



Speech of the Ambassador of the State of Israel, H.E. Mordechai D. Rodgold, on occasion of the Friendship Cedar Tree Planting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Azzeddine Farhane, on July 15th, 2021, at the Residence of Israel in Vienna.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Azzeddine Farhane and myself would like to welcome with great pleasure,

The Representatives of the Austrian Foreign Ministry,
Ambassador Helmut Tichy and Counsellor Gerold Vollmer,
The Chargé d’Affairs of the United States Embassy, Mario Mesquita,

And last but not least,

The President of The Jewish Community, my friend Oskar Deutsch,

And all our distinguished friends!

Welcome to the Israeli residence in Vienna on this joyful occasion.

It is my honor to host this friendship tree planting together with my esteemed colleague, Ambassador Farhane.

The renewal of full diplomatic relations between Israel and Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI and the Prime Minister of Israel, and with the support of our greatest ally, our friends from the United States of America, is a historic milestone in the ancient relations between our two peoples.



In the past weeks, His Majesty King Mohammed VI congratulated Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett upon his taking office. Our Foreign Minister Yair Lapid extended an invitation to Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Burita to visit Israel. The Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, my dear friend Alon Ushpiz, has just returned from a diplomatic visit to Morocco. He held the first political-strategic dialogue between our countries.

Our renewed relationship is especially meaningful to me personally. I had the honor to serve in Rabat in my first diplomatic mission 26 years ago. Every diplomat has special feelings about the place of his first posting. This is particularly true for me. So I can sincerely share with you that Morocco has and will forever have a warm place in my heart. In fact, Morocco is always present in my own family. My spouse Céline was born in Morocco. Her family was part of the famous Jewish community in the beautiful city of Essaouira/Mogador on the Atlantic coast.

Israel and Morocco decided to join hands to strengthen the bilateral political ties, and to build economic, technological, cultural and touristic cooperation between the two countries.

The launch of direct flights this month between Tel Aviv and Marrakesh and between Tel Aviv and Casablanca in August will enhance ties between our peoples and strengthen the economy in both our countries.

This will also enable people-to-people encounters, which is the basis for real peace – a peace that can take roots, grow, bear fruits



and blossom on and on for the generations to come. Just like this cedar tree, we are going to plant.

The cedar symbolizes robustness, solidity, resilience and durability. It is very resistant to putrefaction and its lifespan lasts for centuries. We will witness it grow stronger and bigger – and this relates symbolically to our commitment to build the relations between Israel and Morocco stronger and bigger.

The cedar tree is also a tree of the bible. In the bible, we can read that the Temple in Jerusalem was built of cedar wood.

The cedar tree is typical for our region as well as of Morocco. I remember the mountains full of cedar woods and tremendous trees around Ifran Azrou and Mishlifen. This tree here is actually of a variety from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. It is a Moroccan variety of a cedar tree that will now grow on the soil of the residence of Israel in Vienna.

'For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again and that its tender shoots will not cease.' (Job 14:7)

Ambassador, please join me for the planting.