

# **What contributions of the Covid-19 pandemic to the quest for a new development model in Morocco?**

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## **Abstract**

As Morocco has been engaging in a national debate about the new development model, the coronavirus pandemic hits the country as a unique and unprecedented plague. The current model has reached its limits and can no longer meet the citizens' fundamental needs and aspirations. Several shortcomings, such as the scope of social inequalities and territorial disparities, and poor governance, are particularly pointed out. The alternative model sought is expected to tackle the country's most hindering factors and pave the way for comprehensive, sustainable, and inclusive development. In this respect, a national debate led by the Special Commission on the Development Model (CSMD) and based on a participatory approach involving a broad panoply of governmental institutions and non-governmental actors and citizens is taking place. This article aims to reflect on how Morocco could build on the lessons drawn from this exceptional pandemic to boost the public debate already underway and help complete the formulation of such a new development model before its implementation. Through a review of some critical stakeholders' contributions to this debate and an analysis of the significant outbreak's impacts and the country's response to handling the situation, major building blocks of Morocco's new model are put together and discussed. In a nutshell, in the current context of change and uncertainty, the coronavirus crisis should provide strong impetus and serve as a transition springboard to the long-awaited new development model.

## **Keywords**

New development model, coronavirus pandemic, socioeconomic impacts, sustainable development, inequality, disparity.

## 1. Introduction

As Morocco has been engaging in a national debate about the new development model, the coronavirus pandemic hits the country as a unique and unprecedented plague.

The national debate dates back to October 13, 2017, when the Royal speech delivered by King Mohammed VI at the opening of the parliamentary session has called for a profound reflection on the country's development model. King's speech admits, « (...) our national development model no longer responds to citizens' growing demands and pressing needs. It has not been able to reduce disparities between segments of the population, correct inter-regional imbalances, or achieve social justice» (King Mohammed VI, 2017). In other words, the current model has reached its limits and needs to be reviewed and updated.

Many stakeholders submit their contributions to the new development model's national debate in response to the royal call. The objective is to draft an integrated vision that addresses the country's most challenging weaknesses and shortcomings and serves as a frame of reference for all public policies and strategies.

To further widen, structure, and lead the debate, Morocco's King appointed the Special Commission on the Development Model (CSMD)<sup>1</sup>. He invested it with the explicit mandate «to be impartial and objective, and to report on facts as they are on the ground, however harsh or painful they may be. Moreover, when proposing solutions, it has to be daring and innovative» (King Mohammed VI, 2019).

Based on a broad participatory approach, the CSMD has started to hold consultations and listening sessions to hear from different Moroccan society segments. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, the CSMD has sought inputs and proposals from stakeholders and citizens<sup>2</sup>.

This article aims to reflect on how Morocco could build on the lessons drawn from this exceptional pandemic to boost the public debate already underway and help complete the formulation of such a new development model before its implementation. Through a review of some critical stakeholders' contributions to this debate and an analysis of significant outbreak' impacts and the country's response to handling the situation, major building blocks of morocco's new model are put together and discussed.

The article is structured as follows: the first part will discuss the need for a new development model. The second will focus on reviewing several contributions to the national debate on the new development model, submitted by key national stakeholders. In this regard, we will adopt a reading grid for reviewing such contributions. The last part of the paper will focus on the lessons drawn from the Covid-19 crisis and how the country should capitalize on them to design the long-awaited new development model.

## 2. The need for a new development model

### 2.1. Valuing the country's assets and building on its achievements

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to its president, nominated on November 19, 2019, the King nominated the CSMD on December 12, 2019. It is composed of 35 members, representatives, and experts from a wide range of fields, including several Moroccan diasporas.

<sup>2</sup> See the CSMD's digital platform: [www.csmmd.ma](http://www.csmmd.ma)

Morocco has undeniable assets that allow it to enhance its development ambitions. (Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental, 2019). These assets are linked principally to its history (a rich civilization and a millennia-old history characterized by multiple cultural identities), its geographical position (at the crossroads of Africa, the East, and the West), and the striking diversity of its culture. Other valuable assets are the richness of its natural and intangible capital, particularly its positive image as a country of openness, cooperation, and peace.

The country is also very appraised for its significant political and institutional reforms, especially the 2011 Constitution's adoption and the establishment of sound governance principles and deep devolution reform (advanced regionalization). These reforms have paved the way for a more modern state advocating the rule of law.

The review of the country's performance for the period of (1999-2015) (Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental & Bank Al-Maghrib, 2016) shows that the country has reached valuable achievements such as the increase of growth rate<sup>3</sup>, the decline of the poverty rate<sup>4</sup>, and that of the illiteracy rate<sup>5</sup>. Many other accomplishments could also be cited, including the near generalizing of the primary education, the increased access for broad layers of rural population to drinking water and electricity. Note, also, the opening up and connecting many scattered and isolated locations of more than three million people in remote rural areas.

These achievements are attributable to a series of reforms and policies such as the sectoral strategies, significant infrastructure projects (Tanger Med, Highway network, and airports), and the launch of the National initiative of human development (INDH).

The current debate on the development model should capitalize on these (and other) acquired assets and achievements to fundamentally reshape them as part of the new model.

## *2.2. A Vision for Morocco's future*

A development model is «a blueprint to be followed to foster the progress of a people. It is a frame of reference for policymakers in charge of developing a country's public policies. (...) The purpose of a development model is to improve quality of life» (United Nations, quoted by IRES) (Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES), 2020).

In other words, the sought-after model is « more than just sectoral reforms or reshuffling certain economic projects and social programs. (...) it is an integrated vision to shape a model for the achievement of the country's political, economic, and social development and a system for full-fledged central and local governance» (King Mohammed VI, 2019).

Such an integrated vision will lead to more visibility and coherence, greater clarity of the direction to be followed, and better convergence of development decisions. On the other hand, it will also create more synergies amongst the new generation of sectoral strategies.

In the era of advanced regionalization, the new development model would also serve as a frame of reference for local authorities. In particular, the strategic planning documents, i.e.,

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<sup>3</sup> From an average of 3% during the 1990s to 4,6% during the 2000-2016s.

<sup>4</sup> From 15.3% (2001) to 4.2% (2014)

<sup>5</sup> From 43% (2004) to 32% (2014)

PDR & SRAT<sup>6</sup>, issued by the regional councils, should be closely aligned with sectoral public policies and the new development model's avenues.

### 2.3. Tackling the country's most challenging weaknesses.

The diagnosis established by most of the reviewed contributions, and other references, stands out that the country should address four main challenges related to efficiency, social and territorial inclusiveness, and sustainability. Morocco's governance shortcomings are a cross-cutting issue that underlines all the others.

*-Efficiency.* In recent decades, Morocco's growth process reveals the sluggish and poor economic growth quality as a fundamental trend. The per capita GDP growth has moved, on average, from 1.6 percent in the 1990s up to 3.3 percent during 2000-2015, and the country's economic structural transformation, over a long period, can be described as slow (World Bank, 2018)<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the job-content of economic growth has declined over the last two decades (DEPF(a), 2018)<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, the regulatory frameworks and rules governing business in Morocco have resulted in protected sectors, privileges, and special licenses that encourage rent-seeking behavior at the expense of economic efficiency, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Even though the business environment has significantly improved and has been a steady increase in enterprise creation (OMPIC, 2018)<sup>9</sup>, there is still more to be done to reduce business bankruptcies (Inforisk, 2020)<sup>10</sup>.

*-Social inclusiveness.* Morocco has set in motion about 139 programs and initiatives (INDH, RAMED, «Tayssir», Rural development funds, and so on, covering a wide range of areas, such as education, health, and employment (DEPF(b), 2018). Despite substantial achievements made in this regard, the country should deploy more efforts to enhance its human development policies' significant indicators.

The 2018 ONDH Human development report (ONDH, 2018) points out critical findings related to human development. In 2015, the country recorded « an HDI of 0.647, a considerably lower rate than the world average, even slightly higher than the average in middle human development countries. The "health," "income," and "education" components contributed to the index, respectively, with 43%, 32%, and 25% ».

On the other side, youth unemployment is the country's most pressing issue. Even though the unemployment rate has recently slightly decreased, some labor market indicators still lag.

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<sup>6</sup> PDR: (Plan de développement régional) Regional development Plan; SRAT (Schéma Régional d'Aménagement du Territoire) Regional Scheme of Land-use Planning

<sup>7</sup> The shares of industry and services have remained relatively stable compared with the more dynamic trends posted by other upper-middle-income countries.

<sup>8</sup> According to DEPF, the employment/growth elasticity has dropped significantly, i.e., for each percentage point of GDP growth between 2008 and 2017, overall employment increased by only 0.12% on average against 0.33% between 2000 and 2007.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC), 91909 businesses were created in 2018, an increase of 79.5% compared to 2008(51190 creations).

<sup>10</sup>According to Inforisk, the number of business failures, in 2019, was 8439, compared to 2451 in 2009. In ten years, the number of bankruptcies has, therefore, multiplied by 3.4.

Indeed, the rate varies widely depending on age, educational level, and gender (HCP, 2019)<sup>11</sup>. Besides, a particularly worrying phenomenon is the low level of women's activity rate<sup>12</sup>.

Furthermore, Morocco's development pattern shows severe social inequalities. The available figures show that the GINI index, which measures the income inequalities based on the annual per capita spending, has slightly decreased from 0,407 to 0,395 between 2007 and 2014 (HCP, 2016). Most likely, such inequalities could have been even higher if estimated on the household wealth's data basis.

Besides their adverse impacts on human development, inequalities are increasingly neither accepted nor tolerated. In this regard, some have considered the 2018 Morocco's boycott campaign against "unjustified" price increases of food products as a cry of the frustrated middle class being severely impoverished<sup>13</sup>.

*-Territorial inclusiveness.* Territorial disparities are an essential issue that justifies the prioritization of advanced regionalization as a fundamental pillar for Morocco's development. A 2017 HCP's study (HCP, 2017) shows substantial regional disparities in terms of contribution to national growth:

- 30.4 % of domestic growth is attributable to the Casablanca-Settat region, whose contribution to GDP growth was 1.3 points.
- The regions of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra and Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima contributed for a third to GDP growth: 1.4 points, with 0.8 and 0.6 points, respectively.
- The nine remaining regions contributed just over a third of the growth recorded in 2017: 1.5 points.

In terms of human development, the ONDH's data regarding the human development index (National Human Development Index<sup>14</sup>) show that, while the regions of Casablanca-Settat and southern Morocco are about to reach the level of developed countries (with 0,697 and 0,682, respectively), the regions of Marrakech-Safi, Beni Mallal-Khenifra and Draa-Tafilalet remain in a stage of low human development (0,589; 0,605 and 0,608 respectively) (ONDH, 2018).

Besides, the analysis of human development dynamics highlights « a particularly slow catch-up process, (...), i.e., human development in the least developed regions is slightly more rapid than in most developed regions. If the pace recorded between 2000 and 2005 is maintained, regional disparities will be cut by half in 41 years » (ONDH, 2018).

Beyond inter and intra-regional disparities, we witness the development of other territorial discrepancies (rural/urban, mountain areas, border strips, and oases areas).

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<sup>11</sup>In 2019, the unemployment rate was 24,9% for Young people aged 15-24, 22% for graduates of vocational training, and 15.7% for those of general education. Also, women are more affected by unemployment than men, 13,5% against 7.8 %.

<sup>12</sup> The women's activity rate, in 2019, was 71% for men compared to 21,5% for women.

<sup>13</sup> See a field survey carried out by l'Economiste Mai 24, 2018. (L'Economiste-Sunergia, 2018)

<sup>14</sup> The National Human Development Index is a composite index constructed by the ONDH-Morocco. In addition to the three dimensions of the UNDP 's Human Development Index (health, education, income), the NHDI includes three other dimensions, i.e. "subjective well-being", "social cohesion and human security" and the "living environment". The NHDI is made up of 18 single indicators related to its six dimensions.

*-Sustainability.* Morocco is facing significant environmental challenges such as pollution, natural resource degradation, biodiversity loss, risks, and the impact of climate change. These challenges entail severe consequences for the country's economy and society, namely the loss of wellbeing, agricultural productivity, and tourism' revenue.

A related study conducted by the Ministry of environment/World Bank (Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Environnement/Banque Mondiale, 2017) has estimated the cost of environmental degradation to Moroccan society at 3,52% of GDP. The cost of greenhouse gas emissions to the global community would be 1, 62% of GDP. The charge related to water degradation stands out as the highest one (1, 26% of GDP). Also, air pollution causes severe damage (1, 05% of GDP), followed respectively by land degradation (0.54% of GDP), Waste (0.40% of GDP), and Coastal zone (0.27% of GDP).

Even though the study's estimates mentioned above should be considered orders of magnitude, it is a powerful tool for integrating environmental issues into economic and social policies.

*-Morocco's governance system.* Governance is the underpinning of the other aspects (efficiency, inclusiveness, and sustainability). It refers to widely shared principles such as accountability, transparency, and participation. Although the 2011 Constitution has enshrined these principles, their implementation still has to be ensured.

Beyond the governance dysfunctions, lack of trust in institutions is the most daunting challenge facing the country. We note in this respect that the protests Morocco has experienced in recent years, against the deterioration of living conditions, were expressed outside the «intermediate bodies» (political parties, trade unions, civil society organizations) (CESE, 2019). Even though Morocco was one of the few countries partially spared from the Arab spring's upheavals, the lack of trust in institutions could seriously damage its political stability.

### **3. Shaping a new development model: an analysis of several contributions**

#### *3.1. Methodology*

The methodological approach adopted is based on a review of the key actors' contributions to the debate. Though relatively restricted, the «contributions' sample» reviewed is reasonably representative. It includes almost all kinds of stakeholders in the discussion, i.e., a constitutional institution, a strategic institute, political parties, a civil society organization, and a trade union.

For the study's needs, we have used an analysis grid, including five items, i.e., drafting method, overall vision, structuring pillars, key recommended measures, and implementation mechanisms, as shown in Table 1.

The paper has deliberately limited the «sample» to written contributions, retrieved from the relevant organizations' official websites or the Special Commission for the New Development Model. This choice is why the paper has not included some key organizations' contributions (General Confederation for Moroccan Businesses (CGEM), in particular). A written contribution provides a clearer and authentic idea about the entire proposition.

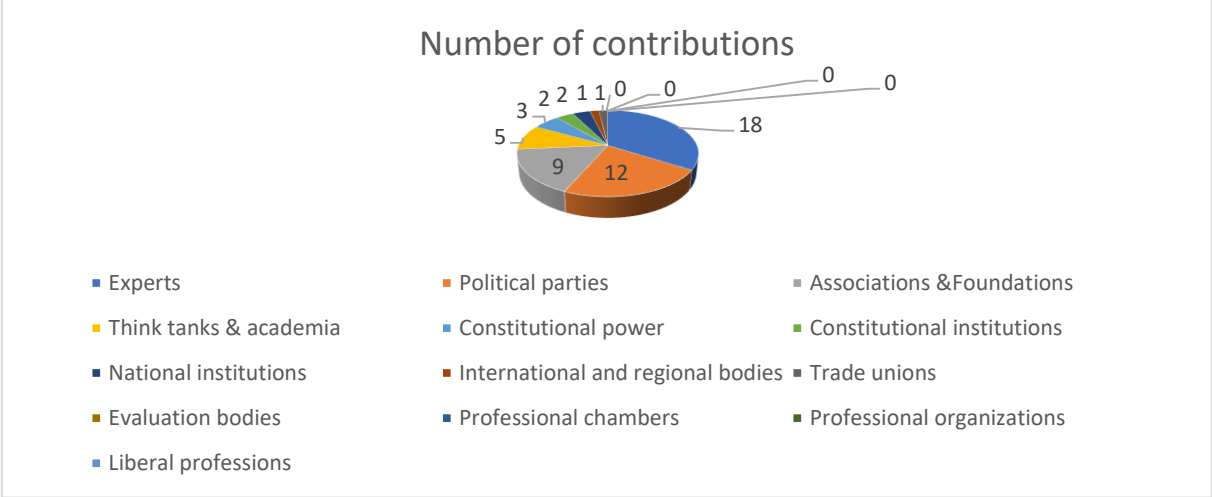
While this study has considered the fundamental structuring pillars, it has only listed several

vital measures. The countless number of suggested actions make it hard to reproduce the whole list<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, to keep updated with the pandemic's various aspects (spread, impacts, responses, and coverage), this research paper is firmly based on all kinds of inputs provided by reliable sources (research papers, press outlets, and TV). The study has also tried to integrate specific inputs provided by several organizations during the listening sessions held by the CSMD.

Apart from the contributions submitted by experts (18), which put forward valuable viewpoints, the study has exclusively focused on the organizations' contributions.

In this regard, five contributions among the thirty-five ones provided par organizations and posted on the CSMD's website, i.e. (CESE,2019), (Parti de l'Istiqlal, 2019), (RNI, 2019), (USFP, 2020), (UNTM, 2020), and two others retrieved from the official websites of the relevant organizations (IRES, 2020), (Mouvement Damir, 2019), have been chosen.

**Figure 1:** Figures related to the contributions



Source: Developed from available data posted on [www.csmd.ma](http://www.csmd.ma)

Also, what we are looking for is not mere statistical representativeness but meaningful analyzes and innovative approaches. Thus, we will point out only several critical features of each contribution.

*3.2. Findings*

In response to the royal call to design a new development model, several actors have developed their vision for the project. Table 1 summarizes the key features of such contributions. It allows highlighting several comments.

First, the structure and the detail levels are significantly different from one organization to another. Most of the contributions restrict their scope to three headings (drafting method, pillars, and measures). However, the titles of "vision" and "implementation" rarely appear in the contributions. Most often, the assessment of the country's performance is a significant part of each contribution. This aspect of analysis has been, to a certain extent, synthesized in the

<sup>15</sup> For instance, 183 measures have been proposed by the CESE.

**Table 1:** Key features of several contributions to the debate on a new development model (NDM)

	<b>Drafting method</b>	<b>Overall vision</b>	<b>Structuring pillars</b>	<b>Key recommended measures &amp; reforms</b>	<b>Implementation mechanisms</b>
<b>CESE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Capitalizing on the reports and notices previously published by the CESE</li> <li>-Holding meetings with 59 stakeholders</li> <li>-Holding hearing sessions within the Council (political parties, trade unions, and civil society organizations)</li> <li>-On line consultation with Moroccan citizens</li> </ul>	<p>Build a dynamic development model to ensure steady, inclusive, sustainable growth and promote equal opportunities; it also aims to foster the individuals' fulfilments and capacities within a prosperous and united society centered on the citizen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A learner-centered education system</li> <li>-A new generation of efficient and accessible public services</li> <li>-A regulating environment ensuring fair competition and fighting rent-seeking and privileges</li> <li>-A structural transformation of the economy, integrating the informal sector, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, and promoting industrial emergence.</li> <li>-Empowered women, actors of development and exercising their rights for full involvement in economic, social, political, and cultural life</li> <li>- An integrated, showcased, attractive, and connected rural area</li> <li>- Organized solidarity aimed at reducing social inequalities and territorial disparities, as well as providing universal social protection</li> <li>- Protected natural capital and sustained growth.</li> <li>- The rule of law and public policies based on coherence, transparency, efficiency, and systematic evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Promote the teaching profession (incentives and working conditions)</li> <li>-Improve the teachers' basic and continuous training</li> <li>-Generalize the use of digital technologies in schools</li> <li>-Draw up a reference framework of skills and mechanisms to evaluate the learners' achievements</li> <li>-Align with the WHO's standards regarding medical staff &amp; health equipment</li> <li>-Extend the social security coverage to other categories (liberal professions, craftsmen)</li> <li>-Shorten the length of trials and speed up the enforcement of judgments</li> <li>-Enhance the training of judges, in particular, those specializing in economic and digital legislation</li> <li>-Strengthen the territory's railway network to open up isolated areas</li> <li>-Assess the socioeconomic impacts of incentives granted to real estate developers within the frame of social housing policy</li> <li>-Open up the protected sectors to broader competition and replace the authorization by specification</li> <li>-Overtax the accumulation of non-productive capital</li> <li>-Better integrate the international value chains</li> <li>-Set up particular ecosystems related to cultural industry and green technologies</li> <li>-Strengthen the central role of the regional territories in the development of sectors</li> <li>-Strengthen the innovative star-ups (honor loans, venture capital, incubators)</li> <li>-Increase research and development spending up to 3% of GDP</li> <li>-Dematerialize all interactions between citizens and businesses with the administration in 3 years</li> <li>-Levy a flat tax on production units of the informal sector (3000 to 4000 Dirhams per year), which allows social insurance coverage.</li> <li>-Mainstream the principle of gender equality into public policies</li> <li>-Erect emerging rural centers as development poles</li> <li>-Set up an "old-age minimum income" at least equivalent to the poverty line for the benefit of people without a retirement pension</li> <li>-Strengthen the middle class by setting up household taxation</li> <li>-Set up environmental and energy taxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Very level of institutional support</li> <li>- A convening role for the head of the Government during the implementation phase</li> <li>- The continuity of the project beyond the Government's mandate</li> <li>-The mobilization and involvement of all stakeholders</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set a time frame for forming a government majority, ranging from the head of Government's appointment to the confidence vote.</li> <li>- Resort to framework-laws to secure long-term strategic orientations</li> <li>-Operate a substantial reallocation of the State budget to align with the new development model's priorities.</li> <li>- Systematically assess each promulgated law</li> </ul>	
<b>IRES</b>	Setting up of Workshops and scientific gatherings in the Royal Institute for Strategic studies.	The proposal aims to promote Moroccans' wellbeing and consider the strategic guidelines set out by King Mohammed VI in his different speeches and messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Governance, at the heart of the development model, to be built</li> <li>-Placing humans back at the heart of the development</li> <li>-Taking care of nature</li> <li>-Planetarisation</li> <li>-Exponentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Make the intangible capital as a criterion for evaluating public policies decision</li> <li>-Seek greater public policy coherence and closer coordination between stakeholders</li> <li>-Establish a particular "young company" status (for five years after creation)</li> <li>-Facilitate a platform economy that brings buyers and sellers, supply and demand into contact through digital platforms</li> <li>-Develop home care services to relieve hospital congestion, reinforce the paramedical sector, and create jobs</li> <li>-Address the digital divide since it risks marginalizing part of the population (access to public services through online platforms)</li> <li>-Promote climate-smart agriculture, which uses innovation and is better integrated with other sectors of the economy</li> <li>-Treat wastewater and apply effective irrigation techniques, as well as streamline water use</li> <li>-Enhance the value of ecosystem services</li> <li>-Promote climate-smart agriculture, which uses innovation and is better integrated with other sectors</li> <li>-Better match research programs to Morocco's broad strategic priority</li> <li>-Enhance Morocco' presence on the international bodies, and mobilize Diaspora as a power of influence</li> <li>-Favor regional than bilateral agreements, and less asymmetrical than some of those signed</li> <li>-Create a genuine state-of-the-art technologies' ecosystem (artificial intelligence and big data)</li> <li>-Harvest the potential of sustainability by promoting organic farming, sustainable agriculture, and urban agriculture</li> </ul>	
<b>IP</b>	-Establishment of a special commission dedicated to draft a new development model proposal	Combination of human development and sustainable development concepts and "egalitarianism" as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Effective governance with territorial and participatory depth</li> <li>-Putting employment at the heart of public policies and economic decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pursue the constitutional, institutional, and political reforms</li> <li>-Develop sectoral strategies taking into consideration the territorial dimension</li> <li>-Precisely define the competencies of elected and representative institutions to ensure their efficiency and facilitate their readability.</li> </ul>	Pass a framework-law dedicated to the implementation of the new development model

	-Internal consultation within the party	an intellectual and political reference frame for the party.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve the national economy's attractiveness and competitiveness</li> <li>-voluntary commitment to the technological revolution</li> <li>-Fight poverty, reduce social inequalities, strengthen and expand the middle class</li> <li>-Upgrade the underpinnings of sustainable and human development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Link the incentives granted to businesses to the job creation' effort</li> <li>-Establish an integrated employment policy that Government will implement in partnership with local authorities</li> <li>-Strengthen the skills of the NEET (no employed, educated, and trained)</li> <li>-Reassess the actual sectoral strategies' job creation potential, and review them to increase their job content</li> <li>-Ensure legal certainty for businesses (simplify the administrative procedures, eliminate payment arrears)</li> <li>-Enhance the role of the regional investment centers by enabling them to boost the local economy within the territorial strategies frame.</li> <li>-Foster the entrepreneurship and the takeover of distressed businesses</li> <li>-Develop an integrated policy to strengthen the middle class (housing, tourism.)</li> <li>-Hamper the "inter-generational transmission of poverty."</li> <li>-Enhance the quality of education</li> <li>-Increase national effort spending on scientific research up to 3% of GDP</li> <li>-Establish a fair and binding "health map" for the private and public sectors</li> <li>-Complete the health insurance coverage reform</li> <li>-Mainstream the gender equity principle in public policies</li> <li>-Highly prioritize the water policy (supply &amp; demand management, wastewater treatment, and use)</li> </ul>	
<b>RNI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opinion polling with a sample size of 5000 citizens</li> <li>-Party's regional Conferences+ Moroccans residing abroad</li> <li>-Scientific gatherings</li> </ul>	Social democracy principles combine liberal values (freedom of initiative, competition, and pluralism) and socialist principles (equal opportunities and social cohesion).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Employment for a dignified life (lowering the unemployment rate at 7.5%)</li> <li>-Health for better wellbeing.</li> <li>-Education as a fundamental prerequisite for a successful development model</li> <li>-Boosting the role of youth, civil society, and "intermediate bodies."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create more than 2 million additional jobs by 2025 (in local services (key sectoral industries, green economy, fishing)</li> <li>-Scale up the structural transformation of the economy</li> <li>-Create and extend a middle class in rural areas through the strengthening of solidarity agriculture projects</li> <li>- Unleash the youth potential and accompany project holders through the technical, managerial, and financial support of their projects</li> <li>-Implement new kinds of financing (Crowdfunding, loan honor)</li> <li>-Scale up the growth rate at 7% (improving the business environment, increasing labor market flexibility, enhancing the role of the regional investment centers)</li> <li>-Expand preschool education</li> <li>-Promote an inclusive education for children with disabilities</li> <li>-Implement proper governance mechanisms for school</li> <li>-Strengthen the capacities of the teachers (primary and continuous</li> </ul>	

				<p>training)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strengthen social and pedagogical support for the pupils in rural areas</li> <li>-Provide greater autonomy for universities</li> <li>-Improve the services offered by local health centers</li> <li>- Equip all Moroccans with sanitary smart cards</li> <li>- Grant distance premiums for doctors operating in remote areas</li> <li>-Expand medical coverage to 90% of the population</li> <li>-Establish good governance for the health sector, especially at the regional level</li> <li>-Raise the health budget to 10% instead of 5.5% currently</li> </ul>	
<b>USFP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Party development programs</li> <li>-Setting up two study days</li> <li>-Setting up thematic Committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Social democratic vision, based on modernism, justice, parity, and equal opportunities for all</li> <li>-The balance between economic growth and social development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The institutional pillar</li> <li>The economic pillar</li> <li>The social pillar</li> <li>The societal pillar</li> <li>The cultural pillar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reform the electoral system by introducing the single-member voting system</li> <li>-Sufficient independence of the judiciary</li> <li>-Boost the growth rate so that it can reach 6 or 6.5% by 2025</li> <li>-Continue to improve the business climate</li> <li>-Get rid of rent-seeking and privileges</li> <li>-Put an end to "social segregation" in the field of education and ensure free access to education</li> <li>-Extend and develop social security systems</li> <li>-Apply article 19 of the Constitution on gender equality</li> <li>-Set up appropriate policies towards some venerable groups (childhood, disabled, and elderly)</li> <li>- Strengthen the cultural and legal status of the Arabic and Amazigh languages</li> <li>-Rational, fair, and equitable language management</li> <li>-Promote public media</li> </ul>	
<b>UNTM</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strengthening the democratic process, consolidation of the institutional arrangements, and completion of the advanced regionalization</li> <li>-Reforming the educational system</li> <li>-Empowering women and youth</li> <li>-Stimulating economic growth and wealth production as well as equitable distribution</li> <li>-Mainstreaming the social dimension into the sectoral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Democratic implementation of the Constitution</li> <li>-Activate the region's competencies and speed up the processes of deconcentration</li> <li>-Link the vocational training with regional specificities</li> <li>-Enforce the principle of gender parity</li> <li>-Implement appropriate measures to limit the "brain drain" and foster the Diaspora to contribute to the development process</li> <li>-Develop regional strategies to deal with the employment issue</li> <li>-Launch a new generation of sectoral strategies</li> <li>-Levy a tax upon the unproductive wealth</li> <li>-Create an agency for integrating the informal sector into the legal, economic system.</li> <li>-Subsidize a housing product intended for the middle class</li> </ul>	

			strategies and public policies -Extending social insurance coverage -Establishing a new social contract that strengthens the role of trade unions	-Set up tax-deductibility of private education expenses -Generalize the health insurance coverage -Institutionalize the social dialogue -Protect trade union rights and freedoms -Set up regional observatories for monitoring and settling disputes between social partners -Promote collective bargaining -Promulgate a law on trade unions	
<b>Mouvement Damir</b>	-Conducting debates with panels of citizens in deferent Morocco's regions		- A modern political Morocco - A plural Moroccan society - A prosperous and just national economy	-Overhaul the relationships between the "power circles" and political parties -Deepen the reform of the judicial power -Ensure complete media autonomy -Remove resistance to the policy of advanced regionalization -Prohibit the marriage of underage girls -Give rights to single (unwed) mothers and their children -Better protect the domestic workers -Innovate a new model of the banking industry -Implement tax reform for promoting growth and social justice -Remove some tax exemption privileges	

Source: synthesized from :

CESE : Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental (Environmental, Economic and Social Council) (CESE, 2019)

IRES : Institut Royal des Etudes Stratégiques (Royal Institute for Strategic Studies) (IRES, 2020)

IP : Parti de l'Istiqlal (Istiqlal party) (PI, 2019)

RNI : Rassemblement National des Indépendants (National Rally of indépendants) (RNI, 2019)

USFP : Union Socialiste des Forces populaires (Socialist Union for Popular Forces) (USFP, 2020)

UNTM : Union Nationale du Travail du Maroc (National Labor Union of Morocco) (UNMT, 2020)

Mouvement Damir (Mouvment Damir, 2019)

first axis of the paper<sup>16</sup>.

Second, the propositions put forward are related to the issues raised in the diagnosis part, i.e., efficiency, inclusiveness, sustainability, and governance. In some cases, this latter refers to the consecration of democratic choice, which several political parties consider to be "the entrance key" to the new development model (Spurgeon, S., 2020).

Third, in the various proposals, there is a lack of tangible measures, quantified, and with a clear timeline. Sometimes, the propositions are akin to broad recommendations rather than concrete actions. Several contributions do not separate the suggested policy measures into short-term, medium-term, and long-term horizons.

Fourth, while several contributions have mobilized the internal expertise, others have been drawn up using the participatory approach and consultation with citizens. Others, however, use both. The design of a new development method should rely on both expertise, which brings thoroughness and know-how, and a broad participatory approach, which brings a large pool of ideas and perspectives and provides an excellent opportunity for vulnerable groups to express their views.

Fifth, while specific issues are ubiquitous (education and health sectors' reforms, social inequalities, and territorial disparities), others are rarely raised (wealth taxation, banking industry, the balance of power, and SDGs). There is indeed a consensus that investing in "intangible capital" (World Bank, 2018), which relates to the country's human, social, and institutional capital, will put the country on the right track towards a new development model<sup>17</sup>. Also, some recommendations seem to be quite daring regarding the societal and political setting. Nevertheless, this is indeed the very purpose of the debate.

Sixth, in a few contributions, there is a distinction between social aspects in the narrow sense (poverty and unemployment, for example) and the societal ones that pertain to society as a whole (values and behaviors). Indeed, both of them are essential in the sought-after new development model.

Seventh, overall, the debate is focused on critical dimensions, i.e., economic (and financial), social, societal, territorial, sustainable, governance, and political reforms. The latter seems to be "the key entrance" and the underpinning of the other aspects.

Eighth, the "listening sessions" held by the Special Commission on the Development Model are intended to hear from different actors on their views about Morocco's new development model. As mentioned above, the Commission is now asking for specific coronavirus crisis-related inputs.

#### **4.The Covid-19 crisis, lessons from Morocco....and elsewhere**

Coronavirus, like other crises and pandemics, is a moment of deep reflection and change. It is not a transient disruption, but rather a starting point of shift. From this process of change will

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<sup>16</sup> Tackling the country's most challenging weaknesses.

<sup>17</sup> The intangible capital stands for the combination of three components: human (education and health), social (gender equality and interpersonal trust) and institutional (market support institutions, public institutions, and services). According to the World Bank, specific reforms related to enhancing human, social, and institutional capitals could lead to double Morocco's current rate of convergence with Southern European countries by 2040. Refer to (World Bank, 2018).

emerge Morocco's post-coronavirus. The current crisis is an excellent opportunity for nurturing the national debate on Morocco's development model. Several crisis-related novel issues have arisen. Also, Morocco's management of the crisis and the solidarity campaign during the pandemic would further enrich the new development model's design.

#### *4.1. A renewed focus on high-priority areas*

##### *4.1.1. The deficiencies of the health care system*

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed considerable stress on the health care system all over the world. Even robust systems have been overwhelmed. The burden is even more substantial as it also concerns the non-Covid-19 related services, especially primary health care services that should continue.

Another major challenge faced by the health care system is «maintaining population trust in the capacity of the health system to meet essential needs safely and to control infection risk in health facilities (...), which is key to ensuring appropriate care-seeking behavior and adherence to public health advice» (World Health Organization, 2020).

Despite its health care system shortcomings, Morocco has managed to keep the COVID-19 spread under control, thanks to lock down and the overall crisis management. However, this should not overshadow the myriad of chronic weaknesses of the country's health care system (Jacobs, Anna, 2020). Indeed, Morocco should address significant other remaining challenges, especially those related to the insufficiency of the healthcare system's resources, the lack of universal medical insurance coverage, and the low access to health services.

The available data show that the health sector in Morocco operates below the internationally recognized norms and standards. There are shortages of medical staff. In 2018, there were, on average, 7,3 doctors per 10 000 people, when it would take more than double, according to WHO guidelines (the ratio is equal to 12 in Tunisia and 17,6 in Turkey) (CESE, 2019). The medical and paramedical density ratio is about 1.64, well below the critical threshold fixed by WHO of a minimum of 2.5 professionals (number of doctors and nurses) for every 1000 inhabitants. These shortages could worsen, considering the uneven distribution of human resources between rural and urban areas and within the Kingdom's different regions. (Ministry of Health, 2012). Health care spending to GDP (5.245% in 2017) is still relatively low compared to countries at a similar level of economic development (Algeria 6.37% and Jordan 8.12% in 2017) (World Bank, 2017).

During the crisis, Morocco has tried to fill the chronic shortages of its medical equipment and supplies to meet the Covid-19 requirements<sup>18</sup>. Military medicine and its civilian counterpart have teamed up during the crisis. As medical solidarity, some doctors have donated private clinics to receive and treat Covid-19 patients.

Besides, achieving universal health coverage to ensure better access to health care services remains one of the significant challenges in Morocco. There are two kinds of health coverage schemes: Mandatory Health Insurance Scheme (AMO)<sup>19</sup> and Health Insurance Scheme for

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<sup>18</sup> For fighting the Covid-19, Morocco has allocated MAD 2 billion (\$203 million) to purchase medical and hospital equipment (intensive care beds, ventilators, testing kits, x-ray scanners, and other medical supplies).

<sup>19</sup> AMO: Assurance Maladie Obligatoire

Destitute People (RAMED)<sup>20</sup>. Both of them provide medical coverage to 54,6% of the population, thus 45,4 % remaining uncovered (Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental, 2018).

Despite the extension of the mandatory health insurance scheme, the households' expenses remain high, i.e., the "remaining portion payable" stood at 35% in 2016 (CESE, 2018). Also, the RAMED scheme does not ensure access to health services, considering the beneficiaries' increase without prior upgrading of the medical facilities. Thus, deteriorating the quality of health services delivered for both insured and non-insured people.

These and other dysfunctions limit access to the health care system and fuel "a negative perception" and mistrusts toward it<sup>21</sup>. To put the system on the right track, a real mobilization, such as the one experienced during the Covid-19 crisis, would be necessary. In this regard, the main actions should be prioritized (Jacobs A., 2020):

- Meet the WHO's minimum standards regarding all components and functioning of the health care system (medical and paramedical staff, equipment and facilities, and quality of health service). Meeting these standards will require increasing public spending in the health sector. More importantly, increasing spending should go with enhancing the health sector's governance through streamlined allocation and management of resources

- Expand insurance health schemes. In 2015, the AMO scheme was extended to the university students, thanks to additional financing coming from the State's budget. Since around 45% of the population are still uninsured, expanding health insurance coverage towards several categories such as independent, self-employed workers (e.g., doctors, lawyers, and artisans) should be a high-priority issue. As underscored by several contributions to the national debate on the new development model, the two schemes (AMO& RAMED) should ultimately be unified, and a universal health care insurance coverage set up.

- Harvest the potential of health care sector employment. By targeting training programs dedicated to enabling young people to embark on the health care sector's professions, Morocco could also tackle the lack of medical and paramedical staff (physicians, nurses, midwives) and, ultimately, improve the quality of service delivery.

- Promote investment in manufacturing health care equipment. Such a promotion would contribute to the economic structural change sought by the country. Morocco's success stories in manufacturing some medical supplies and equipment (face masks, ventilators) prove that it is an appropriate option. Besides the local market, the international market seems to be promising. In this regard, the extension of "the ecosystem approach"<sup>22</sup> to the health care sector would substantially contribute to diversifying the industrial base and speeding up the economy's structural transformation.

The current coronavirus has also put other crucial concerns on the agenda, such as developing epidemiological research and the importance of partnerships between the public and private health sectors.

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<sup>20</sup> Régime d'Assistance Maladie pour Les Economiquement Défavorisés

<sup>21</sup> For more details, see below.

<sup>22</sup> This approach aims at integrating the value chains and creating better synergies between large companies and SMEs through a set of incentives and tax measures. It also grants utmost importance to human resources 'training and tightening links between academia and Business Community.

#### 4.1.2. Digitalization

Like other countries, Morocco moves through digital solutions in many areas to keep functioning during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

It is worth noting that Morocco, before the current pandemic, has set up "The Agency for Digital Development (ADD)" and devised the "Morocco Digital 2025 Strategy". This latter aims to build on the "Digital Morocco 2013" program's achievements to develop the full potential of the Digitalization

Several initiatives undertaken during the current lockdown tend to speed up the digital transformation (Rhanem, Karima, 2020):

-Setting up a COVID-19 digital platform<sup>23</sup> dedicated to providing updated information to health professionals and the broad public.

-Launch of e-platforms for financial support for the benefit of the formal and informal sector workers who have lost their earnings due to the lockdown, a measure taken by the Economic Watch Committee (CVE).

-Setting up and improving digital learning platforms. After suspending schools, education actors have undertaken several initiatives and practices to keep classes going at all education levels (online learning platforms, Google apps, videos, slides, and MOOCs).

We note that, however, laudable, distance learning could exacerbate education inequalities since students in rural areas and with difficult access to the Internet could find it hard to take advantage of it. Reducing these inequalities is why some TV-channels have broadcasted educational classes.

-Conversion of print media to digital one could also thoughtfully contribute to the digital transformation.

Appropriately used and regulated<sup>24</sup>, the digital transformation could lead to improved public services, enhancing the competitiveness of the economy, and reduced inequalities.

#### 4.2. Emerging novel issues

##### 4.2.1. Setting development objectives

The evidence from the fight against coronavirus shows that setting goals (through indicators measuring the virus's spread and aggressiveness) could make a difference. Indeed, fighting against the virus's spread has been crucial for organizing a global effort as a central objective in these rough times. Analyzing the case of the millennium development goals (MDGs), J-D. Sachs (Sachs, Jeffery D., 2015) put forward at least three main reasons for setting development objectives:

-First, goals are essential for social mobilization. It helps governments, organizations, individuals, and households to agree on the direction. It gives all actors the needed compass and paves the way for coordinated and integrated interventions.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.covidmaroc.ma/Pages/AccueilAR.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Amid the pandemic, the Moroccan government passed a bill (22.20) in a bid to stem fake news on social media, but activists and journalists see this as an attempt to restrict further the right to access information. Thus, the backlash against the bill.



-Second, goals create peer pressure. Since every stakeholder would be compared with others, setting objectives creates the dynamic to reach them.

-Third, it helps to mobilize stakeholders' networks. It could bring together all relevant stakeholders (ministries, civil society organizations, donors, and politicians) and develop synergies and networking.

It follows that the upcoming development model in Morocco should include a specific recommendation aimed at translating all public interventions (projects, programs, and policies) into precise and specific objectives.

It would be crucial, in this regard, to include and mainstream the sustainable development goals (SDGs) contained in the 2030 agenda into national policies and strategies that would stem from the coming new development model. The coronavirus threat should give an impetus to make the paradigm shift towards the UN 2030 agenda and accelerate the transition to a new development model.

#### *4.2.2. Tackling vulnerability*

While the debate on Morocco's development model has made the fight against poverty and inequality a central issue, the coronavirus crisis reveals that vulnerability should be at the heart of the country's debate for the future.

We remind that vulnerability<sup>25</sup> refers to a group of people who are not actually poor but might easily fall into poverty because of a negative shock such as job losses, illness, and revenue losses due to acute drought.

Because of the heavy socioeconomic impact coronavirus could entail (economic recession, livelihoods losses, and deepen inequalities), the vulnerability will undoubtedly worsen, given the vulnerable population's already significant weight<sup>26</sup>. Using an expenditure threshold of US\$ 5.5 PPP, World Bank estimates show that the numbers of poor and those not poor but vulnerable to falling into poverty are bound to increase to 27 percent in 2020, as compared to 25 percent in 2019. In other words, about 10 million Moroccans can become poor due to the economic downturn or at risk of falling into poverty (UNDP, UNECA & World Bank, 2020).

#### *4.2.3. Flexibility, innovation, and readiness for the future*

While most of the contributions to Morocco's new development model focus on the necessity to strengthen economic resilience, the coronavirus lockdown has shown how vital Flexibility is<sup>27</sup>.

The Flexibility is visible through several best practices, such as switching a cosmetics brand and retailer to making hand sanitizer, manufacturing protective face masks by a few industrial

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<sup>25</sup> The vulnerability rate is the proportion of individuals whose annual average per capita expenditure ranges from the poverty line and 1.5 times this threshold.

<sup>26</sup> The vulnerability rate has slowed down from 17.4% to 12.5% between 2007 and 2014. In absolute terms, the number of economically vulnerable fell from 5.4 million people in 2007 to 4.2 million in 2014, registering an average annual decline of 3.6% (HCP,2016).

<sup>27</sup> In a nutshell, flexibility (or agility) stands for the ability to adapt to changes in a given setting successfully, whereas resilience is the ability to survive these changes despite the severe impact.

clothing units by adapting their production chain and using 3D printers to produce needed medical equipment.

Such Flexibility could be highly enhanced by encouraging innovation and substantial involvement in the fourth industrial revolution era. The capacity to benefit from the tremendous number of opportunities provided by this new technological paradigm, which refers to emerging technologies such as the Internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and additive manufacturing, will determine Morocco's readiness for the future.

In this regard, the 2018 World Economic Forum's readiness for the future of production report (World Economic Forum, 2018) has positioned Morocco among Nascent countries, the group least ready for the future of production<sup>28</sup>. However, this paradigm shift would undoubtedly help Morocco with a "leapfrogging strategy" and not getting stuck into the "middle-income" trap.

Therefore, future generations of sectoral strategies that would stem from the upcoming new development model should mainstream these technologies into all sectors. The most important drivers of that are enhanced human capital and appropriate institutional framework. The expected change would seriously lead to significant economic structural adjustment.

#### *4.2.4. For a successful integration into international value chains*

The idea of successfully position the country in the international value chains appears in several contributions to the debate on Morocco's new development model. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought it into sharp focus.

Indeed, the pandemic has disrupted global value chains and «will forever alter the world order» (Henry A. Kissenger, 2020). Consequently, Morocco's response should, at the same time, manage this multifaceted crisis and deeply reflect on the transition to the post-coronavirus order.

In the coronavirus crisis's aftermath and given the China-USA «trade war», most likely, there will be a broad move to relocate some activities that have been outsourced by European countries and the USA.

In this regard, Morocco must curb all of the barriers to integrating its SMEs into global value chains. A field survey conducted, in September 2019, of professional federations, firms, and universities in Morocco has highlighted the need to act on five drivers, i.e., logistics, corporate finance, market knowledge, human resources, and innovation process (Augier P. et al., 2019).

In connection with these measures, the country should review most of the many free trade agreements it has signed during the last decades, either bilaterally or regionally, sometimes without an in-depth analysis of their socioeconomic impacts<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> The approach adopted is based on an assessment of 59 indicators related to Drivers of production and Structure of production. Within 100 countries and economies, four categories have been identified: Leading (with strong current base and positioned well for the future); High-Potential (with currently limited base and positioned well for the future); Legacy (strong current base and at risk for the future); Nascent (currently limited base and at risk for the future). See for more details: (WEF,2018).

<sup>29</sup> The damaging impact that the Free trade agreement with Turkey had on Morocco's clothing sector is an eloquent example in this respect.

### *4.3. Morocco's management of the crisis*

Morocco's response to the crisis has managed to «keep the situation under control» and, to a certain extent, establish an acceptable trade-off between protecting lives and safeguarding livelihoods. These achievements derive from the country's adherence to several fundamental principles. In this regard, proactivity, clear management structures, independence from lobbying, more transparent media coverage, and legality have been crucial.

About two or three weeks after the Covid-19 had reached the country on March 2, policymakers have made crucial decisions, i.e., cancellation of the 15<sup>th</sup> Morocco' International Agricultural Exhibition (SIAM), suspension of in-person classes, suspension of international flights, the establishment of the State of a health emergency, suspension of intercity buses and trains, closing most public facilities, and building field hospitals.

As the pandemic evolved and learned from some «best practices»<sup>30</sup> in other countries, the country has adapted to better manage the crisis. A series of measures have then been taken, such as the requirement to wear masks, the extension of lockdown, the reinforcement of the health capacity, and increasing testing facilities. In a nutshell, proactivity has been a vital driver of the country's strategy for combating coronavirus.

Morocco has also set up specific management bodies and mechanisms. Indeed, King Mohammed VI has appointed a «Moroccan task force» composed of five high-ranking state officials (from scientific, political, and security background) to coordinate the Covid-19 pandemic strategy.

Also, the country has established an Economic Watch Committee (CVE). The committee is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the economic situation and identifying the appropriate measures to weather the crisis. Moreover, King Mohammed VI ordered the creation of the Special Fund for Coronavirus pandemic management. The Fund aims to upgrade the medical infrastructure, support the national economy, and mitigate the pandemic's social impacts.

Moreover, Morocco has established the Interministerial Committee in charge of monitoring supply, prices, and quality control operations to reassure citizens and avoid the panic buying witnessed at the beginning of the pandemic.

The creation of all these bodies and mechanisms reveals the multifaceted approach underpinning Morocco's pandemic management.

More importantly, independence from lobbying is another primary driver while coping with the pandemic. It is about independence from the pharmaceutical lobby (Yahia Hatim, 2020) since Morocco was one of the first countries in the world to adopt the protocol (treatment) of [French Doctor Didier Raoult], that of hydroxychloroquine. The country has then secured a sufficient stockpile of this medicine and adopted a treatment protocol for the coronavirus disease.

Besides, more transparent media coverage has also helped to get the population on board. Not professional at the beginning of the pandemic, the communication strategy has evolved a lot

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<sup>30</sup> See some of these “best practices” in (White, 2020). Some health experts believe that for many reasons, “Asia’s democracies, such as Taiwan and South Korea, maybe better (compared with China, praised by WHO) models for epidemic management”.

over time. Updates about the spread of the virus are communicated twice daily by the Ministry of Health. A dedicated official website also provides information about the spread of the virus and health guidance issued by Morocco's Ministry of Health<sup>31</sup>. Otherwise, through the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Administrative Reform's official website, people are advised on the measures taken by the CVE and the procedures needed to benefit from the stipend granted by the Special Fund for the Coronavirus pandemic management.

More importantly, to create a legal basis for managing the crisis, Morocco has passed two decree-laws<sup>32</sup>, allowing it to take any emergency measure to cope with the pandemic.

Ultimately, the pandemic management has shown that good governance, based on principles such as those established during the crisis, is possible. This kind of governance that cuts ties with aberrant practices, such as wait-and-see, hesitation, submission to lobbying, no access to information, and illegality, must continue even when the pandemic is over.

#### *4.4. The Covid-19 crisis is time for solidarity, trust, and values*

The Covid-19-related economic downturn would result from the lockdown and the decline of exports, tourism revenues, FDI, and remittances transferred by Moroccan living abroad. They would also be exacerbated by the precipitation deficit this year<sup>33</sup>.

A recent survey conducted by the High Commission for Planning shows that approximately 726 000 employees have lost their jobs, temporarily or definitively. Moreover, approximately 142 000 companies representing 52% of companies registered in Morocco's trade register, have declared suspending their activity (HCP, 2020). Also, given the lack of social safety net, a large part of the informal sector's working population will be heavily impacted by the coronavirus crisis.

To alleviate the socioeconomic impacts of Covid-19, the CVE has taken a series of targeted measures for employees and informal sector workers as well as businesses.

All workers from the private sector declared to the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) have benefited from the monthly stipend allowance (of 2000 dirhams) issued by this Fund. This aid added a freeze on water and electricity bills and postponement of bank credits' maturities.

Support measures for the informal sector have also been set up, supporting both RAMED cardholders and non-RAMED holders' households. Thanks to the Special Fund for the Management of the Coronavirus Pandemic, workers in the informal sector have also received financial aid ranging from 800 to 1200 dirhams depending on family size.

Some specific measures aim to keep Moroccan businesses afloat, particularly SMEs and very small businesses. For example, businesses with an annual turnover lower than or equal to MAD 20 million may ask for the postponement of their tax payment deadlines.

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<sup>31</sup> [www.covidmaroc.ma](http://www.covidmaroc.ma)

<sup>32</sup> Decree-Law No. 2-20-292 of 23 March 2020 on the declaration of the state of a health emergency, and Decree No. 2-20-293 of 24 March 2020, which regulates the state of health emergency to contain the Covid-19 epidemic. The decrees were published in the Moroccan Official Bulletin n°6867 bis of 24 March 2020.

<sup>33</sup> According to Morocco's Minister of Economy, Finance, and Administrative Reform, the first two-month lockdown will cause the national economy to lose 1 billion DH (\$100 million) per day or 6 points of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in 2020. Therefore, for the period of the lockdown (March 20 - June 10), the economic losses would be 80 billion (8 points of GDP).

Companies can also request a postponement of the reimbursement of bank loan maturities. Besides, an active credit line is being granted by the banks and guaranteed by the Guaranty Central Fund (CCG).

It is worth noting that after the questions surrounding the Special Fund management had arisen, greater transparency has taken place.

Because of all the measures implemented to limit the spread of the virus and mitigate its health, social, and economic repercussions, there has been «a burst of unity, social solidarity and public support in the face of crisis» (Masbah, 2020). A recent quantitative field study conducted by the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis (MIPA) (Mesbah M. & Rachid Aourraz, 2020) points out that 77% of Moroccan respondents expressed their satisfaction with the measures taken by authorities to tackle the crisis. Nevertheless, 74% of the respondents said they do not trust the healthcare system's effectiveness.

Furthermore, the media have reported real momentum of solidarity during the crisis (such as devoting hotel rooms to the medical staff battling the coronavirus, hosting COVID-19 patients for medical care, serving meals free of charge by some restaurants to doctors in the frontline of the battle, and those most in need, hosting some of the stranded tourists in bed and breakfasts free of charge).

To conclude, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light high-priority issues, emerged unique concerns, highlighted the crucial need for a sound governance system, and emphasized the importance of solidarity values.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Covid-19 has hit hard the country amid a national debate on the new development model. This debate aims at reshaping the county's development patterns. All of the national stakeholders have put forward many contributions and inputs.

From the analysis of seven of these contributions, it is clear that proposals are related to significant dimensions: economic (and financial), social, societal, territorial, governance, and political reforms. The latter is the "key entrance" and cross-cutting requirement of the other components.

In many ways, the Covid-19 crisis has contributed to "mature" the national debate, thus preparing the ground for the new development model implementation.

It has sharpened several challenges discussed before the pandemic, such as the necessity of urgent reforms, the most important of which concerns the health care system. Furthermore, the digital transformation pushed forward by the COVID-19 crisis could strengthen the education system and accelerate the economy's structural transformation, not to mention the positive impacts on social connectedness and ecological footprint.

On the other hand, the Covid-19 has raised a wide-ranging series of challenges, such as the relevance of setting clear development objectives, the emerging issues of vulnerability, and Flexibility. Another critical issue that is coming into focus is the crisis's opportunities for better integration in the international value chains. All of these issues would help to complete the formulation of the new development model before going to its implementation

Furthermore, the Covid-19 crisis has shown that a more relevant governance system is possible. This kind of governance that cuts ties with aberrant practices, such as lack of comprehensive and integrated vision, wait-and-see, hesitation, submission to lobbying, no access to information, and illegality, must be sustained even when the pandemic is over.

Most importantly, the pandemic has generated " a real spur in solidarity" and values. «Morocco must capitalize on the positive momentum the crisis generated and the historic reconciliation between public institutions and Moroccan people» (Bennis, 2020).

In the context of change and uncertainty, the coronavirus crisis should provide strong impetus and serve as a transition springboard to the long-awaited new development model.

As the country is preparing to ease the lockdown, some steps could help transition to the post-coronavirus era. First, the Amending Finance Bill to be drawn up to activate the national economy's recovery plan might be the right frame to introduce the primary measures reform. Policymakers might condition access to incentives and stimulus programs on informality practices, speed up the digitalization transformation, enhance quality education, foster research, and innovate. (Cadena Andres & Ferrari-Haines F., 2020). Second, it would be necessary to transform the CSMD's final report into a framework law. As above-mentioned, this would ensure monitoring and evaluating the project and enduring it beyond the electoral mandates. In the medium run, the country should redouble efforts to address the structural reforms issues, such as those highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis, including challenges related to social protection, vulnerability, and the informal sector. Let us hope that a new social contract will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

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