FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

MOROCCO

THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TODAY

Location	The Kingdom of 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, which has a lengthy Atlantic coastline and borders Mauritania to the east and south.
Size	710,850 sq. km. (274,461 sq. miles), including the 252,120 sq. km (97,344 sq. miles) area of the disputed Western Sahara annexation.
Land boundaries	Total: 2,017.9 km. Border countries: Algeria: 1,559 km, Western Sahara 443 km, Spain (Ceuta): 6.3 km and Spain (Melilla) 9.6 km.
Coastline	1,835 km
Land use	Arable land: 17.5%, permanent crops: 2.9%, permanent pastures: 4701%, forests and woodlands: 11.5% and other: 21%.
Irrigated land	12,580 sq. km.
Elevation extremes	Lowest point: Sebkha Tah -55 meter and highest point: Jbel Toubkal 4,165 meter.
Maritime claims	Territorial sea: 12 nm (22 km), contiguous zone: 24 nm (44km), exclusive economic zone: 200 nm (370 km) and continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation.
Population	37,067,420 estimated for 2023.
Population Density	79.7 (approx) per sq. km
Population growth rate	0.88% estimated for 2023.
Life expectancy rate at birth	Total population: 73.95 years; male: 72.26 years and female: 75.72 years in 2023 est
Birth rate	17.1 births/1,000 population in 2023 est.
Death rate	6.61 deaths/1,000 population in 2023 est.
Net migration rate	-1.73 migrants/1,000 population in 2023 est.
Literacy rate	Total population: 75.90; Male: 84.80 and female: 67.4% (2021 est).
Capital City	Rabat
Other large cities	Casablanca, Fes (Fez), Marrakesh, Oujda, Agadir, Meknes, Tangiers, Kenitra, Beni Mellal, Safi, Tetouan, Mohammedia, Nador, Ksar-el-Kebir and Khouribga etc.
Religion	The established religion is Islam, and most of the country's inhabitants are Muslims. There are Christian and Jewish minorities.
Language	The official language is Arabic, but a large minority speaks Berber. Spanish is widely spoken in the northern regions, and French in the rest of Morocco.
Climate	Morocco's climate is semi-tropical. It is warm and sunny on the summer. Average temperatures are 27° C (81° F) in summer and 7° C (45° F) in winter for Rabat, and 38° C (101° F) and 4° C (40° F) respectively for Marrakesh. The rainy season in the north is from November to April.
International Relations	Morocco is a member of the UN, WTO, the League of Arab States, Arab Maghreb Union, African Development Bank, IOM, OIC, Islamic Development Bank and the International Organization of the Francophonie.
International dialing code	+212
Currency	The unit of currency is Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

NATIONAL ECONOMY

Economic activity has recovered most of the ground lost during the severe global recession of 2020. This performance owes to continued fiscal and monetary stimulus, the rebound of exports, buoyant remittances, and the exceptional harvest following two years of drought. After shrinking by 6.3 percent in 2020, GDP is forecast to have grown by 6.3 percent in 2021, among the highest in the Middle East and North Africa region. Despite having recovered most of the jobs lost in 2020, the unemployment rate of 11.8 percent is still above pre-pandemic level, driven by a rebound of the participation rate. Moroccan banks have weathered the crisis well, thanks to the prompt and exceptional support from Bank al-Maghrib.

GDP growth is projected at around 3 percent in 2022, as agriculture output returns to average levels and non-agricultural activity continues to recover. Recent inflationary pressures have remained manageable and are expected to wane in the medium term, as cost pressures from global supply disruptions are reabsorbed. After the sharp contraction in 2020, the current account deficit is projected to return in 2021 to levels closer to before the pandemic and to stabilize around 3.5 percent of GDP over the medium term. While this outlook remains subject to uncertainty, with much of the risks depending on the evolution of the pandemic, a fast and effective implementation of structural reforms should increase growth over the medium term.

Executive Board Assessment

In concluding the Article IV consultation with Morocco, Executive Directors endorsed the staff's appraisal as follows:

Morocco's economy is rebounding from the 2020 recession, thanks to the exceptional harvest, the rebound of exports, accommodative monetary and fiscal policy stances, and the continued strength in remittances. After a strong compression in 2020, the current account deficit is returning to levels closer to pre-pandemic, but Morocco has emerged from the crisis with a much stronger international reserve position. Staff expects GDP to grow at around 3 percent over the next few years, as the effects from the pandemic on potential activity are gradually reabsorbed and to accelerate gradually thereafter under the positive impact of structural reforms. These projections remain subject to a high level of uncertainty, related both to the evolution of the pandemic and the pace of implementation and effectiveness of the reforms.

The faster than expected closure of the output gap and higher government debt ratio would require a tighter fiscal policy stance than currently envisaged. Staff expects the fiscal deficit to fall very slowly over the medium term and the central government debt-to-GDP ratio to stabilize at close to 80 percent. While public debt remains sustainable, a faster fiscal consolidation process that brings the debt-to-GDP ratio closer to pre-pandemic levels over the medium term would make Morocco less vulnerable to further negative shocks and free more resources for private sector investment. The fiscal policy should be anchored by a credible medium-term macro-fiscal framework and underpinned by a comprehensive reform of the tax system and systematic review of government spending, supplemented by a civil service reform to contain wage bill increase.

Lower fiscal deficits would allow monetary policy to remain accommodative for longer, assuming inflationary pressures will remain manageable. The recent rise in inflation is limited and expected to subside as the imported cost pressures from supply-side bottlenecks and higher commodity prices become less relevant over time. As long as these pressures do not contaminate domestic inflation expectations, BAM has the space for a gradual normalization of monetary policy conditions but should stand ready to tighten its stance if inflationary pressures further accelerate. The recent appreciation of the dirham to the lower end of the exchange rate band offers an opportunity to accelerate the planned transition to an inflation-targeting framework.

Staff welcomes the authorities' commitment to a new wave of structural reforms. The generalization of the social protection system should remove existing gaps in coverage and quality of health care services and strengthen Morocco's social safety net. Together with the full implementation of the Unified Social Registry, these reforms should improve inclusiveness and efficiency. Reforming SOEs should reduce their financial burden on the budget and remove distortions that prevent market neutrality and hinder private sector development. Finally, the New Model of Development (NMD) contains several useful recommendations for strengthening the competitiveness of Moroccan firms, improving governance, boosting human capital, and building a more inclusive society.

Careful implementation of the reforms will be critical for their success. The reforms already ongoing and those suggested in the New Model of Development report have the potential to yield a stronger, more inclusive, and sustainable growth path for Morocco. Still, given the potentially large financing needs associated with these reforms, the uncertain impact on potential output, and the narrow fiscal space, carefully designing and sequencing are needed, on the basis of an adequate financing plan and within a coherent and stable macroeconomic framework.

Morocco: Selected Economic Indicators, 2017-26											
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
					Proj.	Proj.	Proj.	Proj.	Proj.	Proj.	
Output (annual											
percent change)											
Real GDP growth	4.2	3.1	2.6	-6.3	6.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	
Real	2.9	3.1	3.7	-6.0	4.7	3.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	
nonagricultural											
GDP growth											
Employment											
(percent)											
Unemployment	10.6	9.4	10.2	12.2	11.8	11.3	10.9	10.4	9.9	9.3	
Prices											
Inflation (end of	1.7	0.1	1.0	-0.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.0	
period)											
Inflation (period	0.7	1.6	0.2	0.7	1.3	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.0	
average)											
Central											
government											
finances (percent											
of GDP) 1/											
Revenue	26.0	26.1	25.6	28.6	25.3	26.0	26.2	26.4	26.8	26.9	
Expenditure	30.1	29.8	29.4	36.1	32.2	32.3	32.1	31.3	30.9	30.5	
Fiscal balance	-3.5	-3.7	-3.8	-7.6	-6.8	-6.3	-5.9	-4.9	-4.1	-3.6	
Public debt	65.1	65.2	65.1	76.4	76.9	77.5	79.2	79.5	79.0	78.3	
Money and credit											
(annual percent											
change)											
Broad money	5.5	4.1	3.8	8.4							
Claims to the	3.3	3.4	5.6	4.6							
economy 2/											
Velocity of broad	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7							
money											

Balance of										
payments Current account including official transfers (percent of GDP)	-3.4	-5.3	-3.7	-1.5	-3.0	-3.2	-3.1	-3.3	-3.4	-3.4
Exports of goods (in U.S. dollars, annual percent change)	12.7	11.6	1.9	-15.2	22.5	12.7	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.7
Imports of goods (in U.S. dollars, annual percent change)	9.3	12.2	-2.3	-14.8	29.0	10.5	5.0	5.7	6.2	5.8
Merchandise trade balance	-16.5	-17.2	-16.5	-13.5	-15.4	-16.5	-16.5	-16.6	-16.8	-16.9
FDI (percent of GDP)	1.5	2.4	0.7	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
Gross reserves (months of imports)	5.7	5.4	6.9	7.1	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.1	5.7	5.4
External Debt (percent of GDP)	34.8	31.8	33.1	43.7	40.5	41.6	41.2	40.7	40.2	39.8
Exchange rate										
REER (annual average, percent change)	-0.4	0.8	0.7	1.1						
Memorandum Items:										
Nominal GDP (in billions of U.S. dollars)	109.7	118.1	119.9	114.6	126.1	131.2	138.1	145.4	153.5	153.5
Net imports of energy products (in billions of U.S. dollars)	-7.2	-8.8	-7.9	-5.2	-7.7	-9.4	-9.2	-9.6	-9.8	-9.9
Local currency per U.S. dollar (period average)	9.7	9.4	9.6	9.5						::

Sources: Moroccan authorities; and Fund staff estimates.

2/ Includes credit to public enterprises.

^{1/} Include grants.

[&]quot;NATIONAL ECONOMY" is based on IMF Executive Board Concludes 2021 Article IV Consultation with Morocco February 9, 2022.

FOREIGN TRADE

Morocco's total exports in 2018 were of the order of US\$ 29,360 million. It increased to US\$ 42,183 million in 2022. Exports during the period from 2018 to 2022, in terms of percentage, grew highest (32.06%) in 2021 and fell maximum (-6.35%) in 2020 in comparison with 2020 and 2019 respectively. The annual average compound growth rate worked out at 9.48%.

Imports, on the other hand, were of the order of US\$ 72,578 million in 2022 while in 2018 it was US\$ 51,299 million. Imports during the period from 2018 to 2022, in terms of percentage, grew highest (31.78%) in 2021 and fell maximum (-12.78%) in 2020 as compared to 2020 and 2019 respectively. The annual average compound rate of growth worked out at 9.06%.

Volume of trade registered an annual average (compound) rate of growth of 9.22% from US\$ 80,659 million in 2018 to US\$ 114,761 million in 2022.

Morocco faced a deficit balance of trade during the said period (See Table I).

Morocco's export and import, volume and balance of trade between 2018 and 2022 along with their growth rates are given in **Table-I.**

Morocco is an emerging market at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East that imports more than \$11billion worth of goods each year during the period under review.

Morocco's merchandise exports comprise three main groups of products which account for about 80 per cent of the country's merchandise export earnings: agricultural produce and seafood, textiles and clothing, and phosphate and phosphate derivatives. Morocco possesses more than half the world's phosphate reserves and, internationally, is the leading phosphate exporter. Moreover, it is phosphates that enable Morocco to maintain a presence in a large number of foreign markets.

The services sector in Morocco is mainly based on tourism which is favoured by the natural beauty of the country and its cultural heritage. Tourist activities bring in as much foreign currency as agricultural and seafood exports combined (about 30 per cent of merchandise export earnings). European tourists represent about 60 per cent of the total. Although considerable, tourist earnings and the remittances from Moroccans working abroad are not sufficient to absorb the structural deficits of the trade balance.

With political and economic stability, development of democratic institutions and economic and social reforms, Morocco is evolving as a stable country in the region. Its strategic location as a gateway to Europe and African continent makes it even more attractive for investments from other countries. Morocco enjoys sound political relations with the EU countries (with some exception of Spain) as well as all Arab countries. Morocco is also seeking to conclude Free Trade Agreement with the EU. Morocco-USA relations are also on a sound footing and both the countries have reached an advanced stage in their negotiations to sign a Free Trade Agreement. Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have recently concluded Free Trade Agreement and Mauritania and Lebanon have expressed their desire to join this group. These developments make Morocco an attractive destination for investments and joint ventures.

The main international airports are at Casablanca (King Muhammad V), Rabat, Tangier, Marrakesh, Agadir Inezgane, Fez, Oujda, Al-Hocima, el-Aaiun, Ouarzate and Agadir al-Massira. Construction of a new international airport at al-Aroui, located 25 km south of Nador, began in late 1998. In November 1999 the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development granted a loan worth US\$ 32.7 million to finance a project to extend and modernize King Muhammad V airport. The project, which

includes the construction of a second runway and new terminal buildings, was scheduled for completion by 2005.

The national carrier is Royal Air Maroc. Morocco launched its first private air company, Regional Air Lines, to serve the major regions of the kingdom, in addition to southern Spain and the Canary Islands.

According to the Ministry of Equipment, Morocco's 21 ports handled 53.2 million tons of goods in 2000. The most important ports, in terms of the volume of goods handled, are Casablanca, Mohammadia, Jorf Lasfar and Safi. Tangier is the principal port for passenger services. Construction work on new ports at Tangier and Agadir commenced in 2000.

BILATERAL TRADE WITH INDIA

Indo-Morocco bilateral trade in 2018-19 was of the order of Rs.14,019.34 crores. It increased to Rs.28,968.38 crores in 2022-23. The annual compound growth rate of volume of trade during the period from 2018-19 to 2022-23 was 19.89%. India faced a deficit balance of trade during the said period **(see table II).** The average annual compound growth rates of exports and imports worked out at 15.40% and 22.02% respectively.

India's exports to, and imports from Morocco of Merchandise Goods between 2018-19 and 2022-23 with their growth rates are presented in **Table II.**

India's top ten merchandise goods exported to and imported from Morocco during 2018-19 to 2022-23, along with their growth rates are depicted in **Table III & IV** respectively.

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			TABLE - I									
MOROCCO'S TOTAL EXPORTS AND IMPORTS, VOLUME AND BALANCE OF TRADE												
			BETWEEN 2	018 TO 2022.								
					(Figures in US MIL	LION DOLLARS)						
Year	Exports	Percentage	Import	Percentage	Volume	Percentage	Balance					
		Growth in		Growth in	of	Growth in	of					
		Exports		Imports	Trade	Vol. of Trade	Trade					
2018	29360		51299		80,659		-21939					
2019	29582	0.76	51049	<i>-0.49</i>	80,631	-0.03	<i>-21467</i>					
2020	27703	-6.35	44526	-12.78	72,229	-10.42	-16823					
2021	36585	32.06	58678	31.78	95,263	31.89	-22093					
2022	42183	<i>15.30</i>	72578	23.69	1,14,761	20.47	-30395					
Annual												
Compound												
Growth Rate	9.48		9.06		9.22							
NOTE :	Figures re	ate to calendar	year, January t	o December.								
SOURCE :	UN COMTRA	DE PUBLICAT	ΓΙΟΝ									

	TABLE - II											
	INDIA	INDIA'S EXPORT TO AND IMPORT FROM MOROCCO OF MERCHANDISE										
		GOODS DURING 2018-2019 TO 2022-2023										
				C	Value in Rs. C	RORES)						
Year	Exports	Percentage	Import	Percentage	Volume	Percentage	Balance					
		Growth in		Growth in	of	Growth in	of					
		Exports		Imports	Trade	Vol. of Trade	Trade					
2018-19	4752.20		9267.14		14019.34		-4514.94					
2019-20	5662.07	19.15	6724.91	-27.43	12386.98	-11.64	-1062.84					
2020-21	3751.37	-33.75	10664.41	58.58	14415.78	16.38	-6913.04					
2021-22	7197.71	91.87	16761.02	57.17	23958.73	66.20	-9563.31					
2022-23	8427.05	17.08	20541.33	22.55	28968.38	20.91	-12114.28					
Annual												
Compound												
Growth Rate	15.40		22.02		19.89							
NOTE :	Figures rel	ate to Financial	Year April to M	arch.								
SOURCE :	Directorate G	General of Comm	nercial Intellige	nce & Statistics,								
	Ministry o	of Commerce &	Industry, Kolka	ta 700 107.								

			TABLE -III							
	INDIA'S MAJO	OR ITEMS (OF MERCH	ANDISE EX	PORT TO I	MOROCCO				
	20	2018-2019 TO 2022-2023 AND THEIR GROWTH RATES (Value in Rs								
SI. No.	Name of the Merchandise Commodities			Value	of Exports			Annual Grov	wth Rates	
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	19-20 over	20-21 over	21-22 over	22-23 over
							2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Petroleum Products	1383.43	1694.67	12.99	905.20	1568.71	22.50	-99.23	6868.44	73.30
	Share in total export	29.11	29.93	0.35	12.58	18.62				
2	Motor Vehcle/Cars	79.07	211.52	269.39	585.62	1380.56	167.51	27.36	117.39	135.74
	Share in total export	1.66	3.74	7.18	8.14	16.38				
3	Manmade Yarn, Fabrics Madeups	486.86	458.66	356.79	845.15	810.70	-5.79	-22.21	136.88	-4.08
	Share in total export	10.24	8.10	9.51	11.74	9.62				
4	Drugs Formulation, Biologicals	209.07	278.86	440.53	415.37	362.08	33.38	57.98	-5.71	-12.83
	Share in total export	4.40	4.93	11.74	5.77	4.30				
5	Spices	189.35	255.47	307.14	315.88	307.80	34.92	20.23	2.85	-2.56
	Share in total export	3.98	4.51	8.19	4.39	3.65				
6	Cotton Yarn	173.48	180.61	124.36	268.70	271.15	4.11	-31.14	116.07	0.91
	Share in total export	3.65	3.19	3.32	3.73	3.22				
7	Plastic Raw Materials	198.36	205.11	136.46	320.32	267.85	3.40	-33.47	134.74	-16.38
	Share in total export	4.17	3.62	3.64	4.45	3.18				
8	Indl. Machinery For Dairy Etc.	173.00	111.02	122.79	135.94	247.70	-35.83	10.60	10.71	82.21
	Share in total export	3.64	1.96	3.27	1.89	2.94				
9	Telecom Instruments	173.48	559.74	163.22	699.08	220.97	222.65	-70.84	328.31	-68.39
	Share in total export	3.65	9.89	4.35	9.71	2.62				
10	Sulpher, Unroasted Iron Pyrite				35.14	190.48				442.06
	Share in total export				0.49	2.26				
	Total export to MOROCCO	4752.20	5662.07	3751.37	7197.71	8427.05	19.15	-33.75	91.87	17.08
	NOTE: Figures relate to Financial Yea	r, April to M	larch.							
	SOURCE : Directorate General of Com	mercial Inte	lligence & S	statistics, M	inistry of C	ommerce &	Industry, Ko	lkata : 700 10	7.	

TABLE -IV INDIA'S MAJOR ITEMS OF MERCHANDISE IMPORT FROM MOROCCO 2018-2019 TO 2022-2023 AND THEIR GROWTH RATES (Value in Rs. CRORES) Value of Imports **Annual Growth Rates** Name of the Merchandise Commodities No. 2018-19 2019-20 2020-21 2021-22 2022-23 19-20 over 20-21 over 21-22 over 22-23 over 2021-22 2018-19 2019-20 2020-21 1 Fertilizers Manufactured 2125.92 285.61 3810.30 7616.56 11823.66 -86.57 1234.09 99.89 55.24 Share in total imports 22.94 4.25 35.73 45.44 57.56 2 Inorganic Chemicals 4965.79 4410.95 4887.19 6013.20 5236.27 -11.17 10.80 23.04 -12.92 Share in total imports 65.59 35.88 25.49 53.58 45.83 3 Fertilizers Crude 1834.24 1784.07 2604.42 2950.61 1729.06 -2.74 -3.08 50.63 13.29 Share in total imports. 19.79 26.53 16.21 15.54 14.36 4 Aluminium, Products Of Aluminium 73.51 30.63 49.32 195.42 143.05 -58.33 61.02 296.23 -26.80 Share in total import 0.79 0.70 0.46 0.46 1.17 5 Iron And Steel 39.54 42.68 38.89 103.83 95.33 7.94 -8.88 166.98 -8.19 0.62 Share in total import 0.43 0.63 0.36 0.46 6 Paper, Paper Board And Products 6.67 10.67 37.97 61.55 13.06 59.97 22.40 190.74 62.10 Share in total import 0.07 0.30 0.16 0.12 0.23 7 Spices 28.62 36.73 16.30 23.77 34.17 28.34 -55.62 45.83 43.75 Share in total import 0.31 0.55 0.15 0.14 0.17 8 Electronic Machinery And Equipmnt. 36.25 7.72 6.39 9.32 -78.70 -17.23 45.85 124.36 20.91 Share in total import 0.39 0.11 0.06 0.06 0.10 9 Electronic Components 1.46 0.27 2.12 6.43 20.53 -81.51 685.19 203.30 219.28 Share in total import 0.02 0.00 0.04 0.02 0.10 10 Other Non Ferous Metal And Prods. 2.17 1.34 0.88 0.78 18.20 -38.25 -34.33 -11.36 2233.33 0.02 Share in total import 0.02 0.01 0.00 0.09 Total import from MOROCCO 9267.14 6724.91 10664.41 16761.02 20541.33

-27.43

58.58

57.17

22.55

NOTE: Figures relate to Financial Year, April to March.

SOURCE: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Kolkata: 700 107.