

Beat: Local

## UN SG LISTS THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MOROCCO'S SOUTHERN PROVINCES IN REPORT

### TO UNSG REPORT

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**USPA NEWS** - "Morocco launched a series of development projects in its southern provinces in recent years, including large-scale infrastructure projects like the construction of the Atlantic Port of Dakhla. In his latest report to the UN Security Council, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres listed the developments that Morocco's southern provinces in the Moroccan Sahara witnessed. The development projects mentioned in the report were Dakhla port and the infrastructure project of Tiznit-Dakhla highway. Morocco launched a series of development projects in its southern provinces in recent years, including large-scale infrastructure projects like the construction of the Atlantic Port of Dakhla. Mr. Guterres noted that Morocco launched the tender for the Atlantic Port project on April 30, adding that the construction of the port is "underway." Source: Embassy Morocco

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The project is estimated to cost MAD 12.4 billion (\$1.37 billion) and is part of Morocco's new development plan.

In addition, the UN chief informed the Security Council of the continuation of construction work on a highway linking Tiznit to Dakhla.

**BY FEBRUARY THE PORT OF DAKHLA PROJECT REACHED 38% OF COMPLETION-----**

By February of this year, the completion rate of the project had reached 38%. The infrastructure project concerns the enlargement of National Road No.1 between Tiznit and Laayoune, and the creation of a new road between Laayoune and Dakhla. The Tiznit-Dakhla highway, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year, is projected to cost a budget of \$1.1 billion; it will extend over a distance of 1,055 kilometers. Mr. Guterres' report also mentioned the diplomatic gains Morocco secured through recent years, including the decision of some countries to open consulates in the country's southern provinces in Laayoune and Dakhla. In the report, the UN chief also recalled that countries such as Burkina Faso, Bahrain, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Jordan, Libya, Malawi, and Senegal, Suriname, the UAE, and Zambia have all opened consulates in Morocco's southern provinces. Since December 2019, a total of 26 countries have opened diplomatic representations in the region, cementing their support for Morocco's territorial integrity. The UN report on the Moroccan Sahara also recalled the US' decision to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the Moroccan Sahara.

On December 10, 2020, the former US President Donald Trump announced his country's decision to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the Moroccan Sahara. Trump also emphasized that Morocco's Autonomy Plan, which the North African country submitted to the UN in 2007, is the serious and credible solution to end the conflict. Many pro-Polisario observers hoped that the US recognition would be reviewed and ultimately rejected by a new US administration. In recent months, however, the Biden administration has consistently signaled its determination to uphold Trump's decision to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over its southern region. Mr. Guterres' report also noted the US' decision to inaugurate a virtual consulate in Morocco's Dakhla on December 29, 2020. During the inauguration, former US Ambassador to Morocco, Mr David Fischer visited the region and wore a Sahrawi outfit to celebrate the US' decision to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the region. In the report, the UN chief also recalled visits from international diplomatic delegations to Dakhla and Laayoune. A group of delegations from Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen carried out visits to the region from June 24-26 to explore investment opportunities. This is not the first time the UN chief highlights investments in Morocco's southern provinces. In fact, this year's annual report on the Moroccan Sahara is the fourth in a row to mention Morocco's development projects in the region." Source: Embassy of Morocco in South Africa.

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