

Beat: Politics

Interview of AZIZ MEKOUAR Ambassador For Multilateral Negotiations at COP22

Free Trade Agreement Negotiator Morocco

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USPA NEWS - Aziz Mekouar was the Ambassador of Morocco to the United States from 2002 to 2011. He participated in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between Morocco and USA. Rahma Sophia Rachdi sat and had a candid conversation for an interview just before the COP22's kick off at Africa Renewable Energy

INTERVIEW AZIZ MEKOUAR

QUESTION Rahma Sophia Rachdi : From COP21 last year where the parties came up with a historical accord called now the " Paris agreement", what happened during that year in between ?

ANSWER Aziz Mekouar : We had the implementation of the Paris Agreement officially, on the 4th November further the ratification. This shows that there is mobilisation, maybe the biggest countries have signed for reducing their gas emissions, and they also mean business not only in terms of regulations, The ones that ratified the Paris agreement are really the largest producers of emissions, such as the US, UE, Brazil, China, India. There are 94 countries at all together.

This shows that people are more aware of the emergency. This last April, through May June and July we had experienced the warmest days, since 1980's. This means something, that there is an actual global warming and this is also, how we see now the very bad effects on people, like the huge migrations, and other consequences. And the leaders are quite aware, as well, that there is a need to make action NOW. This is why we are launching a call upon COP22, ACTION!

QUESTION Rahma Sophia Rachdi : This is it ! we are 3 days before the COP22's kick off here in Marrakech, you are the ambassador for the multilateral negotiations of COP22, how does it feel, as far as your responsibility is concerned, a heavy burden ?

ANSWER Aziz Mekouar : Well, you know, the actual COP22 is the first COP of implementation in order to write the rules and guidelines and it is also the moment to receive lots of initiatives to be announced and to show that there are countries on the ground. For example, we expect adaptation, initiative and also new launchings in Morocco. There are thirty (30) African countries which got involved in agriculture's adaptation process already. The Blue belt, with capacity, a centre of competencies and cachet building, bio fuels generations, from Brasil to Morocco which is part of it. Then you have the agenda which is in the sense of the business community and civil society. We must do, and much to do. We are optimistic and proud of it.

QUESTION Rahma Sophia Rachdi : What do you think of this forum called "Africa renewable Energy Forum" as you attended and brought your own contribution to the round table today ?

ANSWER Aziz Mekouar : This forum is a good idea to gather by few days before the COP22, here in Marrakech. In Africa, people need electricity, what you see when you look at an aerial photo taken by satellite shows that the world is unfairly unequal in terms of lightning. (Aziz Mekouar is showing me the satellite photo from his smartphone). The African continent appears so obviously dark versus the rest of the planet. The african people are in the dark and this how it leads huge migrations, they're going towards light, because they are lacking many facilities dependent on electricity nowadays. There are no hospitals, no pumps, no way to improve things and to develop without electricity.

QUESTION Rahma Sophia Rachdi : From the ethical perspective, everybody agrees that Africa needs a Marshall Plan to being electrified ?

ANSWER Aziz Mekouar : It is much better and easier to develop the renewable for Africa in a cost effective way than in a traditional manner. Moreover, it is the right timing for that. It takes trillions of \$ and much grids, local grids, and can be done with renewable and especially with a real ROI (Return on Investment)

Renewable attract lots of money, regulatory, How this should be done example in Morocco, and other examples even in the USA. This is not very old, it could be an benchmark and why not. Mexico did it and it worked well. The transfert of technology and the know how in terms of constitutions and regulation must be applied from both sides in an approach of win-win. **QUESTION** Rahma Sophia Rachdi : The 22nd Conference of parties is held in Morocco this year, just after the signature of the Paris Agreement in Bourget. Still, The Moroccan are renowned for being genuine negotiations. Is that true and shall be helpful during the COP22 ?

ANSWER Aziz Mekouar : During the COP22 the society has to know and show the rest of the world how we could make it, in Morocco, because yes, we are tough negotiators and may be yes it can be the right place for the showcase for Morocco, and also

helping in explain that there is a ROI (Return On Investment). Means it's worth it to investing in the Solar and Hydro and other renewable energies but not only, in terms of technical issues, but also as far as fighting against climate change in order to reduce the GHG. (Green House Gaz)“/

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