

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Morocco Summary 16 March 2021

Morocco's Covid-19 epidemic is slowing down as its vaccinated population surpasses 4 million. The government hopes that decreasing case numbers and its massive vaccination campaign will enable revitalisation of the domestic economy and relieve the pressure of Covid-19 on the healthcare system. In yet another demonstration of growing pro-Morocco consensus on the Western Sahara question, the African Union (AU) rejects a proposal challenging the United Nations-led, compromise-based political solution. Morocco's government legalises the production of cannabis for "medical, pharmaceutical and industrial use" but maintains the ban on its recreational use. Legalising cannabis for medical use will position Morocco in a global market that is growing at an annual rate of 30%, and by 60% a year in Europe. The Agence Nationale de Réglementation des Télécommunications (ANRT) (national telecommunications regulatory agency) reports a 17% year-on-year increase in the number of internet subscribers in the country in 2020, bringing the number of users to 29.8 million and increasing the penetration rate to 83%.

Covid-19 numbers decline as vaccination ramps up ...

After a month of rapidly falling case numbers, **Morocco's Covid-19** epidemic decline is slowing down as new cases appear to have stabilised to several hundred daily.¹ The government hopes that the decreasing case numbers and its massive vaccination campaign will enable revitalisation of the domestic economy and relieve the pressure of Covid-19 on the healthcare system. Recoveries are outpacing new cases, despite health authorities having increased testing for Covid-19 from roughly 10,000 a day to several thousand more. As of 13 March, Morocco has performed more than 5 million tests since Covid-19 first appeared in the country in March 2020 (see *ARC Briefing Morocco March 2020*).²

Morocco's Covid-19 vaccination campaign is in full swing. The health ministry aims to inoculate 80% of its adult population – 25 million of its 36.5 million inhabitants – to reach herd immunity against Covid-19 within five months. Morocco has earned international applause, and more recently from the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, for positioning itself among the first 10 countries worldwide to speed up the vaccination process.³ As of 16 March, 4,210,770 people had received their first Covid-19 vaccine dose.⁴ To date, over 1.4 million Moroccans have been fully vaccinated after receiving both doses of Covid-19 vaccine.

The health ministry has hedged its bets on ordering and using different types of Covid-19 vaccine, and has received 8.5 million doses in total to date. **United States (US)**-based news outlet **Reuters** reported on 11 March that Morocco's **Scientific Advisory Committee** had approved both **Russia's Sputnik V** Covid-19 vaccine and that of US-based pharmaceutical company **Johnson & Johnson**.⁵ Health minister **Khalid Ait Taleb** announced on 11 March that the government had ordered one million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine.⁶ The first batch is scheduled to arrive in March and a second in

¹ Morocco World News, 13 Mar 2021

² Morocco World News, 13 Mar 2021

³ Morocco World News, 12 Mar 2021

⁴ Morocco World News, 13 Mar 2021

⁵ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

⁶ EFE, 11 March 2021

April, depending on “*Russian commitments to other countries*”.⁷ Morocco received 500,000 doses of **China’s Sinopharm** vaccine on 7 March, its third batch from Sinopharm, totalling 1.5 million doses. It has also received 7 million doses of the **Oxford AstraZeneca** vaccine.

AU affirms support for compromise-based solution in Western Sahara

The Moroccan government has received further high-level affirmation of its policy on the disputed area of **Western Sahara**. African heads of states convened on 9 March for a videoconference as part of the **African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AUPSC)** summit to discuss climate change and security issues facing the continent. The AU rejected a proposal challenging the **United Nations (UN)**-led compromise-based political solution on Western Sahara.⁸ The development is yet another demonstration of the growing pro-Morocco consensus on the Western Sahara question, and is a blow to the **Polisario Front** and **Algeria’s** challenge to Morocco’s control of the Western Sahara.⁹ Algeria’s diplomatic activism efforts seem increasingly out of sync with the AU, and Algiers is seen as attempting to derail the newfound continental consensus on the Western Sahara dispute.

Algeria’s state media reported that President **Abdelmajid Tebboune** (2019-present) held a phone conversation with **Kenya’s** President **Uhuru Kenyatta** (2013-present) and **South Africa’s** President **Cyril Ramaphosa** (since 2018) on the eve of the summit to discuss the “*main issues on the agenda*” of the AUPSC meeting.¹⁰ Kenya is the AU body’s current chair, while South Africa and Algeria are the Polisario Front’s main supporters in Africa. Ramaphosa and Tebboune reportedly sought to persuade Kenya to push for pro-Polisario talking points during the AUPSC summit, hoping that a united front of three of Africa’s leading nations could succeed in forcing a number of pro-Polisario decisions out of the summit.¹¹ President Tebboune’s speech during the summit outlined the kind of pro-Polisario activism that he hoped to see from other participating countries. While denouncing Morocco’s “*occupation*” of Western Sahara, Tebboune said African countries must unite to end the suffering of the **Sahrawis**,

*“Africa, which defeated the **European** occupation by its political and armed struggle at times and which came to the end of Apartheid, must today put an end to the plight of Africa’s last colony.”¹²*

However, the summit ended with the familiar sight in AU circles of a polite diplomatically worded rebuffing of Algeria and South Africa’s efforts to pressure the AU into assuming a more hostile attitude towards Morocco.¹³ In a statement on social media platform **Twitter** following the summit, the AU strongly reaffirmed that, despite Algeria and South Africa’s pressure, it intends to uphold the terms of the 2018 **Nouakchott Agreement**:

“#AUPSC called for immediate #ceasefire in the #WesternSahara, requested the #AU Troika and the AU Special Envoy to reinvigorate support to the #UN-led mediation and thus urged the UNSG @antonioguterres to expeditiously appoint a Special Envoy to #MINURSO to support #peace efforts”.¹⁴

AU leaders convening in the **Mauritanian** capital of **Nouakchott** in the summer of 2018 to decide what Africa’s role should be in resolving the Sahara conflict, made the historic decision to stop all attempts at a “*parallel solution*” and instead focus on accompanying and supporting the UN-led political process. Since then, the AU has consistently supported the Nouakchott Agreement, thereby frustrating Algiers and **Pretoria’s** efforts. While the AU’s statement is diplomatic in its wording and tone and doesn’t openly humiliate South Africa and Algeria, it speaks volumes about the AU’s

⁷ EFE, 11 March 2021

⁸ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

⁹ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹⁰ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹¹ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹² Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹³ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹⁴ African Union Twitter Account, 9 Mar 2021

commitment in its pledge to assist the **UN Security Council's** agenda for a compromise-based political solution in Western Sahara.¹⁵ The AU's rebuffing of pro-Polisario activism also points to the increasing inevitability of pro-Morocco momentum on the Western Sahara issue.¹⁶

Morocco adopts bill legalising medical production of cannabis

Morocco's government on 11 March adopted a bill to legalise the production of cannabis for "*medical, pharmaceutical, and industrial use*" while maintaining the ban on its recreational use.¹⁷ According to Morocco's interior ministry, legalising cannabis for medical use will position Morocco in a global market that is growing at an annual rate of 30%, and by 60% a year in Europe.¹⁸ The interior ministry said that state regulation will improve farmers' living conditions and protect them from illegal drug trafficking networks. According to a report by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, Morocco is the world's largest producer of cannabis resin or hashish.¹⁹ The **Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime** estimates **North Africa's** production of cannabis at more than 700 tonnes in 2020.²⁰ Figures released by Moroccan authorities in early March show that 55,000 hectares (around 136,000 acres) of land were illicitly used to grow hashish in 2019. In 2018 production was estimated at 45,000 hectares.

Although **Bill 13-21** is still subject to approval by both houses of parliament,²¹ it is highly likely to become a reality in the near future with little resistance expected from parliament. Government estimates that Morocco's current illicit cannabis industry is worth \$15 billion, providing a powerful incentive for its legalisation.²² The bill is expected to create a parallel legal cannabis industry which will be tightly regulated to ensure product quality, as well as environmental and social protection for cannabis producers.²³ The draft law calls for the creation of a national agency to regulate the industry, and the establishment of cooperatives that would grow certified cannabis plants.²⁴ According to the draft legislation, the move by government will "*reconvert illicit*" cannabis plantations into "*legal durable activities that generate jobs*".²⁵ However, several elements of the bill remain subject to additional bills that will clarify specific details.²⁶

Internet penetration hits 83%

National telecommunications regulatory agency **l'Agence Nationale de Réglementation des Télécommunications (ANRT)** released a report on 9 March showing a significant increase in internet subscribers in Morocco in 2020. As of 31 December, the number of internet subscribers had increased by 17%, brings the total to 29.8 million, and the penetration rate to 83%.²⁷ The increased connectivity is a positive development that is expected to accelerate the spread of ideas and allow users to benefit from new research and technologies.²⁸ Expanding internet access can also increase market efficiency by removing barriers to entry, reducing transaction costs and increasing transparency, particularly in the context of Covid-19 when millions around the world have been forced to work remotely.²⁹ According to the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**, in 2017 Morocco had more than 20.5 million users, including 12 million **Facebook** users, representing a

¹⁵ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹⁶ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2021

¹⁷ France24, 11 March 2021

¹⁸ France24, 11 March 2021

¹⁹ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

²⁰ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

²¹ Morocco World News, 11 Mar 2021

²² Morocco World News, 11 Mar 2021

²³ Morocco World News, 11 Mar 2021

²⁴ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

²⁵ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

²⁶ Reuters, 12 Mar 2021

²⁷ Morocco World News, 9 Mar 2021

²⁸ Deloitte, 1 Feb 2014

²⁹ Deloitte, 1 Feb 2014

58.3% penetration rate.³⁰ A 2018 ITU report showed that 64% of Moroccans used the internet, with 61% of women users compared to 68.5% of men.

The ANRT report notes the number of 4G mobile subscribers has increased by more than 30% to approximately 20.5 million users. The number of fibre optic network subscribers increased by nearly 80% year-on-year to more than 218,000 users. Smartphone penetration rate is 137%, and the contract mobile user base increased by 16.32% annually reaching 5.48 million users at the end of 2020.³¹ Mobile data traffic increased by 155% in 2020, while fixed-line data traffic rose by 56% and resulted in a 27.26% rise in international internet bandwidth, which reached 2.507 gigabytes at the end of 2020.³²

Planner

Feb-May 2021 **(Morocco)** National vaccination programme;

2021 **(Morocco)** Scheduled construction of five new dams;

2021 **(Morocco)** Scheduled legislative, regional and local elections;

2021 **Oued Zem (Morocco)** Scheduled opening of automotive testing centre;

Q4 2021 **Marrakech (Morocco)** 24th **General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**

2022 **Marrakech (Morocco)** **International Monetary Fund** and **World Bank** annual meetings to take place in Morocco;

Chronology

15 Mar 2021 **Anti-Atlas (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **United Kingdom**-based mineral exploration company **Aterian Resources** is awarded three exploration licences totalling 252 kilometres, in western Morocco's Anti-Atlas region;

15 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. Morocco extends nationwide night curfew by two more weeks in line with government's preventive measures against the spread of **COVID-19**;

15 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development** says Morocco could produce up to 4% of the global demand for green hydrogen by 2030;

15 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Atalayar*. **EllaLink**, the company behind the 6,000 kilometre optical submarine cable linking **Europe** and **South America**, says it plans to connect **Portugal** and **Morocco** in similar fashion;

14 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco marks its one-year anniversary of **Covid-19** by publishing a report that details the authorities' commitment to put in place and implement "comprehensive" measures to combat the virus;

13 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's **Covid-19** epidemic appears to have "settled," with several hundred cases being detected every day as recoveries outpace new cases and the the active caseload steadily decreases;

13 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. **World Bank's Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** chapter vice president, **Farid Balhaj**, says the organisation is ready to increase its financial support to Morocco;

³⁰ Morocco World News, 9 Mar 2021

³¹ Morocco World News, 9 Mar 2021

³² Morocco World News, 9 Mar 2021

13 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco will continue to suspend all flights from Morocco to **Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey** and the **United Kingdom** until 10 April as part of national anti-Covid-19 measures;

12 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Africa Intelligence*. The **Naval Group**, a major **French** defence contractor, has been discussing a possible order of French submarines with Morocco's **Royal Armed Forces (FAR)**;

12 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. National planning, urban planning, housing and urban policy ministry announces that **Japan** and Morocco have signed the first Memorandum of Cooperation of its kind in the fields of land-use planning, town planning, infrastructure and investment;

12 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The health ministry has ordered one million doses of **Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19** vaccine;

12 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Algeria's minister of Islamic affairs, **Youssef Belmehdi**, accuses Morocco of planning to spread drug addiction in Algeria;

11 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **International Trade Commission (ITC)** rules in favour of establishing import duties on Moroccan phosphate, bringing to a close months of lobbying and speculation about the fate of Morocco's most wanted export product;

11 Mar 2021 **Dakhla (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. The **Republic of Suriname** decides to open a consulate in **Dakhla**, southern Morocco;

11 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco adopts a bill legalising medical production of cannabis;

11 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Mauritania** is preparing for a series of military exercises in the country's north following a **Polisario Front** attack near its border in January;

10 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. The **European Investment Bank** reports it mobilised €617m (\$735m) within the **Team Europe** initiative in 2020 to assist Morocco in its battle against the **Covid-19** pandemic;

10 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The Moroccan dirham (MAD) continues to depreciate against the **United States** dollar, passing the conversion milestone of nine MAD to \$1 after a nearly 1% hike;

11 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters*. The **Scientific Advisory Committee** has authorised the use of **Russia's Sputnik V** and the United States' **Johnson & Johnson Covid-19** vaccines for the country's national vaccination campaign;

10 Mar 2021 **Casablanca (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Casablanca** and **Hong Kong** trade centre representatives sign a partnership agreement that aims to reinforce economic cooperation and bilateral trade between the two cities;

10 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. A new study from Morocco's **High Commission for Planning (HCP)** says that the participation of women in the domestic labour market remains low;

10 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The number of people who have received their second doses of **Covid-19** vaccines reaches 854,274;

10 Mar 2021 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)** *Morocco World News*. The **African Union (AU)** rejects a proposal challenging the **United Nations**-led, compromise-based political solution on the **Sahara** question;

10 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Map News*. Morocco launches vaccination campaign for

prisoners;

9 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency*. The **National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT)** releases a report showing that the number of Moroccans who have access to the internet reached 29 million in 2020;

9 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Culture, youth and sports minister **Othman El Ferdaous** says increased gender parity and equality can lead to 35% growth in the national economy;

9 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Africa News*. **National Airports Office (ONDA)** announces that Morocco has suspended flights with **Norway, Finland, Greece, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Poland** as part of national anti-**Covid-19** measures;

9 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's filed patents rose by nearly 30% in 2020, making it the country with the third greatest number of patents in **Africa**, trailing only **South Africa** and **Egypt**;

8 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's performance on the **Economic Freedom Index** remains above regional and global averages, with Morocco ranking highest in **North Africa** and ninth in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region;

7 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Health authorities in Morocco have vaccinated 3,913,615 Moroccan citizens and residents against **Covid-19**;

7 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco receives a new batch of 500,000 **Sinopharm** vaccines to reinforce its vaccination campaign against **Covid-19**;

6 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The reservoirs of the main dams in Morocco reached nearly 8.04 billion cubic meters, representing a filling rate of 50%, according to the **General Directorate of Water**;

5 Mar 2021 **Poole (United Kingdom)** *Poole Harbour Commissioners*. **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **Poole Harbour Commissioners** confirms a new direct maritime shipping route to connect the UK and **Morocco**, between **Poole** in **Dorset**, and **Tanger Med** in northern Morocco;

6 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco decides to suspend flights with **Algeria** and **Egypt** as part of preventive measures to limit the spread of **Covid-19**;

4 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Low-cost airline **Air Arabia Maroc** announces the launch of its 2021 summer programme with five new connections from **Tangier, Fez**, and **Marrakech** to **Spain** starting 28 March;

4 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. Government announces a decision to extend the country's state of emergency until 10 April;

4 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** congratulates Morocco on its successful vaccination campaign against **Covid-19**;

4 Mar 2021 **Laayoune (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. **Jordan** officially opens its consulate general in Laayoune, southern Morocco;

4 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco exported \$100m in goods to **Brazil** In January 2021, making it the top **Arab** exporter to the country;

3 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Schengen Visa Info News*. The **German** embassy in **Rabat** announces that it will stop issuing **Schengen** visas, citing **Covid-19** concerns;

3 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's trade deficit was reduced by 32.7% to MAD 11.06m (\$1.2m) in January 2021, according to a foreign exchange regulator's press release;

3 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Germany's** foreign ministry summons the Moroccan ambassador in **Berlin** for an urgent meeting amidst a diplomatic spat between **Germany** and Morocco;

3 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco has vaccinated 10% of its population against **Covid-19**;

3 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **European Union (EU)** lawyers deal a devastating blow to the **Polisario Front's** attempts to contest the legality of EU-Morocco fisheries and agriculture agreements;

3 Mar 2021 **Anchoi (Morocco)** *Africa Inc Magazine*. **United Kingdom-based Chariot Oil & Gas** signs a Memorandum of Understanding for the "high potential" **Anchoi** gas field off the coast of Northern Morocco to become a Moroccan gas supplier;

2 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Remittances from Moroccans residing abroad have grown to nearly MAD 5.9 billion (\$660m) in January 2021;

2 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. State-owned phosphate and fertiliser group **OCP Group** is moving forward with its commitment to assist the **Nigerian** government to achieve its goal of developing its agricultural industry;

2 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. With the **European Court of Justice (ECJ)** reviewing the **Western Sahara** file in two hearings scheduled 2 and 3 March, Morocco's foreign minister, **Nasser Bourita**, declares that **Rabat** is looking forward to defending the "legitimacy of its commercial partnership" with the **European Union (EU)**;

2 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Garda*. The Moroccan government adds **Italy** and **Belgium** to the list of countries with which it has suspended air links in order to limit the spread of **Covid-19**;

2 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Shafqna*. Morocco's government announces a \$1m donation to help tackle the humanitarian crisis in **Yemen**;

1 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** and **United States State Department** are using an undivided map of Morocco, including the southern provinces in **Western Sahara**;

1 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Arab News*. The foreign affairs ministry announces the suspension of all contact with **Germany's** embassy in **Rabat**;

1 Mar 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. Morocco extends night curfew by two more weeks as part of the country's measures to limit the spread of **Covid-19**;

27 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Energy, mines and environment minister **Aziz Rabbah** reconfirms Morocco's commitment to **Africa's** green recovery following the **Covid-19** pandemic;

27 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The major electricity network project that King **Mohammed VI** launched in Morocco's southern provinces in January 2016 has reached its final stages;

27 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Exporters Gateway*. The **European Union (EU)** delegation in **Rabat** announces that trade exchange between Morocco and the EU amounted to €35 billion (\$41 billion) during 2020;

27 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **RCI Finance Maroc**, French auto manufacturing company **Renault's** automobile financing structure in Morocco, has declared a 23.6% financing decline compared to last year, dropping by almost one fourth by the end of 2020 compared to December 2019;

26 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The government has terminated a

\$75,000 per month lobbying contract with lobbying firm **JPC Strategies**, which it hired to protect its strong ties with the **United States**;

26 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United States** embassy in **Rabat** issues a statement warning citizens of the spread of **Covid-19** in Morocco;

26 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The increase in cooking oil prices has stirred controversy and uproar among Moroccan citizens, many of whom are calling for a boycott in protest;

26 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Samsung Biologics** senior vice-president **Samir Machour** says Morocco is set to receive four million additional doses of the **AstraZeneca Covid-19** vaccine by the end of March, and 15 million doses in April;

26 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco has vaccinated 3,327,858 people against **Covid-19**;

25 Feb 2021 **Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)** *Salaam Gateway*. **Morocco** signs a statute to officially join the **Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS)** in Jeddah;

25 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco has ranked first in **Africa** for the **Country Brand Awards**, the only African country that figures in Africa's top three of all the award categories of the Country Brand Awards;

25 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **Council of Ministers** discussed a draft bill to legalise cannabis within tight limits;

24 Feb 2021 **Casablanca (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. A new batch of 1 million **AstraZeneca's Covid-19** vaccine arrives in **Casablanca** from **India** bringing to 7 million the number of doses of AstraZeneca vaccine, and 1 million doses of the **Sinopharm** vaccines received to date;

24 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Foreign affairs minister **Nasser Bourita** says recent developments in the Morocco-**European Union (EU)** partnership should convince **Brussels** to abandon its superiority complex and open itself to a new kind of relationship with **Rabat**;

24 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **National Office of Electricity and Drinking Water (ONEE)** is investing MAD 2 billion (\$224m) to boost the power supply in Morocco's southern provinces;

23 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. According to a recent study from the **Forum EuroMediterraneen des Instituts de Sciences Economiques (FEMISE)**, the shift to renewable energy sources in Morocco will create up to 482,000 new domestic jobs over the next 20 years;

23 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Economy, finance and administrative reform minister **Mohammed Benchaaboun** says sweeping reforms for the generalisation of social protection in Morocco will cost MAD 51 billion (\$5.7 billion) per year.

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