012)*

Unemployment: 8.81% (2012)*

Inflation: 1.30% (2012)*

Balance of trade: -US\$21.89 billion (2012)*

Annual FDI: US\$2.52 billion (2011)

* estimated figure

news was that there were no changes that might limit the monarch's extensive powers. Despite these intrinsic limitations, the Moroccan electorate voted the amendments into law in July 2012. Transparent government is, sadly, not common in the countries of the Maghreb. On the 2012 Transparency International *Corruption Perceptions Index* Morocco ranked a lame 88 out of the 177 countries surveyed, ahead of Algeria (at 105) but behind Tunisia (75).

In September 2013 the World Bank approved a US\$200 million loan to Morocco to support a comprehensive programme to foster inclusive governance reforms. The Transparency and Accountability Development Policy Loan (DPL), also known as *Hakama* was the first of two operations which were designed to strengthen transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and foster open governance. The World Bank claimed that 'The *Hakama* programme will give greater impetus to the continuing governance reforms in Morocco and will support key areas that can significantly leverage the performance and transparency of the public sector while enhancing citizen information and participation in decision making.' There were those who had their doubts.

Good in parts

Importantly, the 2012 amendments to Morocco's constitution recognised Amazigh, the Berber language, as an official

language. The Berbers were Morocco's first inhabitants and make up some 60 per cent of the population, but have complained of widespread discrimination. As important, the constitution also prohibited torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances. It also required the authorities to inform, immediately, any person who was arrested of the reason for the arrest and to enjoy the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial. In the view of the Washington-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) the constitutional amendments had to be seen to change what HRW termed 'Morocco's decidedly mixed human rights performance.'

The question confronting the Moroccan authorities was the extent to which the Arab Spring contagion would take hold in Morocco. There certainly were indications that that was the case as younger Moroccans, no doubt inspired by the street protests elsewhere that had brought about change in Tunisia, Egypt and the Yemen, took to the streets in February 2012 to demand sweeping political reforms. 'Reform', rather than 'Revolution', seemed to be the order of the day. There did not seem to be any calls for the King to step down although Prime Minister Benkirane was accused of failing to deliver on promised reforms. The February 20 movement, which seemed to be leading the demonstrations and had orchestrated weekly pro-democracy marches around the country, said it would continue to call

for 'a truly democratic constitution and a parliamentary monarch.' Support also came from various other political and civil society forces. Significantly, the Islamist Justice and Spirituality movement supported the protests which took place in a number of Morocco's major cities including Casablanca, Kenitra and Rabat. The rallies were the largest since the new government took office in January 2012. In 2011 King Mohammed VI had managed to quell the protests by ostensibly limiting his own powers and pledging a number of reforms. For the most part the protests were lively rather than violent – nevertheless, feelings were strong and police reports suggested that 33 public buildings had been vandalised, as well as over 20 banks.

The economy

King Mohammed has repeatedly claimed that the fight against poverty is a priority, earning him the name 'guardian of the poor'. Officials cite improved access to basic services in shanty towns and among the rural poor. However, some non-governmental organisations (NGO's) said that little had changed beyond the statistics, with poverty still widespread and unemployment remaining high. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its mid-2013 assessment of the country's economy, Morocco's solid performance had been challenged by a combination of domestic vulnerabilities and external shocks. Morocco has a track record of strong macro-economic policies that, over the previous decade had helped deliver solid growth, low inflation, comfortable external reserves, financial deepening and poverty reduction, despite stubbornly high youth unemployment. However, the economy's own rigidities, social pressures and repeated external shocks from the global crisis and commodity prices had led to a significant erosion of fiscal and external buffers. Furthermore, in 2012, growth was dragged down by a lower-than-average harvest resulting from low rainfall.

The IMF's PLL (Precautionary and Liquidity Line) continued to support the Moroccan authorities' efforts to rebuild buffers and address medium-term challenges by providing insurance against external risks. The authorities intended to continue to treat the PLL as precautionary and to draw on it only in the event of unforeseen external shocks or a substantial worsening of the international outlook relative to current assumptions. Their economic strategy, supported by the PLL,

KEY INDICATORS		Morocco				
	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	31.44	31.70	*31.85	*32.19	*32.52
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	88.90	90.80	103.50	99.20	*97.53
GDP per capita	US\$	2,827	2,865	3,249	3,083	*2,999
GDP real growth	%	5.8	4.9	3.7	4.3	*3.0
Inflation	%	3.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	*1.3
Unemployment	%	9.6	9.1	9.1	8.9	*8.8
Industrial output	% change	2.6	-3.8	6.5	-	-
Agricultural output	% change	16.4	29.7	-1.9	-	-
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	20,173.0	13,915.0	17,584.0	15,945.8	*16,992.0
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	19,175.0	30,546.0	32,646.0	37,333.1	*38,877.0
Balance of trade	US\$m	998.0	-16,632.0	-15,062.0	-21,387.3	*-21,885.0
Current account	US\$m	-4,821.0	-4,958.0	-4,209.0	-8,336.9	*-9,363.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	22,104.0	22,797.0	22,613.0	22,872.8	*16,356.0
Foreign exchange	US\$m	21,976.0	21,924.0	21,762.0	22,005.0	*15,812.0
Exchange rate	per US\$	7.75	8.06	8.42	8.03	8.56
* estimated figure						

was aimed at ensuring fiscal sustainability and increasing competitiveness, potential growth and employment.

The IMF noted that the programme was on track but, with a weaker environment, the economic outlook hinged on the sustained delivery of reforms. The IMF also saw fit to remind the Moroccan authorities that in the context of a deteriorating short-term outlook for the external sector, and risks still heavily tilted to the downside, prompt implementation of the programme's policies remained essential for the authorities to achieve their objectives. At the top of that agenda was continued progress in addressing short- and longer-term fiscal issues, including pursuing fiscal consolidation. There was a need for a reform of the general subsidy system, including a better targeting of social protection. Further product and labour market reforms, investment in human capital and infrastructure, increased access to financial services and improvement of the business climate are needed to boost competitiveness, potential growth and employment. Moving toward a more flexible exchange rate would help enhance the economy's ability to absorb shocks and preserve competitiveness. However, the timing of such a move should be carefully co-ordinated with other macro-economic policies, especially a shift toward a new monetary policy framework.

The economy's performance had continued to be affected by a deteriorating external environment and poor rainfall. Output growth in 2012 was estimated to have slowed to 3.2 per cent, mostly due to a lower-than-average cereal crop. However, non-agricultural GDP growth was expected to have remained relatively robust at around 4.5 per cent, with the negative impact of weak external demand from key trading partners – notably the EU – being more than offset by robust domestic consumption. Despite significant increases in the price of several subsidised energy products in June 2012, which were part of the government's effort to contain the fiscal cost of subsidies, headline inflation remained low at 1.6 per cent in November 2012, as second-round effects of the price increases had not yet fully materialised. Core inflation (excluding food and transport) was close to zero due to the large negative contribution of lower communication tariffs. Unemployment had hovered around 9 per cent since 2010 and remained particularly high among the youth, at almost 18 per cent. Overall, macro-economic performance has been broadly in line with the original

framework of the PLL, but the current account deteriorated significantly more than anticipated, although reserves have stabilised at the expected level.

Risk assessment

Politics	Fair
Economy	Fair
Regional stability	Fair

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1777 Morocco was the first country to recognise the newly sovereign USA. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries (negotiated in 1787) is the longest unbroken US treaty relationship.

1860 Spain declared war in a dispute over the Ceuta enclave and temporarily occupied Tetuán (later relinquished) and won an enlarged Melilla and Ceuta.

1884 Spain created a protectorate in coastal areas of Morocco.

1904 France and Spain agreed on respective zones of influence in the country.

1912 Morocco became a French protectorate under the Treaty of Fez. Spain continued to operate its coastal protectorate.

1923 France, Spain and Britain set up the international zone of Tangier.

1921–26 A rebellion in the Rif Mountains, led by Abdel Krim, was eventually quelled by French and Spanish troops.

1943 The Istiqlal (Parti de l'Istiqlal) (Independence Party) was founded and an independence struggle began.

1956–57 Independence was granted by France and Spain. Tangier became Moroccan once more. Spain kept its two coastal enclaves. Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef adopted the title of King Mohammed V and established an hereditary monarchy.

1961 Mohammed V died and was succeeded by King Hassan II. He introduced political liberalisation.

1963 The first general elections were held.

1965 Following student riots and civil unrest, the King declared a state of emergency and suspended parliament.

1971 There was a failed attempt to depose the King and to establish a republic.

1972 A constitution was adopted.

1973–76 The Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (Polisario) (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro), formed with Algerian support, aimed at an independent state in Spanish Sahara, a territory south of Morocco, controlled by Spain. King Hassan ordered a 350,000-strong Green March into the territory, attempting to annex it for Morocco. Spain agreed to withdraw from the

region (later to become Western Sahara) and to transfer it to joint Moroccan-Mauritanian control. Polisario announced the formation of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and formed a government-in-exile. Western Sahara was divided between Morocco and Mauritania. Fighting continued between Moroccan military and Polisario forces.

1977 Morocco left the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in protest at the SADR's admission to the body.

1983 Relations between Morocco and Algeria improve.

1988 Full diplomatic relations with Algeria were resumed.

1991 A UN-monitored cease-fire began in Western Sahara.

1998 The moderate Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP) (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) won the elections and formed a government.

1999 King Hassan II died suddenly and his son, Mohammed VI acceded to the throne.

2000 King Mohammed VI began a process of modest political liberalisation.

2002 King Mohammed married Salma Bennani, a 24-year-old computer engineer; the marriage to a commoner was a break with Royal Moroccan tradition. Morocco occupied the tiny, uninhabited island of Leila or Isla del Perejil (Parsley Island) off its coast and owned by Spain, prompting an international spat. After the general election, the two main parties – the USFP and Istiqlal – formed a coalition government. Driss Jettou was appointed prime minister.

2003 Senegal and Morocco signed agreements on closer co-operation. There were suicide bombings in Casablanca killing 41 and injuring many more. Anti-terrorism laws were enacted and a campaign against extremists undertaken.

Crown Prince Moulay Hassan was born.

2004 An earthquake in the north killed over 500 people. A free trade agreement was signed with the US after Morocco had been designated a major non-NATO ally.

2005 Prime Minister Jettou announced a proposal for a TGV (French high-speed train) service, from Tangier to Casablanca (by 2015). Hundreds of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa attempted to force their entry into the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta. Once repelled they were later deported from Morocco. An official commission reported that human rights abuses during the rule of King Hassan II included almost 600 deaths.

2007 Morocco proposed the Sahara autonomy plan, which would allow Morocco and the Polisario to discuss the future of Western Sahara without pre-conditions, but later failed to achieve agreement. In parliamentary elections, 33 parties and

KEY FACTS: Western Sahara

Official name: Western Sahara (The legal status of the territory and the issue of sovereignty are unresolved; they are contested by Morocco and the Polisario, which in Feb 1976, formally proclaimed a government-in-exile of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR))

Head of State: President Mohammed Abdelaziz (Frente Polisario) (since 1982) (based in Tindouf Refugee camp, Algeria)

Head of government: Prime Minister Abdelkader Taleb Oumar (from Oct 2004) (based in Tindouf Refugee camp, Algeria)

Ruling party: Independence movement – Frente para la Liberación de Sagüia al Hamra y Río de Oro (Polisario) (Popular Front for the Liberation of Sagüia al Hamra and Río de Oro) (based in Tindouf Refugee camp, Algeria)

Area: 266,000 square km

Population: 491,519 (2010)*

Capital: Laayoune (El Aaiún)

Official language: Arabic and Spanish

Currency: Moroccan dirham (Dh) = 100 centimes; the currency used in the Occupied Zone

Exchange rate: Dh8.43 per US\$ (Jul 2013); (roughly pegged at Dh10 per euro, which circulates widely)

Labour force: 12,000 (2005)*

Aid flow: US\$10.00 million (annually)*

* estimated figure

6,600 candidates participated; the Istiqlal won most votes, to retain power and become the governing coalition party. Its partner in the outgoing government, the USFP lost 12 seats. The turnout, at 37 per cent, was the lowest in Morocco's history. 2009 Christopher Ross was named as the UN's Special Envoy in mediation talks over the future of Western Sahara. Over US\$10.3 billion was committed to modernising the energy sector, including 11 wind-generated electricity turbines. The tourism minister announced the government would invest US\$37.3 million in its tourist industry.

2010 New talks with Polisario, concerning the future of Western Sahara, began. The minister of transport announced that the motorway network will total 1,417km by 2011 following US\$3.4 billion in investment. In Western Sahara, 11 people were killed and hundreds reported missing in an operation by Moroccan security forces to clear the Gadaym Izik, Frente Polisario, protest camp close to Laayoune. Morocco defended its security forces, saying police had intervened in a peaceful manner and that they only defended themselves.

2011 In April a remote controlled bomb in a café in Djemaa el Fna square, Marrakesh, killed 15 people, including a number of tourists. King Mohammed VI announced proposed constitutional amendments in June, to be put to a referendum on 1 July. The amendments included giving the prime minister more executive authority, reducing the powers of the monarch, making Berger an official language and boosting the independence of the judiciary; the King would remain supreme commander of the armed forces. There was scepticism within the opposition who said the reforms did not go far enough. However, 98.49 per cent of voters were in favour; turnout was 72.65 per cent. In May, Morocco was invited to join the political and economic union, Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCASG) (known as Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC)). Although no timetable for integration was set. The recorded unemployment rate was 8.7 per cent by 30 June. Unemployment for those aged under 34 was 30.2 per cent. On 29 September King Mohammed and French President Sarkozy jointly launched the 350km high-speed railway project between the cities of Rabat and Casablanca in the south. The joint Moroccan-French, US\$4.1 billion, Tangiers-Casablanca line development is due for completion in 2015, with a journey time cut from over six hours to two. The French engineering company Alstom will provide 14 high-speed trains for the new line. Early general elections were held on 25 November. The moderate Islamist, Hizb al

Adala wa at Tanmia (Parti de la Justice et du Développement) (PJD) (Justice and Development Party) won the single largest block of seats of 107 (out of 395), while the pro-monarchy, Alliance pour la Démocratie (Coalition for Democracy), an eight party bloc, won 159 seats and Koutla, an alliance of three parties led by Istiqlal, won 117 seats. On 29 November, King Mohammed appointed Abdelilah Benkirane (PJD) to be prime minister. The PJD began coalition talks with Koutla.

2012 On 3 January PJD agreed to a coalition with Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS) (Party of Progress and Socialism) and Mouvement Populaire (MP) (Popular Movement). A report from the UN Secretary General concerning Western Sahara was published in April, with a complaint that the UN force had been 'unable to exercise fully its peace-keeping monitoring, observation and reporting functions' due to Moroccan interference. The report detailed the positions of both sides, which remain the unchanged, namely that Morocco claims Western Sahara is a self-governing territory within its country and Polisario argues that not only is it not a self-governing territory, but also that it claims the right to self-determination. On 22 May, opponents of the TGV organised protests in several cities objecting to the cost of the project, estimated at Bh25 billion (US\$2.9 billion) that they said would be better spent on social programmes.

2013 On 9 July five ministers from the secular centre-right Istiqlal party, the second largest party in parliament, resigned from the government. A Spanish paedophile who was freed by royal decree along with 47 other imprisoned Spaniards was rearrested in Spain a day later after protests Rabat had led the King to rescind the pardon. The release of the 48 had been requested by King Juan Carlos of Spain. King Mohammed IV ordered an investigation.

Political structure

Constitution

Adopted 10 March 1972; amended 1992 and 1996.

The constitution prohibits a one-party political system.

The King is *Amir al Moumineen* (Commander of the Faithful), hereditary head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces.

A constitutional referendum held on 1 July 2011 was approved by 98.49 per cent of voters. The changes included: requiring the King to name a prime minister from the largest political party in parliament; transferring some rights of government from the King to prime minister (including

the dissolution of parliament); allowing parliament to grant amnesties (a privilege previously held by the King alone); promoting Berber to be an official language of Morocco.

Independence date

1956

Form of state

Constitutional monarchy

The executive

The King holds executive power, which is delegated to the prime minister and cabinet.

National legislature

The bicameral *Barlaman* (parliament) consists of the *Majlis al Nuwab* (assembly of representatives, lower house) with 325 members, of which 295 are elected in multi-seat constituencies and 30 from national lists of exclusively women candidates. All are elected to serve for five-year terms. The *Majlis al Mustasharin* (assembly of counsellors) has 270 members indirectly elected by two separate electoral colleges, of local councils (162 seats) and representatives of the working population (118 seats). All serve for nine-year terms with one-third elected every three years. The lower house debates legislation presented to it by the government; approved legislation is automatically promulgated after one month. The upper house has the power to caution or censure the government, which if successful requires the government to resign.

Legal system

The legal system is based on Islamic law and a combination of French and Spanish civil law codes. The Supreme Court is responsible for reviewing government legislation.

Last elections

1 July 2011 (constitutional referendum);

25 November 2011 (parliamentary)

Results: Referendum: approval was given by 98.49 per cent of voters, 1.5 per cent opposed; turnout was 72.65 per cent.

Parliamentary: (*Hizb al Adala wa at Tanmia*) (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement*) (PJD) (Justice and Development Party) won 107 seats (out of 395), *Hizb al Istiqlal* (*Istiqlal*) (Independence Party) 60, *Rassemblement National des Indépendents* (National Rally of Independent) 52, *Parti Authenticité et Modernité* (PAM) (Authenticity and Modernity Party) 47, *Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires* (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) 39, *Mouvement Populaire* (Popular Movement) 32, *Union Constitutionnelle* (Constitutional Union) 23, *Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme* (Party of Progress and Socialism) 18, *Parti Travailleiste* (Labour Party) four; four other political parties each won two seats and five other parties each won one seat. 13 other

parties fail to win any seats. Turnout was 45.4 per cent.

Next elections

2016 (parliamentary)

Political parties

Ruling party

Coalition, led by *Parti de la Justice et du Développement* (PJD) (*Hizb al Adala wa at Tanmia*) (Justice and Development Party) with *Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme* (PPS) (Party of Progress and Socialism) and *Mouvement Populaire* (MP) (Popular Movement) (from 3 Jan 2012)

Main opposition party

Alliance pour la Démocratie (Coalition for Democracy), an eight party bloc, led by *Mouvement Populaire* (Popular Movement).

Population

32.52 million (2012)*

Around 70 per cent of the population is under 25 years of age.

Last census: September 2004:

29,680,069

Population density: 68 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 58 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 1.3 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Mostly Berbers and Arabs. There is a small Jewish minority and an estimated 60,000 foreign residents, mainly of French, Spanish and Italian origin.

Religions

Islam is the state religion. Sunni Muslim (98 per cent). There are small minority Jewish and Roman Catholic communities.

Education

The illiteracy rate is as high as 83 per cent among women in rural areas. The government aims to increase the literacy to 76 per cent by 2010. Public expenditure on education is about 5 per cent of annual Gross National Income (GNI) and includes subsidies to private education at all levels.

Primary, or first stage education lasts until the age of 12, then students move onto second stage until aged 15, when they choose between an academic general secondary school or a technical secondary school for three years. At aged 18 the academic students undertake the *Baccalauréat* for progression to higher education. Technical students may undertake a further two years study in their specialised skill.

Higher education is provided by 13 universities, specialised schools and institutes under the supervision of the National Ministry of Education. Besides a traditional system of higher education, there are 28 executive training institutes

(*Etablissements de Formation des Cadres*), which provide specialised training under the direct control of ministerial departments. There are also eight *Grandes Ecoles d'Ingénieurs* (engineering schools). A private university opened in September 1994. Universities are mainly public institutions with budgetary autonomy. In 2003, schools began to teach Tamazight, the Berber language which predates Arabic in north Africa; children will have to learn using Arabic, Latin and Berber scripts.

Literacy rate: 51 per cent adult rate; 70 per cent youth rate (15–24) (Unesco 2005).

Compulsory years: 7 to 14.

Enrolment rate: 86 per cent gross primary enrolment of relevant age group (including repeaters); 39 per cent gross secondary enrolment (World Bank).

Pupils per teacher: 28 in primary schools.

Health

It is estimated that less than 20 per cent of Moroccans have access to healthcare. Public hospitals are free, but patients must buy medicine and pay for certain services, such as X-rays. Medical fees are reimbursed only for children. There are basic health services in rural areas, including local dispensaries, rural hospitals and provincial hospitals. Government policy specifically targets the reduction of infant deaths, the provision of family planning services, nutrition awareness programmes and campaigns against malaria and tuberculosis.

HIV/Aids

HIV prevalence: 0.1 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

Life expectancy: 71 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 2.3 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef); maternal mortality 230 per 100,000 live births (World Bank).

Birth rate/Death rate: Seven deaths and 25 births per 1,000 head of population (World Bank).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 31 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Head of population per physician: 0.51 physicians per 1,000 people, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Welfare

There is a stark contrast between the living standards of the rural and urban population. In 2004, 19 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. In rural areas over a third of the population are classified as poor.

Morocco's social security system is based on the *Caisse Nationale de la Sécurité Sociale* (CNSS) (National Social Security

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Fund), which is funded by subscribers' contributions and interest on investments. All salaried workers in industry, commerce and services must belong to the CNSS. Civil servants belong to a similar scheme, run by the Caisse Nationale des Organismes de Prévoyance Sociale (CNOPS).

In cases of illness or accident, an employee can receive 50 per cent of salary after the eighth day. The employee can claim this benefit for up to 52 weeks every two years. Maternity benefit, equal to 50 per cent of salary, is paid for up to 10 weeks. The invalidity pension is equal to 50 per cent of salary for someone who has worked between five and 15 years. If a worker dies, the family is entitled to a payment equal to two months' salary. Old age pensions, equal to 50 per cent of salary, are payable to employees who have contributed for at least 15 years. The retirement age is 60. A pension is paid to the family of a deceased retired worker, provided they had worked for more than 15 years.

Main cities

Rabat (capital, estimated population 1.9 million (m) in 2012), Casablanca (commercial centre, 3.4m), Fez (1.1m), Marrakesh (953,305), Tangier (793,776), Meknès (616,110), Agadir (600,177), Oujda (435,378), Kenitra (418,222).

Languages spoken

Business literature and correspondence should be in French or Arabic.

Arabic is spoken in general. French is taught in school and is more commonly spoken in government, business and among the Moroccans elite.

There are three main dialects of Tamazight (the Berber language) spoken all over the country. Tamazight belongs to the Afro-Asiatic family and is related to ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian. Berber groups and their dialects: Shleuh (Ishalhiyan), in the High Atlas, Tashalhit dialect; Imazighen (Imazighen), Middle Atlas/Eastern High Atlas, Tamazight dialect; Rifans (Irifiyan), Northern Morocco, Tarifit dialect.

In the north, Spanish is widely spoken, while in the bigger cities like Casablanca, English is very common.

Official language/s

Arabic and Amazigh (the Berber language)

Media

The government has a continued interest in the countries media with a participating role in newspapers, television and radio. Through a degree of liberalisation the private press has an expanded remit to report on previously prohibited topics. However there remains a stringent press

code that could be used to curb journalist, who still exercise self-censorship. In November 2008 the Ministry of Information banned the French *L'Express International* magazine, which was deemed to have insulted Islam and was in breach of the country's press code. The magazine had discussed the relationship between the Christian and Muslim faiths, ahead of the meeting of scholars and officials being held in the Vatican.

Press

Dailies: In Arabic, *Al Anbaa* is an official publication, other private newspapers include *Al Alam* (www.alalam.ma), *Assabah* (www.assabah.press.ma) and *Bayane al Yaoume* (www.bayanealyaoume.ma). In French, *Libération* (<http://liberation.press.ma>), *Maroc Hebdo* (www.maroc-hebdo.press.ma) and *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc* (www.aujourd'hui.ma). In English, *Morocco Today* (www.moroccotoday.net).

Weeklies: In French *Telquel* (www.telquel-online.com), *La Gazette du Maroc* (www.lagazettedumaroc.com) and *La Nouvelle Tribune* (www.lanouvelletribune.com) report on news and current affairs.

Business: There are several publications, in French, including *l'Economiste* (www.leconomiste.com) *Finances News Hebdo* (<http://menara.ma/fr/Finance>), *La Vie Éco* (www.lavieeco.com). Daily newspapers also have financial news sections.

Broadcasting

The national public broadcaster is Société Nationale de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision (SNRT) (www.snrt.ma) and is state-run.

Radio: SNRT (www.snrt.ma) has five stations which broadcast news, religious and regional programmes. The national, commercial broadcaster 2M (www.2m.ma) is partly government owned and operates Radio 2M (www.radio2m.ma), and Hit Maroc (www.hitmaroc.com). Other stations include the bilingual French and Arabic Medi 1 Radio (www.medi1.com), Chada FM and Radio Atlantic.

Television: SNRT (www.snrt.ma) has several channels that provide programmes of news, culture, sport and entertainment. 2M (www.2m.ma) is the second national, commercial network with a range of imported and domestic news programmes. Cable and satellite TV has grown in popularity with many overseas broadcasters reaching Morocco.

National news agency: Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP)

Other news agencies: APA (African Press Agency): www.apanews.net
Reuters Africa: <http://africa.reuters.com>

Economy

The economy has been steadily liberalised since the early 1990s, with many state-owned entities privatised through government policies of diversification. Morocco is the world's third largest producer of phosphorous (after China and the US) and mining and industry provides around 15 per cent of GDP, agriculture (including fish and seafood) around 16 per cent and the service sector 55 per cent, of which tourism is the major component.

GDP growth in 2008 was 5.8 per cent, following a bumper harvest of cereals, before falling to 4.9 per cent in 2009 as global trade slumped. Growth in 2010 was 3.7 per cent, which rose to an estimated 4.3 per cent in 2011.

In 2008, the Department of Tourism launched its *2010 Vision and Future*, to attract 10 million visitors by 2010, with a strategy to expand the sector from 160,000 beds to 230,000 beds and create 600,000 new jobs. However, despite a good start in 2008 when eight million visitors arrived, primarily from France and Spain, (over three million visitors were expatriates returning home on vacation), the downturn in the global economy reduced the number of visitors to 7.7 million in 2009. The numbers in 2010 reached 9.3 million, however the disruption throughout Arab North Africa in 2011 caused visitors to switch to other destinations and Morocco's visitor numbers fell.

In 2008 the government implemented its seven-year *Plan Maroc Vert* with two main strategies: to develop high value and productive agriculture and fight poverty by increasing revenues to small-farmers. Unemployment and underemployment are still problems, particularly for the young, leading many to choose to work abroad. Remittances were a record US\$6.4 billion in 2010 (6.86 per cent of GDP), which rose to an estimated US\$7.1 billion in 2011.

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank announced in 2010, that they were setting up a regional initiative of up to US\$1 billion to help close the infrastructure gap in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) and help boost economic growth. The World Bank considers that the Mena region requires US\$75–100 billion per year to sustain the growth of recent years and boost economic competitiveness. Private sector investment is limited and although it was hoped the new initiative would help address this shortfall in investment through both Shari'a-compliant and conventional investment, the unrest that began in the Maghreb at the end of 2010 has proved difficult to overcome.

In 2011, the UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Morocco 130 (out of 187) for national development in health, education and income. Since 2000, Morocco's progress has grown steadily but has not matched the improvement of other Arab states. In 2010, 45.3 per cent of the population experienced at least one indicator of poverty, while the headcount poverty rate was 10.6 per cent of the population (2000–10).

External trade

Morocco is a member of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (Gafta) along with 16 other countries, within an Arab economic bloc. A customs union was established whereby tariffs on locally produced items within Gafta are zero. It is also a signatory of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership agreement, which provides for the introduction of free trade between the EU and 10 Mediterranean countries by 2012. Morocco belongs to the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) with Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia. However internal disputes have hampered the implementation of a free trade or customs union. It also has a free trade agreement with the US.

Imports

Principal imports are crude oil, textiles, electronic and telecommunications equipment, wheat, gas and electricity, plastics.

Main sources: France (13.6 per cent of total in 2011), Spain (11.3 per cent), US (8.6 per cent).

Exports

Principal exports are clothing, fish, fruits and vegetables, chemicals (including petrochemicals), transistors, unrefined minerals, fertilisers (including phosphates) and petroleum products.

Main destinations: France (19.7 per cent of total in 2011), Spain (18.2 per cent), India (6.2 per cent).

Agriculture

Total agricultural land is 44.6 million hectares (ha), of which 47.1 per cent is pastoral and 18 per cent arable land, cultivated mainly by subsistent farmers (26 per cent of the workforce).

Principal crops are wheat, barley, maize (grown in the rain-fed areas), citrus fruits, beans, chick peas and other pulses, tomatoes (mainly for export), potatoes, olives and oilseeds. Important agri-export crops are sugar cane, sugar beet (the production of which is being developed to cut down on sugar imports) and cotton. Livestock productivity and crop yields have remained low and regular food imports of grain are necessary to meet domestic cereal requirements. Agricultural development has also been hampered by the small size of the majority of holdings and restricted access to EU markets. Many long-term government projects are under

way, including irrigation schemes, development of new techniques and financial incentives to farmers.

As the increasing population puts pressure on available resources, access to water will become more difficult. The World Bank has estimated that Morocco will become a water deficit country by 2020.

Some 32,500 tonnes of cannabis is grown annually in the deprived north of Morocco for the European market. King Mohammed has made developing the north a priority in government policy in order to combat illicit crop cultivation.

The fishing sector offers considerable potential, although export markets for the main catch, sardines, are restricted by strong competition from Spain, Portugal and France. The total catch is estimated at around one million tonnes a year, of which 150,000 tonnes is shellfish and 930,000 tonnes is marine fish.

Morocco's fleet fishes in both Atlantic and Mediterranean waters and has an agreement to fish in the Gulf of Guinea. As well as its own ports, some of Morocco's catch is landed in Portugal. Fish frozen at sea is landed at Agadir and Tan-Tan.

The government is modernising the fishing fleet and ports to exploit the rich potential of local fishing grounds. The EU donated US\$22.2 million to build four new fishing villages on Morocco's Mediterranean coast. A US\$13 million expansion programme at Sidi Ifni fishing port, enabled catches in excess of 50,000 tonnes per annum.

In December 2011, European members of parliament (MPs) voted down a new agreement with Morocco for fishing rights in the waters off Western Sahara, amid objections that the deal was illegal as the UN did not recognise Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara.

After pursuing a policy of leasing fishing rights to foreign countries such as South Korea, Japan, the former Soviet Union, Spain and Portugal, the government is now encouraging national private enterprises in the sector.

Morocco has an agreement with Norway concerning co-operation on fishery issues, exchange of expertise and data and bilateral investment promotion.

Only 9 per cent of land area is forested and most of Morocco's wood needs are imported.

Industry and manufacturing

The industrial sector accounts for 30–35 per cent of GDP and employs 37 per cent of the workforce. Most activity is concentrated in the Casablanca area.

The main industry is the processing of phosphates into phosphoric acid and fertilisers. Food processing is another major industry. Other significant industries

include oil refining, steel, cement, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, toiletries, metallurgy, textiles, leather, paper and timber, metals, rubber, plastics and vehicle assembly. The textile and leather industries employ one quarter of the industrial workforce, and export successfully.

Industrial development has switched in recent years away from import substitution and towards encouraging the manufacture of goods for export, support for small- and medium-sized producers, devolution of spending powers to local authorities and investment in other areas of the country away from Casablanca.

The French car manufacturer, Renault, opened the largest automotive factory in North Africa – inside the Tangiers Free Zone – on 9 February 2012. The plant has a capacity to produce 147,000 cars per year with a current workforce of 2,000; it could also indirectly account for up to 35,000 jobs. Renault invested US\$1.5 billion on the industrial assembly line and expects to market low price cars to Brics and other emerging economic countries.

Tourism

Morocco has a variety of destinations that include historic cities, the Sahara desert, the Atlas Mountains and the Atlantic coast, all attracting a wide assortment of visitors. The tourist industry is well established and diverse enough to cater for not only differing pockets but also culturally different clientele. There are eight sites on Unesco's World Heritage List, including archaeological sites, several historic Medinas and the ksar of Ait Ben Haddou (traditional earthen buildings of the Sahara) in southern Morocco.

Morocco was not unduly affected by the unsettled political situation of the 2011 Arab Spring. In fact, visitor numbers grew 3 per cent from January–September 2011, over the same period in 2010, when 9.3 million visitors, mostly from Europe arrived, due in large part to the 'open sky' agreement with the EU that allows any Moroccan-EU private airline operator to fly into and out of each other's territories.

Travel and tourism contributed an average 20.3 per cent of GDP (2006–11). The industry also provides jobs for up to two million workers (around 20 per cent of the workforce). Capital investment in the industry typically absorbs over 10 per cent (over US\$3 billion) per annum of total investment.

Mining

Government policy has been to open up the mining sector to investments by both minor and major mining companies. There are more than 90 mining companies producing 20 different mineral

products. The sector contributes approximately 15 per cent to GDP and employs 4 per cent of the workforce.

Although phosphates account for 92 per cent of mineral production, smaller quantities of other minerals are produced, including 500,000 tonnes of anthracite.

Morocco has large deposits of lead, zinc, copper, iron, fluorine, silver, manganese, cobalt, antimony, barytine, salt and other minerals.

Phosphate mining and the production of phosphoric acid are of vital importance to the Moroccan economy, although a large proportion of reserves is located in the disputed Western Sahara area occupied by Morocco since 1975. The sector is controlled by the state through the country's largest company, Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP). OCP is the world's largest exporter of phosphate rock. With reserves of approximately 110 billion tonnes, Morocco is estimated to contain three-quarters of the world's phosphate reserves.

Iron ore deposits in the northern Rif region, 25km from the port of Beni Eznar, include 18.2 million tonnes of magnetite ore, which could bring in 700,000–800,000 tonnes of ore per year. Silver, copper, zinc and lead are also mined.

Hydrocarbons

Proven oil reserves were one million barrels in 2008, with production at 500 barrels per day (bpd) from Morocco's Sidi Rhelem oil field. With total consumption of around 187,000bpd, the country is heavily reliant on imported oil. Oil accounts for over 80 per cent of total energy requirements, mainly imported from Saudi Arabia. Exploration projects are under way onshore, mainly in the south-west and north-east, as well as offshore.

Morocco has two oil refineries, Samir and Sidi Kacem, with a combined capacity of 155,000bpd.

Although Morocco contains only limited natural gas reserves at 1.6 billion cubic metres in 2007, the country is a major transit centre for Algerian gas exports to Europe. The Maghreb-Europe pipeline transports Algerian gas to Spain via Morocco and the Straits of Gibraltar. Ultimately it is planned to carry 20 billion cubic metres of gas per year to Europe via Spain.

A new gas find in the Atlantic Ocean, off the northern coast of Morocco, was announced on 30 March 2009, with 28 billion cubic metres of recoverable natural gas.

Although there is one coal mine, at Jerada, with 91 million tonnes of reserves no production is undertaken and all coal is imported from South Africa and Poland.

Western Sahara currently does not produce any hydrocarbons and relies entirely on imports to meet domestic demand; it imported 2,000 barrels per day (bpd) of petroleum products in 2008.

Despite the UN's legal counsel to the Security Council, which said that Morocco should not have issued oil-exploration rights of the Western Sahara's 210,000 square km of territorial waters without the consent of the Polisario (Western Sahara's independence movement), seismic exploration offshore by contracted international oil and gas companies has continued since 2001. The legality of these contracts can only be settled after the status of Western Sahara is internationally recognised.

Western Sahara does not produce nor import natural gas and any coal in use is in insignificant amounts.

Energy

Total installed electricity generating capacity was over 5 gigawatts (GW) in 2006, producing 21.9 billion kilowatt hours (kWh). There are plans to increase capacity to cater for Morocco's expanding population and economic growth; contracts for new natural gas-fired power plants, sited in the north, have been let since 2007, including an 800MW station in the Sidi Kacem Province and a 300MW plant in Mohammedia.

To avoid blackouts and government expenditure the private sector is increasing its market share of electricity generation. The Office National de l'Electricité (ONE) is solely responsible for electricity transmission and distribution. The entire energy sector is in the process of being liberalised and observers consider the state's share of electricity generation will decline to around 40 per cent by 2020.

Morocco has completed 40 per cent of the construction of a nuclear reactor and is looking to other non-fossil fuel energy sources to provide 10 per cent of its energy needs by 2011, including wind turbines and hydro- and solar power. The Programme d'Electrification Rural Global (PERG) (global rural electrification programme) began in the 1990s and through the use of distribution lines or photovoltaic panels most rural homes and villages have access to electricity. Around 10 per cent of homes are powered by solar energy.

In November 2011, the World Bank agreed to loan US\$297 million to back the 500MW photovoltaic power plant in the southern city of Ouarzazate. The World Bank support will fund generation of the first 160MW before a commercial return of the investment provides the remainder.

Western Sahara's total installed generating capacity was 58MW in 2007, producing 90 million kWh.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Bourse de Casablanca (Casablanca Stock Exchange) (CSE)

Banking and insurance

The Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur (BMCE) was the first Moroccan bank and has grown steadily since 1995. It has broadened its international shareholder base and opened new branches throughout Morocco and abroad. At 8 per cent it has the largest capitalisations on the stock exchange, and around 25 per cent of that of the banking sector. The Banque Commerciale du Maroc (BCM) holds the sector's best return on equity. It has a bad debt reduction strategy, and lower levels of bad debts than its competitors.

The Banque Centrale Populaire (BCP), the Banque Nationale pour le Développement Economique (BNDE) and the Crédit Immobilier et Hôtelier (CIH) are scheduled for privatisation. They are criticised for being burdened with high levels of bad debt and may need radical restructuring if they are to survive and compete in an adverse economic climate.

Central bank

Bank al Maghrib

Main financial centre

Casablanca

Time

GMT

Geography

Morocco is situated in the extreme north-west of Africa. It has a long coastline on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and, east of the Strait of Gibraltar, on the Mediterranean Sea, facing southern Spain. Morocco's eastern frontier is with Algeria, while to the south lies the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

There are four distinct geographical regions, from the low-lying arid Saharan desert in the south to the Rif mountains in the north. A wide, fertile, coastal plain runs in an arc along the western seaboard and around to the Mediterranean Coast, bounded by the Rif and Atlas mountains.

The Atlas mountains bisect the country from south-west to north-east and contain the highest peak in North Africa, Jebel Toubkal (4,165 metres) in the main range called the Great Atlas. The two main rivers, the Moulouya flows into the Mediterranean sea and the Sebou flows into the Atlantic.

Western Sahara is typical semiarid Sahel (an Arab word to describe a border or margin) of savannah and scrubland with low hills in the north and south.

Hemisphere

Northern

Climate

Varies widely with area; while Mediterranean on the coast, it is hotter and drier inland and Alpine in the High Atlas, yet Saharan in the south. Summer is from May–October. It is dry and hot, with temperatures between 23–28 degrees Celsius (C) on the coast, 30–45 degrees C inland. Winter runs from November–April, with light rain on the coast, average temperature 15–21 degrees C, and dry inland with temperatures between 20–30 degrees C.

Dress codes

Lightweight suits are best for formal wear. Women should dress modestly. Some visitors adopt the traditional *jellaba*, which is more comfortable in both hot and cool weather and is usually worn by men. It can get cool quickly after dark, so a light overcoat or wrap is advised.

Entry requirements**Passports**

Required by all. Passports must be valid for at least six months from the date of entry.

Visa

Required by all, except citizens of EU, North America and Australasia, for visits including business trips up to three months, for further exceptions and information see: www.maec.gov.ma and follow link from *Consular* to *Formalities and procedures for international visitors*.

Currency advice/regulations

The import and export of local currency is prohibited. The import and export of foreign currency is unlimited but all amounts over Dh15,000 must be declared.

Up to half (and a greater percentage for visits of less than 48 hours) of the Moroccan dirham purchased by a visitor may be re-exchanged for foreign currency, on the production of bank sales vouchers, when departing.

Travellers cheques are accepted in banks and to avoid additional exchange fees, cheques in US dollars and pounds sterling are best.

Prohibited imports

Import restrictions apply to firearms and ammunition, permits must be obtained before travelling.

Health (for visitors)**Mandatory precautions**

Vaccinations against yellow fever are required if arriving from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Typhoid, tetanus and polio vaccinations are recommended. Anti-malaria precautions should be taken. Water may be contaminated. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled.

Hotels

Inexpensive and widely available. Two main types: graded hotels (which are given a one- to five-star rating by the Tourist Board) and small (and usually old) unlisted hotels. A service charge and local tax is normally added to bill.

Credit cards

Major credit cards widely accepted. ATMs can be found in cities and large towns.

Public holidays (national)**Fixed dates**

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 11 Jan (Independence Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 30 Jul (Feast of the Throne), 14 Aug (Oued Eddahab Allegiance Day), 20 Aug (The King and the People's Revolution Day), 21 Aug (King Mohammed's Birthday), 6 Nov (Anniversary of the Green March), 18 Nov (Independence Day).

Holidays that fall at the weekend are not transferred to another day.

Variable dates

Eid al Adha (two days), Islamic New Year, Birth of the Prophet (two days), Eid al Fitr (two days).

Islamic year 1435 (5 Nov 2013–24 Oct 2014):

The Islamic year contains 354 or 355 days, with the result that Muslim feasts advance by 10–12 days against the Gregorian calendar. Dates of feasts vary according to the sighting of the new moon, so cannot be forecast exactly.

Working hours**Banking**

Mon–Thu: 0815–1215 and 1415–1715, Fri: 0815–1115 and 1430–1730; Sat 0900–1300. Ramadan: Mon–Fri: 0900–1530.

Business

Winter: Mon–Fri: 0800–1200 and 1400–1800/2000. Summer hours vary, some work Mon–Fri: 0800–1500/1600, others revert to winter hours. Ramadan: Mon–Fri: 0900–1500/1600.

Government

Winter: Mon–Fri: 0800–1200 and 1430–1800. Summer: Mon–Sat: 0800–1600. Ramadan: Mon–Sat: 0900–1500.

Shops

Shops are usually open between 0800 and 1800, often closing for a few hours in the middle of the day.

Telecommunications**Mobile/cell phones**

GSM 900 services are available for most of Morocco and northern Western Sahara.

Electricity supply

220V AC, 50 cycles; sockets are typically the European two-pronged variety.

Social customs/useful tips

Business visits during the Muslim month of Ramadan are best avoided, as many businesses close during part or all of this period. During Ramadan, visitors should respect Muslim traditions and avoid drinking, eating and smoking in public during daylight hours.

Pork and alcohol are forbidden to Muslims at all times, so these should not be offered, although in practice alcohol is widely available and its consumption not considered an insult to Islam.

Business practices in most respects are similar to those in France and Spain.

Tipping is common for most services, including hotel porters, cinema usherettes, cloakroom attendants, railway porters, and so on. In hotels and restaurants a service charge is normally added to the bill. Taxi drivers (in *grand taxis* only) will expect a 10 per cent tip.

Security

Street crime is a problem, especially in the larger cities where petty theft is rife.

Women may also encounter sexual harassment on the streets at any time, especially when walking alone.

Getting there**Air**

National airline: Royal Air Maroc

International airport/s: Casa-blanca-Mohammed V (CMN), 30km south of the city, duty-free shops, restaurant, bank, post office, car hire and business centre. There are taxis to Casablanca and a rail link to Rabat.

Tangier-Boukhalef Souahel (TNG), 11km from city, with duty-free shops, restaurant, bank, post office, shops, car hire.

Other airport/s: Agadir-Inezgane (AGA), 6.5km south of city, bar, buffet, bank, car hire; Fez-Sais (FEZ), 10km from city; Rabat-Salé (RBA), 10km from city, restaurant, bank, car hire; Marrakesh (RAK), 6km from city.

Airport tax: None

Surface

Road: Road access is possible from Algeria via Oujda.

Rail: There are good rail connections to Tunisia, France and Spain (via rail-ferry link). The international rail link is via Oujda. In 2002, rail links to Algeria were suspended.

Water: Regular car ferry and hydrofoil services connect Spain, France and Gibraltar with Tangier and the Spanish administered ports of Ceuta and Melilla.

Main port/s: Agadir, Casablanca (major freight port), Jorf Lasfar, Kenitra, Mohammedia, Nador, Safi, Tangier (main passenger port).

Getting about

National transport

Air: Royal Air Maroc operates domestic services to main centres. Regional Airlines is another domestic carrier.

Road: Morocco has approximately 30,000km of surfaced roads. The links between main centres are generally good. Some of the 30,000km country roads need care and/or local knowledge. The Atlas Mountains may be impassable in winter.

Buses: There are frequent, cheap services between towns. Long-distance services include: Tangier-Oujda, Fez-Marrakesh; Agadir-Casablanca and Tangier-Casablanca. It is advisable to book in advance.

Rail: A limited (1,893km) but efficient network is operated by Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF). Fares are cheap. Three classes are available. Air-conditioning, air-conditioned sleeping cars – couchettes and restaurant cars are available; supplements may be payable. Routes include: Oujda-Fez-Rabat-Casablanca, Marrakesh-Casablanca-Rabat and Casablanca-Rabat-Tangier.

City transport

Taxis: The *grand taxis* (Moroccan bus-taxis), seating up to six persons, operate along specific routes and can be arranged at hotel receptions, or can be found outside bus and train stations and the airport. They are cheaper than a conventional taxi for long journeys and more comfortable and convenient than a bus. The *petit taxis* are metered and operate within cities. Fares vary considerably; drivers prefer to set fares in advance, rather than use the meter, so each journey is preceded by a negotiation. A 10 per cent tip is usual.

Buses, trams & metro: Agadir, Casablanca, Tangier and other main towns have good bus services. Tickets can be bought in advance of journeys. There is a shuttle bus service from the Casablanca rail station to the CTM Gare Routière (bus station) which takes at least 45 minutes, depending on traffic.

Trains: Train service every 30 minutes connects Casablanca's Mohammed V Airport with the city's main railway stations, Voyageurs and Port.

Car hire

Car hire is widely available but expensive. Major hire companies operate from Agadir, Casablanca and Tangier. National or international driving licences are accepted. Driving is on the right.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that

changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international dialling code (IDD) for Morocco is +212, followed by area code and subscriber's number:

Agadir	48	Mohammedia	232
Casablanca	22	Rabat	37
Fes	55	Tangier	39
Marrakech	44		

Chambers of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce in Morocco, Hyatt Regency Casablanca, Place des Nations Unies, Casablanca (tel: 293-028; fax: 481-597; email: amcham@amcham-morocco.com).

British Chamber of Commerce for Morocco, 65 Avenue Hassan Seghir, Casablanca (tel: 448-860; fax: 448-868; email: britcham@casanet.net.ma).

Casablanca Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et des Services, 98 Boulevard Mohammed V, PO Box 423, Casablanca (tel: 264-327; fax: 268-436; email: ccisc@cciscx.gov.ma).

Chambre de Commerce Internationale, Boulevard de Bordeaux, Casablanca (tel: 225-111; fax: 225-119; email: icc@casanet.net.ma).

French Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie du Maroc, 15 Avenue Mers Sultan, PO Box 15810, Casablanca (tel: 209-090; fax: 200-130; email: cfcim@cfcim.org).

Marrakech Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et de Services, Djinan El Harti Gueliz, Marrakech (tel: 431-951; fax: 430-950; email: ccismar@iam.net.ma).

Morocco Fédération des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie, 6 Rue Erfoud, Rabat (tel: 766-108; fax: 767-076; e-mail: fccjsm@maghrebnet.net.ma).

Rabat Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et de Services, 6 Rue Ghandi, PO Box 131, Rabat (tel: 703-185; fax: 703-166; email: ccisrs@ccisrs.org.ma).

Tangiers Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et de Services, Angle Rue Ibn Taymia et Rue El Hariri, Tangier (tel: 946-026; fax: 942-954; email: cciswtg@iam.net.ma).

Banking

ABN Amro Bank (Moroc) SA, PO Box 13478, 47 Rue Allal Ben Abellah, Casablanca 20000 (tel: 266-027; fax: 222-514).

Banque Centrale Populaire, 101 Boulevard Mohamed Zerkouni, Casablanca (tel: 222-589; fax: 222-699; e-mail: aslamti@cpm.co.ma).

Banque Commerciale du Maroc, 2 Boulevard Moulay Youssef, Casablanca (tel: 224-169; fax: 469-916).

Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur SA, PO Box 13.425, 140 Avenue Hassan II, Casablanca 01 (tel: 220-0325, 220-0467; fax: 220-0005, 220-0060).

Crédit du Maroc SA, PO Box 13579, 48-58 Boulevard Mohammed V, Casablanca 20000 (tel: 477-000; fax: 277-127, 206-076/77).

Crédit Immobilier et Hôtelier, 187 Avenue Hassan II, Casablanca 20000 (tel: 222-7863; fax: 248-7537, 227-8631).

Groupement Professionnel des Banques du Maroc (Moroccan Banking Association), 71 Avenue des Forces Armées Royales, Casablanca (tel: 311-624; fax: 311-911).

Société Marocaine de Dépôt et de Crédit, 79 Avenue Hassan II, Casablanca (tel: 224-114; fax: 271-590).

Wafabank, 163 Avenue Hassan II, Casablanca (tel: 220-0200, 227-1091, 226-5151, 222-4105; fax: 226-3621).

Central bank

Bank al Maghrib, PO Box 445, 277 Avenue Mohammed V, Rabat (tel: 702-626; fax: 706-677).

Stock exchange

Bourse de Casablanca (Casablanca Stock Exchange) (CSE), www.casablanca-bourse.com

Travel information

Casablanca Airport, Office National des Aéroports, Casa-Oasis, BP 8101 Casablanca (tel: 539-040, 539-140; fax: 539-051, 539-901; internet: www.ondo.org.ma).

Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF) Tourist Office, 98 Boulevard Mohammed V, Casablanca (tel: 221-524).

Royal Air Maroc, 44 Avenue des Forces Armées Royales, Casablanca (tel: 311-122; fax: 442-409).

Ministry of tourism

Ministry of Economy, Finance and Tourism, Quartier Administratif, Chellah, Rabat (tel: 760-147; 760-509; fax: 761-575; e-mail: ministre@mfie.gov.ma; internet site: http://www.tourisme-marocain.com/frame/infos.htm).

National tourist organisation offices

Morocco National Tourist Board (ONMT), Rue Oued Fes, Angle Avenue Al Abtal, Agdal, Rabat (tel: 681-531; fax: 777-437; e-mail: visitemorocco@mbox.azure.net).

Ministries

Prime Minister's Office, Palais Royal, Le Méchouar, Rabat (tel: 762-709; fax: 769-995).

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Place Abdallah Chefchaoui, Quartier Administratif, Rabat (tel: 760-933; fax: 763-378).

Ministry of Communication, 10 Rue de Béni Mellal, Place de la Grande Poste, Avenue Mohammed V, Rabat (tel: 766-016; fax: 766-908; internet site: www.mincom.gov.ma).

Ministry of Economic Forecasts and Planning, Avenue Al Haj Cherkaoui, Agdal, Rabat (tel: 761-415; fax: 760-771).

Ministry of Economy, Finance and Tourism, Quartier Administratif, Chellah, Rabat (tel: 760-147; 760-509; fax: 761-575; email: ministre@mfe.gov.ma; internet site: www.finances.gov.ma).

Ministry of Education, Bab Rouah, Rabat (tel: 771-822; fax: 772-042).

Minister of Employment, Vocational Training, Social Development and Solidarity (tel: 760-695; fax: 766-633).

Ministry of Equipment, Quartier Administratif, Chellah, Rabat (tel: 762-811; fax: 765-505).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Avenue Roosevelt, Rabat (tel: 762-841; fax: 764-679; email: mail@maec.gov.ma; internet site: www.maec.gov.ma).

Minister of Habous and Islamic Affairs, Le Méchouar, Rabat (tel: 766-801; fax: 765-257; e-mail: webmaster@habous.gov.ma).

Ministry of Health, 335 Boulevard Mohammed V, Rabat (tel: 761-121; fax: 768-401; e-mail: webmaster@sante.gov.ma).

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Charia Bouregreg, Rabat (tel: 707-496; fax: 737-236).

Ministry of Human Rights (tel: 673-131; fax: 671-967).

Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Energy, and Mines, Quartier Administratif,

Chellah, Rabat (tel: 761-868; fax: 766-265; email: ministre@mcinet).

Ministry of Interior, Quartier Administratif, Rabat (tel: 761-861; fax: 762-056).

Ministry of Justice, Place Mamounia, Rabat (tel: 732-941; fax: 730-772).

Minister of Land Management, Urban Affairs, Housing and the Environment (tel: 763-539; fax: 763-510).

Ministry of Parliamentary Relations, Quartier Administratif, Agdal, Rabat (tel: 775-170; fax: 775-468).

Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform (770-894; fax: 775-690).

Ministry of Public Sector and Privatisation (internet site: www.minpriv.gov.ma).

Ministry of Sea Fisheries, Quartier Administratif, Rabat (tel: 770-154; fax: 778-540).

Ministry of Transport and Merchant Marine (tel: 774-266; fax: 779-525).

Ministry of Youth and Sport, Boulevard Ibn Sina, Agdal, Rabat, (tel: 680-045; fax: 680-916).

Other useful addresses

Bourse de Casablanca (Stock Exchange), Avenue de l'Armée Royale, Casablanca (tel: 452-626; fax: 452-625; email: contact@casablanca-bourse.com).

British Consulate-General, 43 Boulevard d'Anfa, Casablanca (tel: 221-653; fax: 265-779; email: british.consulate@casanet.net.ma).

British Embassy, 17 Boulevard de la Tour Hassan, Rabat (tel: 729-696; fax: 704-531; email: britemb@mtds.com).

Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM), Angle Avenue des Forces Armées Royales et Rue Mohamed Errachid, Casablanca (tel: 252-696; fax: 253-839).

Fédération des Industries Chimiques et Parachimiques (FICP), 36 Rue Chaouia, Casablanca (tel: 229-215; fax: 225-613).

Fédération des Industries de la Conserve des Produits Agricoles du Maroc (FICOPAM), 77 Rue Mohamed Smiha, Casablanca (tel: 303-953; fax: 303-534).

Fédération des Industries Métallurgiques, Mécaniques, Electriques et Electroniques (FIMME), 147 Rue Mohamed Smiha, Casablanca (tel: 301-683; fax: 940-587).

Moroccan Centre for Export Promotion, 23 Rue Bnou Majed El Bahar, Casablanca (tel: 522 302 210; fax: 522 301-793; email: info@marocexport.ma).

Moroccan Embassy (USA), 1601 21st Street, NW, Washington DC 20009 (tel: (+1-202) 462-7979; fax: (+1-202) 265-0161; email: sifarausa@erols.com).

National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT), Boulevard Ennakhil, Rabat (tel: 717-312; email: webmaster@anrt.net.ma).

Office pour le Développement Industriel (ODI), 10 Rue Ghandi, Rabat (tel: 708-460; fax: 707-695).

ONAREP (national oil company), 34 Avenue Al Fadila, Rabat (tel: 281-616; fax: 281-634; email: benkhadr@onarep.com).

United States Embassy, 2 Avenue de Mohamed El Fassi, Rabat (tel: 762-265; fax: 765-661).

National news agency: Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP)

BP1049, 122 Ave Allal Ben Abdellah, Rabat (tel: 764-083; email: webmap@map.co.ma; internet: www.map.ma/eng).

Other news agencies: APA (African Press Agency): www.apanews.net

Reuters Africa: <http://africa.reuters.com>

Internet sites

Africa Business Network: www.ifc.org/abn

AllAfrica.com: <http://allafrica.com>

African Development Bank: www.afdb.org

Information on Morocco – historical events, cities, economy, culture and media: www.dsg.ki.se/maroc/

Mbendi AfroPaedia (information on companies, countries, industries and stock exchanges in Africa): <http://mbendi.co.za>

Menara Yellow Pages (in French): www.menara.co.ma/pagejauneHome.asp