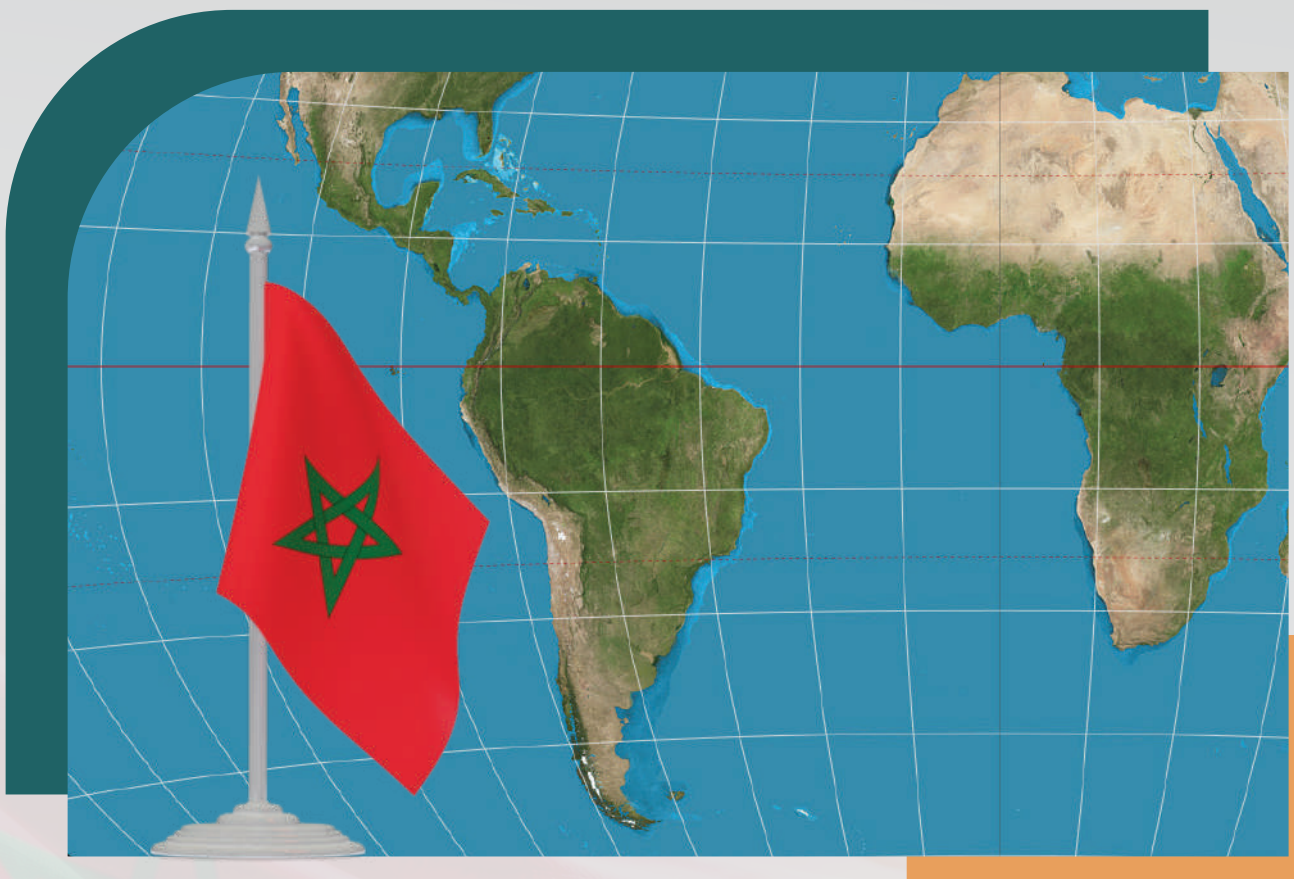




AFRICAN NARRATIVES

AFROLAC Summit 2025: Strengthening Parliamentary Ties Between Africa and Latin America



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Main Points

- **Enhancing Parliamentary Cooperation:**

The AFROLAC summit aims to bolster cooperation between African and Latin American parliaments across political, economic, and social spheres. This collaboration seeks to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between the two continents.

- **Cooperation in Sustainable Development:**

The summit will address pressing issues of sustainable development, including climate change, gender equality, education, and health—areas of common concern for both regions. Discussions will focus on sharing knowledge and best practices to address these challenges effectively.

- **Promoting Trade and Investment:**

Parliamentary cooperation will emphasize the promotion of trade between Africa and Latin America by reducing trade barriers and encouraging joint investments between companies from both continents.

- **Morocco's Role in Strengthening Relations:**

As the summit's host country, Morocco will play a pivotal role in facilitating cooperation between African and Latin American parliaments. The summit provides an opportunity to expand relations among AFROLAC member countries, with Morocco serving as a hub for communication and coordination.

- **Focus on Regional and International Issues:**

The summit will tackle regional and international issues of mutual interest, such as security, counterterrorism, promoting peace and stability, and enhancing good governance.

- **Potential for Strategic Alliances:**

The summit could lead to the formation of strategic alliances between parliaments from both continents, strengthening their influence in shaping international policies and addressing global challenges, including economic and environmental concerns.

- **Exchange of Experiences in Governance and Reform:**

Discussions will center on enhancing transparency and democratic participation within parliaments through the sharing of experiences related to parliamentary reforms and good governance practices.

- **Emphasis on South-South Partnership:**

The summit aims to strengthen the concept of South-South partnership, where countries exchange resources, expertise, and support, promoting self-reliance instead of relying solely on traditional Western powers.

- **Potential for Regional Integration:**

Parliamentary cooperation between Africa and Latin America can contribute to strengthening regional integration, fostering cooperation between regional organizations like the African Union and MERCOSUR.

- **Future Challenges and Opportunities:**

The summit will identify the challenges facing cooperation between the two continents and explore future opportunities to enhance parliamentary alliances and develop bilateral and regional relations.



Abstract

The Conference of African, Latin American and Caribbean Energy Ministers (AFROLAC) summit, to be held in Morocco in 2025, presents a strategic opportunity to enhance parliamentary cooperation between Africa and Latin America. The summit seeks to strengthen relations between the parliaments of the two continents by promoting dialogue in political, economic, and social fields. It will focus on sustainable development issues such as climate change, gender equality, education, and health, while also enhancing

trade and investment cooperation between African and Latin American countries.

Morocco, as the host country, will play a central role in facilitating this cooperation, serving as a platform to enhance regional integration between organizations like the African Union and MERCOSUR. The summit will also seek to develop South-South partnerships, promote security and peace, and improve democratic governance through the exchange of parliamentary experiences.

Introduction

The relationship between Africa and Latin America is unique and distinctive, underpinned by historical and cultural ties, as well as the geographical and economic diversity within both regions. While not new, this relationship dates back centuries and is characterized by several factors that contribute to enhanced mutual cooperation across various fields, despite the geographical distances involved. The following elaborates on these relations:

Historical and Cultural Links:

- **Slavery and Shared Heritage:** A prominent link between Africa and Latin America is the legacy of slavery, which significantly shaped the colonial history of both regions. During the colonial era, European powers transported millions of Africans to Latin America to work as slaves on sugar plantations and in mines. This led to a strong African cultural influence on Latin American societies, enriching music, dance, and the arts.
- **Shared Identity:** Despite the geographical distance, cultural identities significantly intersect between some African and Latin American countries, particularly in Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela. Brazil, for example, possesses a rich cultural heritage stemming from African slavery, with African cultural influences evident in many aspects of Brazilian life, such as music (samba, bossa nova) and traditional dances.
- **Liberation Movements and Solidarity:** Throughout the 20th century, significant solidarity existed between Latin American and African countries. Many Latin American nations supported national liberation movements in Africa against colonialism. For instance, Cuba strongly supported liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia, demonstrating its commitment to the African cause in the face of colonial powers.

Political and Economic Cooperation:

- **Joint Forums and Initiatives:** Over the years, African and Latin American countries have established specialized forums and conferences to enhance cooperation. The Africa-Latin America Cooperation Forum (AFROLAC) is the most prominent, aiming to strengthen political and economic relations and support cooperation in areas such as trade, education, energy, and health.
- **Trade and Economy:** Despite infrastructure and investment challenges in both regions, there is growing interest in enhancing trade. Africa possesses vast natural resources, such as minerals and energy, while Latin America boasts strong agricultural and industrial capabilities, creating significant collaboration opportunities in areas like agriculture, renewable energy, and industry.
- **Investment and Development:** An increasing desire exists among Latin American companies to invest in Africa, especially in sectors such as agriculture, mining, and energy, enhancing the potential for joint growth. Concurrently, African countries are seeking to increase their investments in Latin America, benefiting from the latter's experiences in sustainable development.

Cooperation in Global Issues:

- **Global Political Challenges:** Africa and Latin America share common ground on several international political issues, such as neo-colonialism, social justice, and human rights. For example, both regions support the Palestinian cause at the United Nations and oppose American dominance over global affairs.
- **International Organizations:** Both regions participate in numerous international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (for Africa), and Latin American nations' organizations. The two regions seek to coordinate their positions in these organizations to strengthen their shared interests.

Challenges Facing Cooperation Between Africa and Latin America:

- **Economic Gap:** Despite significant potential for cooperation, a large economic gap exists between the two regions. Many African countries are still in advanced stages of growth, while some Latin American countries have higher income levels. This disparity can hinder full economic integration.
- **Geographical Distance:** A major challenge is the geographical distance, which hampers direct trade and communication. However, efforts are underway to enhance trade connectivity through ports and maritime routes.

As a result, the similar challenges faced by Africa and Latin America necessitate the adoption of integrated parliamentary diplomacy based on equality and effectiveness. The current circumstances experienced by the peoples of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, marked by similar challenges linked to global geopolitical changes, require the activation of legislative bodies' responsibilities through the adoption of integrated parliamentary diplomacy built on equality and effectiveness.

This parliamentary diplomacy aims to achieve fairness and justice for the peoples of both continents by addressing the consequences of colonial eras, which resulted in the division of their homelands, the exploitation of their resources, and the imposition of structural dependency. The goal is to find practical solutions that restore the rights of the peoples of these regions and ensure a shared fate and a better future.

This comes at a time when both continents are undergoing positive and promising transformations. They have historic opportunities and immense potential to build a genuine partnership based on South-South cooperation – a model of justice and equality, free from external domination or exploitation. On the political, intellectual,

and economic fronts, clear signs of a renaissance are emerging, culminating in long paths of democratization, political agreements, and reconciliation among various sectors within these societies.

These dynamics have led to the emergence of a new generation of democratic leaders who have freed themselves from old ideological constraints and are now moving toward greater political and social stability, aiming to secure sustainable economic development and social well-being for their peoples. This new generation is characterized by political pragmatism and is working diligently to enhance stability, with the goal of achieving progress and social justice through fruitful partnerships.

From this perspective, consultations and collaboration between the African and Latin American continents took place for over two years to establish the African-Latin American Parliamentary Forum (AFROLAC). This forum is an independent interregional network connecting the national parliaments of the two continents. It provides a space for constructive interactive dialogue and acts as a platform for parliamentary coordination to facilitate regional integration and strengthen cooperation among the countries of the Global South. The forum is also an effective advocacy mechanism, enabling the peoples of the two continents to express their concerns regarding peace, social justice, sustainable development, climate justice, global democratic governance, the rule of law, and human rights.

The Parliamentary Forum of African and Latin American and Caribbean Countries (AFROLAC) is a platform aimed at enhancing parliamentary cooperation between the countries of the African, Latin American, and Caribbean continents. This forum was established to deepen political, economic, and cultural relations between member states and contribute to the development of multilateral cooperation.

The Main Objectives of AFROLAC:

- **Enhancing Parliamentary Cooperation:**

The forum aims to strengthen coordination between parliaments in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean by exchanging experiences and best parliamentary practices and raising awareness about common issues affecting these regions.

- **Deepening Political and Economic Relations:**

The forum seeks to facilitate dialogue among parliamentarians to enhance bilateral and multilateral relations in areas such as trade, development, education, and climate.

- **Supporting Sustainable Development:** The forum aims to collaborate in areas of sustainable development and exchange experiences in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within these regions.

- **Cultural and Educational Cooperation:**

The forum strives to support cultural and educational relations by establishing cultural and educational exchange programs between the countries

of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Members and Participation:

The forum includes countries from the African, Latin American, and Caribbean continents, typically represented by members of national parliaments who cooperate to promote parliamentary collaboration and engage with contemporary political and economic issues.

Activities and Events:

- **Parliamentary Meetings:**

The forum holds regular meetings where members exchange insights on shared challenges and issues and discuss ways to strengthen cooperation.

- **Joint Programs and Projects:**

The forum works towards implementing joint projects and programs in areas such as food security, health, human rights, and economic development.

- **Interaction with International Organizations:**

The forum collaborates with international and regional organizations to enhance the political and economic influence of its members on the global stage.





Morocco and Strategic Partnership: Strengthening South-South Cooperation with Africa and Latin America in the Framework of a Future Vision for Development and Integration

Within the framework of its foreign policy, based on the principles of good neighborliness and diversifying international partnerships, the Kingdom of Morocco constantly reaffirms its deep commitment to its African ties as an irreversible strategic choice. Morocco has worked to strengthen its relations with Arab sister countries and Latin American nations, based on its shared historical and cultural heritage. Morocco sees South-South cooperation as a strategic axis, led by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, who embodied this approach through his historic visit to several Latin American countries in 2004, and his call in 2006 during the Africa-Latin America summit to solidify a strategic partnership based on common values of freedom, democracy, and solidarity, with the goal of achieving sustainable development and the welfare of peoples.

The joint presence of parliamentarians from

Latin America, Africa, and the Arab world marks a pivotal moment in international relations, offering a historic opportunity to compensate for opportunities lost due to the Cold War, which resulted in the limitation of cooperation and dialogue opportunities, with narrow ideological considerations imposing restrictions on the development of relations between African, Arab, and Latin American countries.

With the significant transformations taking place nationally and regionally, particularly in terms of democracy and development, there is now more than ever the capacity to build an effective South-South cooperation model. This model can address current challenges and build a shared future of peace and security, requiring the strengthening of the relationship between security, democracy, human rights, ensuring the rule of law, respecting the national unity of states, and fostering solidarity among peoples.

Morocco's Geostrategic Location Enhances Its Role as a Strategic Link Between Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean through the Moroccan Atlantic Initiative

Morocco enjoys a unique geostrategic position, placing it at a strategic crossroads in its regional environment. It lies at the intersection of key routes connecting Africa to the Arab world, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This geographical location makes Morocco a key partner in Africa, as well as a point of connection between different continents, enhancing its status as a "reliable gateway" for Latin American and Caribbean countries to access Africa and the Arab world.

The relations between Morocco and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have always been characterized by mutual understanding, friendship, and cooperation, based on principles of consultation and respect between nations. Through continuous cooperation, both parties seek to achieve shared interests and enhance economic, cultural, and political exchanges.

One of the key initiatives through which Morocco strengthens this partnership is the Moroccan Atlantic Initiative, which aims to facilitate the access of Sahel countries to the Atlantic Ocean. Through this initiative, Morocco seeks to make its Atlantic coast a logistical platform linking Latin America and the Caribbean to various global markets, opening new opportunities for trade and logistical connections between the continents.

Among the core principles established by the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean (Parlatino) under the organization's founding treaty in 1987 is its commitment to promoting international cooperation as a key tool for achieving sustainable development and improving the well-being of the peoples of Latin America. The organization's objectives include enhancing peace and security, while ensuring economic, social, cultural, and technological development, allowing the people of this region to enjoy their legitimate rights.

Moreover, the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean contributes to strengthening the international legal system, which can support these goals and enhance cooperation between

member states, benefiting the entire region.

In this context, a significant step in Morocco-Latin America relations was Morocco's Parliament becoming the first African and Arab parliament to join the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean as an observer member in 1996. The signing of a memorandum of understanding on April 25, 2018, between the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Parliament of Morocco formalized Morocco's permanent observer membership, reflecting the deepening of cooperation between the two parties and strengthening parliamentary ties across the continents.

The joint declaration between the House of Councilors and the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean highlighted the efforts made by both parties to enhance bilateral and international relations, which culminated in the establishment of the Parliamentary Forum of African, Latin American, and Caribbean Countries (AFRO-LAC). This forum represents a key step towards enhancing cooperation between African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries in various political, economic, and social fields.

The declaration also mentioned that the House of Councilors and the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean share the responsibility of hosting the forum's General Secretariat, reflecting their mutual commitment to promoting parliamentary cooperation between the continents. In this fruitful context, the King Mohammed VI Library was established at the headquarters of the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama. This multimedia center reflects the strong support provided by the House of Councilors to the project, and the library, named after His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is a symbol of the deep respect and appreciation for the relations between Morocco and the participating countries in the forum.

Organizing the AFROLAC Summit in Morocco 2025

The Moroccan House of Councilors and the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean (Parlatino) have agreed to strengthen their cooperation as strategic partners in supporting the Parliamentary Forum of African, Latin American, and Caribbean Countries (AFROLAC). They also agreed to jointly prepare for the forum's summit, which will be held in Morocco on April 29-30, 2025. This agreement was made in a joint declaration following a meeting between the Bureau of the House of Councilors and the Executive Bureau of the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean (Parlatino), which took place on Thursday, February 13, 2025, in Rabat.

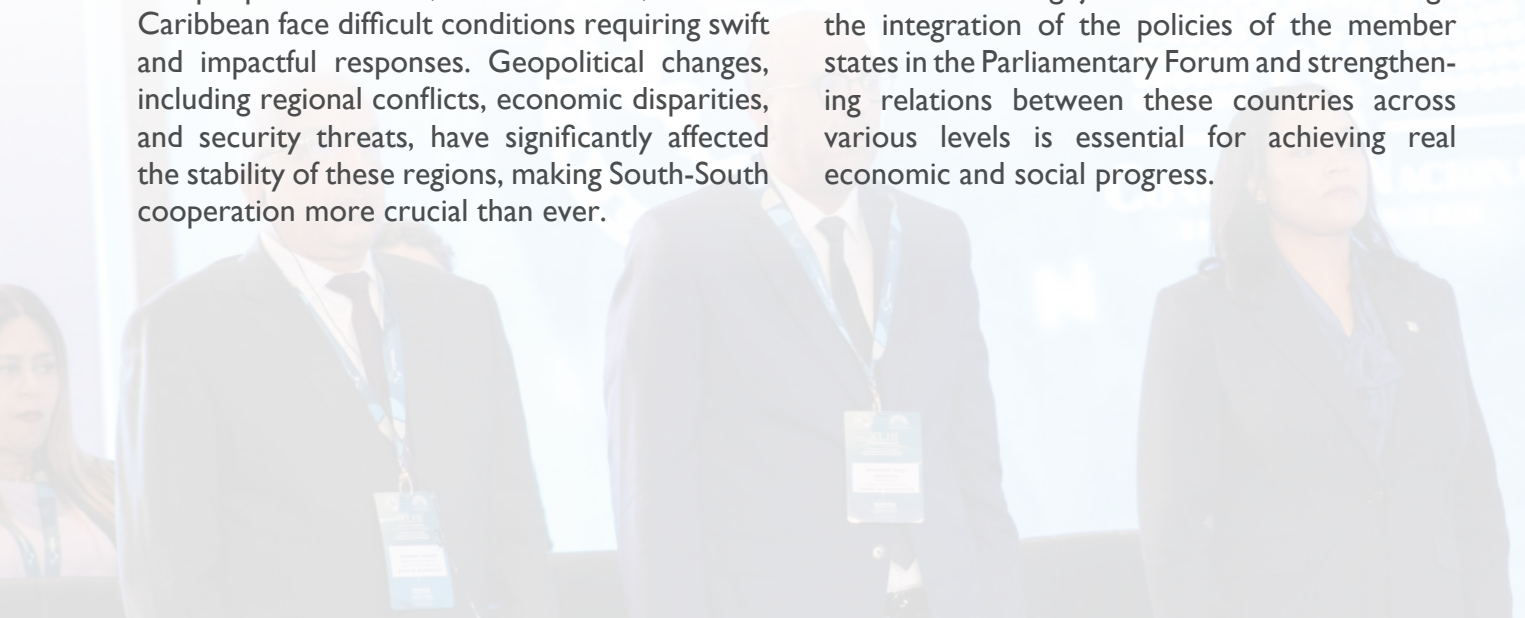
This agreement reflects the importance of South-South cooperation and global popular mobilization, emphasizing the need to promote effective parliamentary and civil diplomacy to address current challenges. The joint declaration highlighted the mutual desire of both parties to strengthen communication and cooperation channels on issues of shared interest and to enhance coordination in international forums. The relations between the two parties are based on common values and principles, focusing on mutual understanding and respect, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member and observer states in Parlatino.

Amid the increasing and diverse challenges linked to geopolitical shifts happening across the world, the peoples of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean face difficult conditions requiring swift and impactful responses. Geopolitical changes, including regional conflicts, economic disparities, and security threats, have significantly affected the stability of these regions, making South-South cooperation more crucial than ever.

South-South cooperation, which includes strengthening ties between Southern countries without relying on the major powers of the North, is a strategic focus in the foreign policies of African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries. This cooperation extends beyond economic and trade support to also fostering dialogue and solidarity among these countries, representing an important step towards achieving sustainable development that addresses the long-term needs of their peoples.

In this context, and following the outcomes of the Parliamentary Forum of African, Latin American, and Caribbean Countries' summits in 2022 and 2023, held at Parlatino's headquarters, it was emphasized that the challenges and issues faced by the countries and peoples of the two regions share many similarities. The summits revealed that issues such as social and economic inequalities, climate change, and security challenges require coordinated and integrated responses. Therefore, the need for utilizing the powers of parliamentary institutions in these regions through integrated parliamentary diplomacy mechanisms, based on efficiency and effectiveness, was underscored.

The summits' outcomes indicated that countries in both regions face the same major challenges, such as the impact of global geopolitical conflicts, the loss of natural resources, and the challenges of good governance. Therefore, working towards achieving justice and fairness through the integration of the policies of the member states in the Parliamentary Forum and strengthening relations between these countries across various levels is essential for achieving real economic and social progress.





In conclusion:

Morocco's active and distinguished parliamentary presence in its interactions with Latin American and Caribbean countries and their parliamentary groups plays a crucial role in strengthening Morocco's position on the Sahara issue. This presence helps highlight Morocco's unwavering stance regarding its territorial integrity and national sovereignty. This growing role reflects international understanding of Morocco's position and strengthens global support for the Kingdom's stance, especially given the significant contributions made by the House of Councilors in advancing political and parliamentary dialogue.