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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF MOROCCO AT THE 580th MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

27 May 2009

**Regarding the Seminar on Conventional Arms and Regional Security,
Rabat, Morocco, 14 and 15 April 2009**

On 14 and 15 April 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation organized a seminar in Rabat on conventional arms and regional security in co-operation with the State Department of the United States of America. It was attended by experts from, besides Morocco and the United States, Burkina Faso, Chad, France, Libya, Mali, Senegal, Spain and Tunisia.

The aim of the seminar was to discuss the illicit and uncontrolled spread of conventional arms into North Africa from conflict zones, and the connection between these arms and terrorist organizations or illegal armed groups. The participants also explored the possibilities of co-operation aimed at developing possible measures to prevent arms proliferation in the Sahel-Sahara region.

The seminar was led by experts from the United States, Spain and France, who gave presentations on the following subjects:

1. Proliferation of conventional arms and the threat these pose to security in the region

The participants all stressed the threat to stability inherent in the proliferation of such arms which sustain armed conflict and jeopardize the peace, stability and territorial integrity of States.

The security challenges in the Mediterranean and Sahel-Sahara regions and the implementation of the Convention on Conventional Arms were reviewed by the participants.

2. Man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS)

In view of the threat posed by surface to air missiles to aviation in particular, the participants stressed the importance of a good stockpile management system as a way of preventing the proliferation of arms of this type and the risk of their appropriation by terrorist groups.

3. Co-ordination among government departments

The experts noted the importance of co-ordinating State action against the various types of threat and crime (violence, drugs, trafficking in human beings, terrorism, money-laundering, organized crime, etc.). On the assumption that these threats are closely connected, it was stressed that a lack of communication between various government departments and agencies is often to blame for ineffective action against these threats and crimes.

Terrorist networks are attracted to the Sahel and Sahara region because of its large ungoverned areas. The unstable situation in this region poses a serious threat not only to the future of the whole area, but also to regional and international security and stability.

In holding this seminar in Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and its contribution to international efforts to promote security and peace, particularly in Africa, where arms proliferation fuels armed conflict and creates a climate of insecurity and instability which is not conducive to regional integration and socio-economic development efforts.

During the seminar, Morocco appealed for open and efficient co-operation in the fight against proliferation and illicit trafficking in conventional arms in order to establish a climate of trust among the Mediterranean and Sahel countries, given that, as was stated at the seminar, the security of the South of Europe depends on the security of the Maghreb and that depends on the stability of the neighbouring Sahel region and indeed West Africa.