

# **Human Development in Morocco and the Arab Spring Region**

**By Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir**

## Abstract:

The Arab Spring marks a time of great urgency to address the primary challenge now facing governments in the region: to advance human development at a rate and effectiveness not before seen, and that failure to do so for the majority of people directly feeds potentially devastating political instability. In order for local communities and neighborhoods to identify, plan, and implement socio-economic and environmental projects they most need – which is the engine for sustainable human development – governments must play a critical role in catalyzing and furthering these local processes by: 1) decentralizing power and the needed capabilities, and creating the necessary administrative structures that promote local development, and 2) supporting experiential training in facilitating participatory planning to members of communities, civil organizations, and government - and implementing the projects communities determine. Morocco has created a number of essential national frameworks that promote development through people's participation, but their implementation is critically lacking for identifiable reasons that can be addressed. This essay provides recommendations to directly promote human development driven by local communities, which is vitally needed in the Arab Spring. The recommendations develop from Morocco's experience and major ideas and lessons from the field of international development since the 1940s. The essay also connects decentralization and human development models to the cases and opportunities in Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine, as well as to the contexts of free trade and rural areas, where most poverty is concentrated.

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## **1. The Primacy of Human Development in the Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring marks a heightened urgency for governments of the Middle East and North Africa to create development that directly engages and benefits the people. Considering the widespread poverty in the region, the Arab Spring – the turning of public social consciousness into counter-action – was in some form expected by many. The peoples’ powerful determination for change in Arab Spring countries and their willingness to pay tragic costs have been transformational, its speed and reach have blindsided most political leaders. What would now compel the people of the region to accept less from their governments than the opportunity to develop (politically and socio-economically) themselves, their communities and country? The Arab Spring has heavily aligned political stability with socio-economic development that is democratically achieved for and by all people. As the Tunisian president Moncef Marzouki recently wrote about the Arab Spring, “We are in a race against poverty.”<sup>1</sup>

In the Arab Spring, national governments are facing a trade-off where survivability and social peace are bought at the price of jurisdictional diversity and territorial autonomy of interests, actors, and ideas. This essay takes the position that the needed short-term and sustainable rise in human development necessitates that governments decentralize power to advance local community planning and implementing of new projects in economic growth, education, health, and natural resource management. Decentralization engenders localized decision-making (through different organizational arrangements, as will be discussed) and capabilities (financial, managerial, and technical) to create development projects driven by the intended beneficiaries.

Human development is decentralized and participatory in its approach, and mobilizes communities by transferring responsibility, skills, and capabilities to the local level and by

supporting programs that catalyze community planning and projects. Human development projects create and reinforce channels between sectors and administrative tiers, making the decentralized system operational. Human development initiatives need to accompany or, better yet, precede (as is the case of Morocco, with serious questions related to effectiveness) the building of decentralized administrative systems so that already local powerful interests at sub-regional levels are not simply further entrenched.

During this revolutionary period, Morocco's relative social and political stability is I suggest due largely to King Mohammed VI's institutionalizing human development initiatives since his rise to the throne in 1999, including committing the nation in 2008 to decentralized government, now in Article I of their new constitution. Morocco demonstrates that national leaders gain measures of public trust when they are genuinely over time committed to reforms that advance people's development.<sup>2</sup> However, it takes the right vision for development (which Morocco has made important strides in) *and* its successful implementation (which Morocco is unfortunately not achieving as needed) in order to attain sustainable socio-political stability in the Arab Spring. Local communities need to come together to identify and implement the projects they most need and want – a process obviously difficult to create across a nation, yet is achievable with the appropriate administrative structures and programs, local investment, and national political will. Community participation in all phases of project development is key to sustainability, and this is arguably *the* most important (and costly) lesson learned in the field of international development since the Marshall Plan.

The decentralization model of the King of Morocco synergistically combines elements from different organizational models (which are, devolution, de-concentration, and delegation) to form an administrative system where sub-national public and private agencies – with ongoing central

level support – assist provinces, villages, and neighborhoods in furthering their self-reliant development. The application of this principle model in public policies and ministerial operations, in a system steeped in centralization, is proving to be a daunting task. At the Moroccan local community-level particularly in rural areas, the unrealized massive development potential in the midst of deep ongoing poverty characterizes the existence of most people. However, it can be remedied in the context of existing principle Moroccan national frameworks for human development and decentralization, and with significant reforms discussed in the essay.

Government may be reluctant to decentralize out of concern that it may promote secessionist movements and instead become a cause of conflict. However, it is more often the lack of empowerment in decision-making at the sub-national levels that heightens political resistance and sectarian and other violence and tension.<sup>3</sup> Decentralization may cause national politicians and bureaucrats to feel depoliticized with less influence. The central level though remains vital in its roles, including: macroeconomic policy, foreign policy, the national judiciary and security, development targets that encourage inter-regional balance and performance, and other areas. Centralization could also help avoid risks of decentralization if it were implemented poorly, such as reduced social protections and greater social and geographic stratification.<sup>4</sup>

National governments ought not to consider decentralizing for development as undermining their own authority, but rather as a short- and long-term way to meet the real needs of the people and advance social integration, national unity,<sup>5</sup> and grassroots political empowerment – and create the conditions for themselves to politically endure. It is noteworthy that the King of Bahrain's call for decentralization in 2011 rang insincere to the public, as his country's Arab Spring was already in full motion. In addition, local political, civil, and community leaders must

do their essential part and assume responsibility, apply participation, and help manage projects – requiring their training, as discussed in this essay.

The following section presents major lessons and ideas in the field of international development in the decades since World War II, human development perspectives during these periods, and their relevance to situations and opportunities in the Arab Spring. The essay directly relates decentralization for human development to situations in Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq, as well as to issues of free trade with Western economies. A significant part of this essay discusses strategies to further the sustainable application of the participatory human development and decentralized administration in Morocco, and which are also intended to also serve as guidelines if applied elsewhere.

## **2. Human Development in the Decades**

The human development approach dates from the beginning of the field of international development. During the 1940s and 1950s, modernization economists – emphasizing capital, technology, labor, income, import/exports, and urbanization to achieve growth – distrusted what they considered “populist” development used by social workers and field activists. They saw the masses as lacking the skills and foresight to plan for the future, and they felt the process could invite political instability.<sup>6</sup> Their concerns were later modified by some of their theorists in light of the ability of the human development approach to promote decentralization and self-reliance, helping to decolonize.<sup>7</sup> Human development first emerged in recognition of the creativity of local communities and marginalized groups, and their views, values, expressions of identity, opportunities, and needs.<sup>8</sup> It stands to reason and reality that local communities know the local conditions best and are positioned to sustainably manage and monitor development project

activities. People feel affirmed as democratic planning of local development unfolds – a public sentiment that would be particularly politically and socially stabilizing in the Arab Spring.

During the 1960s (referred to by some as “the first development decade”<sup>9</sup>), mainstream development initiatives (and here the U.S. Foreign Service Act of 1961 stands out) began to reflect the view that overall human development is essential to alleviating poverty.<sup>10</sup>

The Act, passed under the leadership of President John Kennedy, marked an attempt to de-link U.S. development assistance from U.S. military, political, and economic interests. The Peace Corps was also created with the Act. Its potential benefits for local development and sharing culture, as well as the invaluable work that former volunteers go on to do, could return exponentially in the Arab Spring. For example, the late U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, killed in Libya, was a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco’s High Atlas Mountains and he remained throughout his life a bridge of understanding to the region (there are many other examples). Given the region’s current volatility, typical two-year volunteer assignments are likely prohibitive in most countries beyond the current programs in Jordan and Morocco. However, Peace Corps Response, the agency’s program for shorter specialized assignments, is more conducive for Arab Spring countries, even as a stand-alone program. Response volunteers ought to be offered to universities in the region, which can be excellent gateways to human development opportunities, utilizing a range of skill backgrounds. The first Response Volunteer in Morocco was in partnership with Hassan II University in Mohammedia.

Human development aligns with the 1970’s perspective of scholars and people throughout the developing world who still consider the modernization model too geared toward consumption—and does not account for their social reality. According to this world view, the export by developing nations of their surplus (raw materials and farm products) leads to an economic order

that results in their impoverishment, social dislocation, and reduced autonomy.<sup>11</sup> Human development is considered a befitting remedy for the concerns of these Southern movements, since it could meet their twin objectives to: 1) deliver socio-economic benefits to meet immediate needs,<sup>12</sup> while in the process 2) induce institutional structural reforms from applied participatory democratic procedures<sup>13</sup>. Today in Morocco and for most countries in the region, there are not nearly enough value-added enterprises of raw products, especially among farming communities, where most and intractable poverty is concentrated (World Bank, 2012). For example, 19% of the Moroccan population lives under the national poverty line, of which 70% are living in rural areas (the estimated earned income of women is less than 40% of that of men).<sup>14</sup> The combination of population growth and the low market-value of traditional staple crops (barley and corn), from which most rural households derive their income, has made subsistence agriculture unsustainable. These staples are planted on more than 70% of Moroccan agricultural land, yet account for only 10-15% of agricultural revenue.<sup>15</sup> Family farmers feel compelled to transition to plant cash-crops, most commonly fruit trees, to generate significantly greater income. This essay considers these challenges below.

The 1980s saw the rise of anti-development movements in the context of liberalization and privatization policies of the IMF and World Bank pushed onto governments of developing nations. A shared consensus is that these policies were excessive in their economic austerity, brought major political instability in emerging countries, and continued to bear harmful financial consequences into the 1990s.<sup>16</sup> Today, viewing from a human development perspective the debate around the globe between the proponents of austerity and stimulus – as to which measure will reverse troubled economies – stimulus would be considered the immensely better choice, and nations of the Arab Spring (with international partnership) need to dedicate greater funds for

economic development stimulus. However, the human development approach would absolutely prefer thousands of smaller projects at the local level that communities identify and manage, instead of fewer large-scale costly projects. In addition to benefits for local communities from projects that are more quickly implemented, human development is finely suited to help shorten recessions and promote growth by: 1) increasing people's ability to adapt to changes by building their practical and critical thinking skills and confidence,<sup>17</sup> and 2) creating economic diversity with lower and shared risks on investments from smaller project costs and new partnerships<sup>18</sup> (including community in-kind contributions of work and materials).

The globalization epoch (its onset recognized by the 1990s) intensifies multi-dimensional relations across borders. It is fueled by declining communication and transport costs, a technological revolution, and the spread of economic and political liberalization. The Arab Spring profoundly embodies globalization's empowering characteristics of a "global-local nexus"<sup>19</sup> and "time-space compression"<sup>20</sup>; the people of the region are creating change and value locally, while giving and receiving in real time coherence to and from global networks. In order to build interdependence that would help lessen the potential for conflict in the region and internationally, free trade could potentially be highly contributive if it were gradually introduced so that national and regional institutions have the time they need to address their own structural reform, including first – before the removal of tariffs – decentralization that advances diversified and participatory human development. The rationale for this position is explored below.

By the 1990s, participatory human development became (and still is) the cutting edge of development practice, after a decades-long path to legitimacy and mainstream appeal. Evaluations of development projects conducted by the World Bank, USAID, the UN, and innumerable others over decades overwhelmingly show that active engagement of project



beneficiaries – as much as financing – is essential to achieving project sustainability.<sup>21</sup> The participatory premise is that timing of meetings, project implementation, and the overall development process rests with the people of communities who identify the problems, find and implement solutions, and benefit from the initiatives. It is local self-governance and emphasizes including disadvantaged groups, such as the disabled, illiterate, landless, poor, children, elderly, neglected minorities, professional groups, women, and youth.

When local communities do their own investigation, analysis and implementing of projects, their knowledge (critically built during this data generating and information-sharing process) is directly relevant. The participatory approach to human development has now become hundreds of families of methods of group dialogue and consensus-building, visual and accessible diagramming, and planning around projects that address high-priority local socio-economic and environmental goals. Visual forms of analysis are typically used, such as mapping, where local communities analyze household well-being, risks, and community assets and gaps. Diagrams identify key development institutions, work activities across seasons, historical timelines, and root causes of problems. During the process, community members improve their ability to determine and evaluate solutions to problems, create and present action plans, link available funds with priorities, manage projects, and advocate successful local initiatives for greater scale.

### **3. The Moroccan King and Human Development**

For years prior to the onset of the Arab Spring, King Mohammed VI of Morocco consistently promoted human development and a government system that is decentralized to more quickly, efficiently, and directly respond to the needs of the people. The king's framework for advancing development and democracy is to bind the two processes together so that each occurs by way of

the other, making them mutually reinforcing: which is to say, development occurs through localized democratic procedures, and democracy-building happens through the participatory method of advancing human development.

The king often speaks of this integrated participatory approach in his public statements. For example, in his 100 published statements from 2005 to 2010 in Maghreb Arab Press, Morocco's government press agency, the king refers to it 105 times. He most always chooses to visit new local projects during his constant travels in the country. His launch in 2005 of the National Initiative for Human Development (NIHD) galvanized a progressive self-reliant and self-generating development vision. Aside from its shortcomings and ways it can be more effectively implemented described below, the NIHD inspired civil society action, university programs, and government support and flexibility. It set the tone of subsequent political reforms and national projects, including the amended national charter of communes (or municipalities, Morocco's most local administrative tier) and the Green Plan for agriculture.

Since his rise to the throne, the Moroccan king's progressive ideas related to sustainable development and participatory democracy, national political reconciliation, decentralization, civil society, gender justice, reforming the judiciary, South-South partnership, ethnic-cultural-religious diversity, among others, have been formalized. The king himself certainly wins the general Moroccan public's hearts and minds. After all, consistent support for the people's development and empowerment engenders public trust, and as such is also a highly effective pathway of public diplomacy. The late U.S. Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke (interestingly, he was a former Peace Corps country director in Morocco) viewed public diplomacy to be ultimately effective by partnering for human development around the globe,<sup>22</sup> and studies since

2003 suggest this to be the case.<sup>23</sup> The recent launching of the Morocco-U.S. Strategic Dialogue is a reflection of the king's dedication to development and democratic reforms over many years.

If Morocco were to ever experience threatening political destabilization in the future, it will likely be because of the serious shortcomings in implementation, not because the country did not institute the right principles for development and democracy. When the institutional legal frameworks are in place, it still comes down to delivery: are local communities in fact coming together and creating initiatives that better their lives? Unfortunately in Morocco, human development implementation and results are falling dishearteningly short of critical public needs and expectations. On the whole, for far too much of the public, execution is not living up to the promise and great potential. Thus, as a country with national model structures for promoting democratic human development, Morocco's success or lack thereof has highly considerable regional implications, as well as for Western countries.

#### **4. Decentralization in Morocco and the Region**

King Mohammed VI's Roadmap to decentralization combines three general organizational approaches that have been applied in cases around the globe. First, it includes devolution, or building capabilities of sub-national government, which was the approach applied by Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Brazil.<sup>24</sup> Second, the Roadmap incorporates de-concentration, or subnational government, civil, and community groups working collaboratively for development, with ongoing central-level support (financial and technical, for example), as was applied in India and Sri Lanka.<sup>25</sup> Third is delegation, or the participatory method, such as applied in Tanzania,<sup>26</sup> which is community-driven where, as Morocco's king describes it, "citizens are the engine for and ultimate objective of all initiatives."<sup>27</sup> The king underscored the prerequisite of the

decentralization project: “the necessary public funds.”<sup>28</sup> Combining these organizational arrangements creates a model where sub-national government, civil, and private organizations – with federal level assistance – have the needed authority and capacity to implement development projects (via de-concentration and devolution) that are ultimately determined and controlled by local communities and people (delegation or the participatory method). Jordan has a similar model for decentralization.<sup>29</sup>

The 2011 elections in Morocco saw the rise of the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD). The PJD now has the opportunity to embed decentralization in public administration, which is really the *sine qua non* for human development to take hold across the kingdom. Islamic concepts embody the ideas of decentralization for human development, including *shura*, *ummah*, *baya*, and *tawhidi*, among others.<sup>30</sup> Together, these concepts form a system of local governing as part of a worldwide Muslim community that furthers social justice, accountability of leaders, and empowerment of mankind. The broad appeal of decentralized human development is its diverse philosophical roots, investing in people’s participation for localized solutions, and encouraging benefits and reforms that are driven bottom-up.

The practical and principled justification to decentralize for human development should encourage Egypt’s new Islamic leadership to help pass and execute the Local Administration Law, which transfers power from governors to people’s representatives in the Local Popular Councils to manage local jurisdictions.. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood would be expected to be sympathetic toward decentralizing for development, since its recent electoral success is arguably in large part due to their localized administration of human services for years prior to the elections, enabling their own close proximity to the people.

Prior to its rise to power, Hamas in Gaza was also known for its decentralized management of human service delivery. The Fayyad plan in the West Bank embodies components of decentralized human development in order to build political and economic self-reliance by increasing local control. Decentralized organizational arrangements for human development are a necessary component of liberation from international dependency,<sup>31</sup> and could now be a critical structural feature in a Palestinian unity government. The Israeli occupation has made the Palestinian people among the most poor on earth by way of underdevelopment caused by extreme economic dependency, fueling turmoil and instability throughout the region. Self-reliance through decentralization and development could enable Palestinians to de-link from economic and political domination, price fluctuations and external control, and promote autonomy. Furthermore, Palestinian factional governments could find common ground while forming a federalist-decentralized government to enable what they have proven already by their actions to be at their core identities: meeting human needs through localized processes, and the provision of needed institutional support for that to take place. Comparatively, during the forming of the United States, individual states would not have joined the union had it not been for a federalist-decentralized system.<sup>32</sup>

Iraq, with its veers toward sectarian turmoil, might have done well to adopt federalism – a formalized decentralized system – when the idea caught attention in 2006.<sup>33</sup> Federalist-decentralization, dividing in varying degrees policy-making power between the central government and provincial or state levels, could decrease Shiite-Sunni violence and tension,<sup>34</sup> and still remains perhaps the most viable organizational and constitutional path for long-term stability and unity of Iraq. The U.S.-led Iraqi reconstruction missed an historic opportunity, in the aftermath of an unjust and unnecessary war, to advance reconciliation by integrating its

methods in the process of building local administrative capacity and development. Participatory methods include approaches for confidence-building among deeply divided groups. From a human development perspective, it is inexplicable to have outsourced management of reconstruction away from Iraqis to U.S. firms and agencies, including the military. The United Nations concluded from the first Gulf War's reconstruction that Iraqis can manage projects without onsite help from foreign contractors.<sup>35</sup> Without Iraqis feeling ownership, too many projects were left incomplete or sabotaged. The well established – that people do not destroy projects they control and benefit from<sup>36</sup> – was learned again the tragically hard way: 318 American reconstruction personnel lost their lives,<sup>37</sup> let alone Iraqi humiliation and lost potential and lives (through avoidable instability) as a consequence of foreign reconstruction.

Toward resolving the Western Sahara conflict, the parties – Morocco and the Polisario Front – are talking under United Nations auspices (nine rounds have passed), but there does not seem the gain of significant progress.<sup>38</sup> This conflict of nearly 40 years divides the Maghreb regional bloc of nations from forging essential wide-ranging partnerships to economically excel and live securely in a globalized world. Major and urgent international security challenges are arising from North Africa, and deep collaboration and real peace are critically needed. Morocco catalyzed the current negotiations with its reconciliation proposal to the United Nations Security Council to have an enhanced autonomy of the Sahara within Moroccan sovereignty, and the proposal has received a high level of international interest and consideration to be viable, including by the United States. The parties should define, or Morocco propose as specifically as possible, what exactly the flexible organizational arrangement could mean in terms of decentralized ministerial arrangements and regionally-generated and national financing. Morocco is now moving ahead with planning and implementing decentralization for human

development in its Saharan southern provinces, which could prove to be a positive development toward resolving the conflict because it would give the people living in the region a clearer idea of what decentralized development and management of own affairs could mean in their lives, as well as put the onus of Morocco to deliver genuine sustainable development for all the people, beginning with the disadvantaged local groups.

## **5. Implementing Decentralization in Morocco**

With human development the primary goal, decentralization should then take place as far down as possible in order to effectively and directly engage local people and communities in the planning of projects that are most important to them. Administrations can later re-centralize if needed in response to problems of coordination of resources, for example. In Morocco, the amended national Communal Charter in 2010 sets the stage for the communal level to significantly plan and drive human development. The Charter requires communal councils to create community development plans formulated by the participation of the people. These plans are sent to the ministries of Interior and Finance for consideration for funding, which currently still too often takes place in Rabat the capital. Morocco needs to fully implement the policy that development funding will be approved at the provincial level to support the projects the communes have identified.

However, in Morocco's case, are communes in fact ready to take on this responsibility of determining (with the citizens of their jurisdictions) most needed and viable development projects? A governor of one province in Morocco noted to me that after providing \$58,000 in funding to each commune for them to create a participatory development plan of specific priority projects for their area, the plans from the around two dozen communes were later submitted

identical to each other, in regard to their text and proposed projects. In genuine human development processes, it would be impossible that all village and neighborhood communities of a province's communes defined the same projects at the same priority level. In the participatory approach to human development, there is not a blueprint or any single way development unfolds because of the vast range of economic, social, and environmental local conditions that exist. Unfortunately, even as Morocco has this legal framework for decentralized development, the people on the whole do not have the training and knowledge needed to take full advantage of this enormous opportunity.

What needs to happen? Each village and neighborhood needs facilitators of local group dialogue who apply participatory planning methods. The quantity and durability of local human development projects largely reflects the extent to which there are active facilitators (third-parties) that assist in applying methods for participatory methods for community planning. Facilitators can be school teachers, members of civil society organizations, locally elected officials, government extension workers, university students, representatives of socially responsible corporations, religious leaders, citizens, development aid workers – potentially anyone who is in a position to interface with local communities and whom local people accept in that role. Governments and concerned agencies need to fund and deliver to their community level workers training in participatory facilitation (pedagogically, by way of “learning by doing” in the field) in order to initiate and assist local development processes. The experiential learning pedagogy not only most effectively builds the needed skills, but also results in communities identifying and implementing development projects, as the training takes place in real settings.

Essentially, the challenge to mass participatory human development is in catalyzing community meetings across villages and neighborhoods, and establishing the projects that



communities determine during that process, which they contribute to in-kind, including labor. Entire communities typically do not spontaneously come together and plan projects in a participatory way – there needs to be a catalyst of an inclusive process – someone who help maintain the development momentum, especially during the early stages. Functions of facilitators are to: organize community meetings, coordinate and coach so that all voices are heard, manage competing interests and conflicts, analyze factors that affect projects, understand the needs of the poor and power relations, build confidence and self-reliance (to counteract people's sense of powerlessness), form partnerships, inform beneficiaries of government and other resources available, and be a bridge among people and institutions.

Training people in community settings in Morocco so that they may experience the entire project development cycle (such programs are well appreciated and are in high demand) costs approximately \$1,000 per person. The Ministry of Interior needs to continue to support such existing programs for women elected to communal councils, and expand them to include all members of councils, and human service ministries need to provide the same for their community-related workers. Locally elected women face serious challenges once they are elected, and professional support networks are needed and important. The National Endowment for Democracy and the Middle East Partnership Initiative have assisted these programs in regions. The need for experiential participatory training is extremely pervasive and wanted.

Governments and others must also commit the funding for the community-determined projects that become defined. Morocco's National Initiative for Human Development would be an ideal donor to communes' project plans that genuinely reflect the ideas of the people. Toward that end, it would be helpful if NIHD accepted proposals all year round rather than once a year, with more lead time and community outreach to inform the people about it. Seen at the local

level in many different regions, the NIHD can and should be doing so much more. The far majority of communities who have planned projects are still not accessing the NIHD, while the majority of the NIHD budget goes unspent. The administration of the NIHD needs to be taken out of the Ministry of Interior – human development is not core to Interior’s mission (internal national security is). Most all other ministries engage with the NIHD (five have oversight and management functions). NIHD should be fully managed by them, each with funding streams for projects. Furthermore, Interior representatives at the sub-communal level (the *Moqadem*, *Sheikh*, and *Khalifa*) should be responsible to the elected Communal Councils. This will create a more trusting and transparent space at the local level – encouraging conditions for development.

Decentralization and the NIHD are synergistic, they reinforce each other. The NIHD can help build the new partnerships and structures of regionalization through funding participatory development training and projects, which is the substance (bricks and mortar) of decentralized administration. In terms of planning, it makes real sense that the NIHD preceded decentralization. However, the NIHD needed to be more effective in order to lay much still needed groundwork for equitable and prosperity-generating decentralization.

The King of Morocco’s great challenge is to guide the transition toward decentralization, as an intermediary among social sectors and institutions and among the central, regional, and provincial administrative tiers, so that new productive relationships form. I recommend creating a new agency as part of the palace administration – a recommendation based on the NIHD experience. The king and the NIHD Observatory expressed that the levels of community participation in planning and managing NIHD projects are less than ideal or even inadequate. The NIHD naturally took on the character of the highly centralized government system that implemented it. Therefore, in regard to decentralization, it will likely be a mistake to leave it to

the government alone to decentralize itself; the depth of the central-level bureaucratic mindset and pattern may require external facilitation of building horizontal and vertical multi-sectoral partnerships and mediating the decentralizing process. The king's creation of an agency of decentralization would institutionalize this necessary role, though not indefinitely needed, since the decentralized system itself must in short time be self-sustaining.

## **6. Moroccan Rural Development**

In Morocco, the dominant barriers to realizing value-added projects (to retain surplus) and domestic and export market opportunities are actually two stifling bottlenecks that occur early on in the agricultural development process: the lack of availability of affordable fruit trees (more than 1 billion are needed, driving up their prices) and the widely need of irrigation infrastructure. Community-managed tree nurseries – raising them from seeds rather than purchasing two-year old trees from private nurseries – reduce the cost of trees to a fraction for family farmers, who also become self-reliant in tree production through technical skills-building. New irrigation methods typically use only half of the water traditional systems, enabling communities to expand orchard sizes and harvest at optimal times due to better water management during droughts. However, the price of typical village-based irrigation projects (including building basins and canals, installing piping and pressure/drip systems, terracing, etc.), even when the beneficiaries contribute their labor in-kind, is most often equal to at least an entire village's annual income. Morocco's Green Plan, dedicated to modernizing the country's agricultural sector, funds individual projects that carry out the entire range of the agricultural production and value-added process – from growing the crops to their market delivery. If the Green Plan would concentrate its resources more exclusively on tree nurseries and irrigation, without which communities

cannot reach value-added opportunities and potential export of their product, they might be able to finally break the still dominant subsistence agricultural pattern.

The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact in Morocco, currently winding down after five years, missed a rare opportunity with its Moroccan ministerial partners to more significantly help the country in its agricultural transition. They top-down managed its \$320 million budget buying and planting mature trees, rather than creating new community-managed trees nurseries which could have resulted in millions of more trees for the same cost. Furthermore, they planted only a few varieties, mostly olive, raising the ire of California olive growers who felt their own government was aiding their international competition.<sup>39</sup> If instead, the program had planted in different parts of the country the dozen or more varieties of fruit seeds and saplings that do not require pesticides and then secured their organic certification, this would have doubled the products' value for family farmers while promoting economic diversity and long-term comparative advantage. MCC had to pay local people to water the trees they planted, displaying a serious lack of community ownership. In human development, participation of the beneficiaries should occur in all stages and at the earliest possible opportunity – they own the design, implementation, management, and evaluation of projects.

## **7. Free Trade: Considerations for the Arab Spring**

Potential economic consequences of globalization's unprecedented levels of integration of national economies and its dislodging of identities and communities with homogenous global culture and products, could dislocate and impoverish the interior of countries and concentrate wealth in large cities. Mexico opening its markets to U.S. and Canadian corn under NAFTA, for example, and the resulting fallout in the price paid to farmers combined with Mexico's "prudent"

cuts in rural development spending, forced 1.5 million farmers from their land during the 1990s.<sup>40</sup> With the drop in global commodity prices during that same period, tens of thousands of small farms in the United States were also lost (though income assistance was in place for them), even as the agricultural trade surplus with Mexico ballooned.<sup>41</sup> Trade policies, new technology, and subsidies for export trading partners devastated and provoked counter-actions from local farmers unable to compete with cheap grain imports in countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, and South Korea.<sup>42</sup>

The brutal lesson from Mexico under NAFTA – which is the need for a transition period – is being applied in the U.S. free trade agreements with Morocco, Jordan, and Bahrain. However, the transition period to address the unequal distribution of the burden by creating employment and diversifying incomes is not unfolding at the rate needed especially in rural areas, adding further political and economic stress, including falling real wages, higher trade deficits, and prolonging the transition. Free trade agreements should in their design include new national human development initiatives that are genuinely participatory in their application, which today is not sufficiently the case. The consequence of advancing free trade in the region with industrialized countries – without governments in the region with international development assistance first building decentralized development programs for *vast* human development – will be more swelling of social tension that could deteriorate into chaos.

## **8. Conclusion**

A human development revolution in the final analysis could only save the day for governments in the Arab Spring, and time is not a friend. To endure, governments need to disperse to local levels the power and support for communities to create the development they

seek. Additionally, government budgets in the region and international development assistance should more heavily support building skills in managing local-participatory-democratic-community development, and, vitally, the projects determined by the local people – which range depending on the opportunities they face.

Empowering human development is at the nexus of world philosophies, and its field approach has ascended globally from the irrefutable evidence mounting over decades that it is the staple of project sustainability because it is driven by the participation of the people. Political survival and human development have aligned in the Arab Spring. Boldness is rewarded in this tumultuous time, and King Mohammed VI of Morocco is a rare leader who has endorsed and instituted many of the needed national frameworks for a human development “take-off”. As vitally necessary as this is, the implementation decides national fates in the Arab Spring, and the practical recommendations herein apply. The following table summarizes recommendations to promote human development in the Arab Spring.

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## NOTES

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