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**Country: Morocco**

**The spirit of change in Morocco**, which recently saw Constitutional change to recognise political, social and cultural diversity as well as media freedom, will only deliver greater democracy if all voices in the country are heard in the debate about the future say media and policy leaders.

A round table discussion attended by more than 150 people brought together the country's leading media regulators, media actors and educators on September 30 in Rabat for a debate on how to strengthen the public debate about reform.

The round table *New Constitutional Changes: Media between Diversity and Pluralism* provoked a lively and wide-ranging exchange involving experts such as Salah al Wadiaa and Mohamed Mamad (covering gender and media issues), Mohamed Mamad and Amina Bencheikh (dealing with language diversity), Abdelatif Bensfiya and Mohammed Benayach (regional questions) and commentators on political diversity Nourredine and Khadija Redouane.

The meeting agreed that in the light of the current popular movement for reform in the Arab

world diversity should be observed in the context of Morocco's cultural, political and historical traditions.

"However, the more voices media bring into public arena, the more Moroccans will feel included", said Prof Ali Karimi of the Moroccan Centre for Research on Human Rights and the Media, which, together with Media Diversity Institute (MDI), co-organised the roundtable.



In her remarks opening the event MDI Director Milica Pesic highlighted the importance of free speech and pluralism. "Inclusiveness is a pillar of democracy, and media must ensure the space for public debate is open to all citizens, regardless their race, ethnicity, religion, age, and social status," she said. "Media serve the community best when they include into public debate as many segments of the society as possible. This will guarantee freedom of expression for all citizens regardless their political, social and cultural background."

The event, which received widespread coverage in all leading Moroccan media, was financially supported by the European Union Delegation in Rabat and is one of 5 round table debates, among many other activities, including training for journalists and NGOs to be organised by the MDI project [Media Evolution: Towards an Inclusive, Responsible & Independent Media in Morocco](#) :

The project aims to encourage a public debate on the future of the Moroccan media. It will

ensure promote greater coverage of social diversity in the media, improve freedom of expression and access to information, support responsibility in media through self-regulation, and encourage the government to respect standards of media freedom.