

TOUS AVEC NOS LIONS

L'ECONOMISTE

Weekly highlights by



Qatar 2022

Heads held high!



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EDITORIAL

Well done!

Mohamed Ali MRABI

FOR a few weeks, Moroccans saw a dream, that was previously considered unattainable. Admittedly, Morocco lost the semi-final but the country succeeded in breaking the glass ceiling, and showing to its youth, to Africa and developing countries that anything is possible. People just have to believe and work hard to make it happen. Beyond purely sporting results, the lessons of the World Cup are multi-dimensional. This type of success is a real accelerator for the transformation of societies. It can be a symbol of national power and a source of patriotic pride. In any case, the life of Moroccans after the World Cup will no longer be the same! History is full of examples that testify to the positive impact of sporting achievements on the development dynamics of countries. For example, when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup in 1995, it was seen as a symbol of that country's post-apartheid revival.

Long before that, in the 1950s, when Germany (that was an underdog at the 1954 World Cup) managed to win the prestigious trophy, and this has been considered by historians to be a key factor in restoring the national pride after the defeat of the Nazi regime. Today, Moroccans are facing a key moment in their history. The patriotic fervor, the mobilization of the different social strata, and especially the renewed confidence in human capital, "national product", will have to play a triggering role. The sustainability of this mobilization, and above all of this capital in terms of confidence, will be decisive in fostering the implementation of the various economic and social strategies. This window must be exploited, at a time when all the spotlights are focused on Morocco. Let us remain united and mobilized to win the next game, and above all to win the battle for socio-economic development. Well done, Lions! ☐

Weekly highlights

Clinics are struggling to make their revolution

THE opinion of the Competition Council on clinics and similar establishments (hemodialysis, radiotherapy, chemotherapy centers, etc.) is timely. “Major reforms in the health sector are underway, in particular through the generalization of compulsory health insurance coverage (AMO) by the end of 2022”, notes the entity chaired by Ahmed Rahhou. Regulation will also change mode, and a high health authority will be created, not to mention the Code of Basic Medical Coverage published on November 30, 2022 in Official Gazette No. 7147 bis. The Competition Council took the matter on its own motion to analyze “the competitive functioning of the medical care market”. Due to a lack of data, the Council first commissioned a research firm (not mentioned in the opinion) to conduct a field survey. A sample of 30 clinics and 10 similar institutions was chosen out of the 389 existing ones. The regulator then interviewed about twenty organizations, such as the Ministry of Health, the tax authorities, or the CNSS (National Social Security Fund), and the professional associa-



tions of clinics, paramedics, and other professions.

General observation: “the market has been very dynamic in recent years. On the other hand, dysfunctions prevent it from fully playing its role in the development of the national health system”.

Clinics are “major players” in the medical care market. There are 389 of them, unevenly distributed across the national territory. The establishments provide one third of the hospital bed capacity. The law on the practice of

medicine has relatively propelled the investment. The capital of the clinics was opened to non-practitioners. Clinics represent the largest third-party payment expenditure item for the AMO compulsory medical insurance. However, a geographical imbalance persists.

The Competition Council refers to “the obsolescence of technical and quality standards”, which poses a serious risk to 36 million patients. Nonetheless, a case that gives hope stands out: “Non-profit clinics are a driving

force for developing the market...”, namely the polyclinics of the CNSS, the hemodialysis centers created by philanthropic sponsors, or the university hospitals launched by foundations. About 26 non-profit clinics do exist. They are in a “limited” number, but with a “significant” bed capacity: 91 beds on average. Even with higher fees, nonprofits remain “attractive to patients.”

The owners of private clinics cry out for “unfair competition” in view of the more favorable tax regime granted to their challengers.

Isn't entrepreneurship risk taking? Private clinics claim “the reinvestment of their profit” in the development of their structures, training, research...

The Competition Council announces a clarification: “The market is experiencing a quantitative and qualitative evolution of the share capital” with the arrival of the investment funds. A certain “transparency” thus replaces the “financial opacity” which used to prevail in this sector. □

Faïçal FAQUIHI

Zombie companies: A final “respite”?

THEY are inactive, they do not fulfill their reporting obligations... and they fear tax audits. Really inactive companies, which are more than 200,000 according to figures put forward by the Ministry of Finance during discussions of the draft budget, will benefit from certain advantages provided that they put their situation in order. From January 1, 2023 onwards, companies who have not achieved any turnover or who have paid the minimum contribution during the last four financial years will be exempt from tax audits. For this, they must subscribe to the declaration of total cessation of activity. These companies will also benefit from the automatic cancellation of increases, fines and penalties for failure to declare and pay taxes due for non-prescribed financial years. This is a “small amnesty” on the increases and penalties that will benefit companies that are really inactive and wish to put their situation in order. In addition to the subscription to the declaration of total cessation of activity provided for in Article 150 of the General Tax Code



(CGI), these companies are required to pay a lump sum tax of 5,000 Dirhams (about 500 USD) for each fiscal year that is not time-barred. That said, the transactions carried out by these companies remain taxable, depending on the case, either to IS (Corporate Tax) or to IR (Income Tax) under the conditions of common law.

The tax administration can also initiate the control procedure according to the rules of “common law” in the event of fraud, forgery, or the use of fictitious invoices. The Draft Budget Bill also specifies that financial years

that have been the subject of one of the procedures for rectification of the tax bases are excluded from this transitional regime. Validated on Thursday, December 8 by the Parliament, the draft budget also provides for measures in favor of companies that do not carry out any activity and no longer fulfill their tax obligations. For this category, the automatic taxation will be suspended. At least according to Article 228 Bis which cites companies that have not complied with any obligation to declare and pay taxes provided for by the CGI (General Tax

Code) for the last three closed financial years, and also companies that have not carried out any operation or activity for 3 years according to the information available to the administration. These companies will be invited by notified letter to subscribe to the declaration of cessation of activity provided for in Article 150 of the CGI Code. To do so, companies will have a thirty-day period. Once this period has lapsed, those companies will be listed by the tax authorities in the register of inactive companies and the procedure for automatic taxation provided for in Article 228 will be suspended. If, in the meantime, the administration finds that an inactive company has carried out operations or resumed the exercise of a taxable activity, it will be removed from the register of inactive companies. In this case, the tax authorities will initiate the procedure of automatic taxation according to the procedures provided for, even if the limitation period has expired but without it exceeding 10 years. □

Khadija MASMOUDI

Qatar 2022: Heads held high!



THE historic journey of Morocco, flag bearer of Africa and the Arab world, finished during in the semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup against France (2-0). The young team built by Walid Regragui and fruit of 15 years of training work is promised a bright future. The arrival of the Atlas Lions in the last four of a World Cup, which was a first for an African selection, is experienced as a starting point and not as an outcome. The Mohammed VI Football Academy offered the national team one player per line in this case: Youssef En-Nesyri, Azzedine Ounahi, Nayef Aguerd, and Reda Tagnaouti. In the starting lineup in the semi-finals, only captain Romain Saïss (32), who stayed only 20 minutes, and goalkeeper Yassine Bounou (31), were more than 30-years old. All the others are between 22 years old, like Ounahi, and 29, like Sofiane Boufal and Hakim Ziyech. *"His Majesty has put a lot of resources into making Moroccan football progress, it is also His success"*, said Regragui at the end of the match. *"Africa and Morocco are making headway, we finally understood that we had to take ourselves in hand, we showed the world that in Morocco we work and we move forward"*, continues the coach.

The Atlas Lions, who delivered a heroic participation in Qatar, were not unworthy against the reigning world champions and managed to brave fatigue and injuries to defend their chance until the end. For this semi-final, Walid Regragui changed his tactics



by opting for a five-man defense, with the entry into play of Achraf Dari and Jawad El Yamiq, alongside Ghanem Saïss. On the French side, Didier Deschamps was deprived of the services of Dayot Upamecano and Adrien Rabiot, victims of a flu-like condition on Tuesday and replaced by Ibrahima Konaté and Youssouf Fofana. From the start of the meeting, the French players quickly entered the heart of the matter by opening the scoring in the fifth minute. This opener has put the nationals in an unprecedented situation because they have never been behind since the start of the tournament, but the reaction of the Lions was up to par.

If France joins Argentina in the World Cup final, the Moroccan selection will have the chance to engrave its name in the Qatari World Cup by challenging Croatia in a match for 3rd place.

The FRMF has chosen to raise the training of executives with the organization in Morocco of an exam, the coaching diploma (CAF Pro), of which two members of the first promotion were in Qatar, Walid Regragui and the Senegalese Aliou Cissé. And that's not



all because the development of Botola has allowed exploits at the continental level since the RSB of Berkane won the CAF Confederation Cup, and the WAC Casablanca won the last African Champions League, with in particular global players Tagnaouti, Yahya Attia-tallah, who came on full of energy after the break on Wednesday, and Achraf Dari. The latter signed in Brest and played the entire semi-final, in place of Aguerd, injured and removed from the National Eleven where he was

announced an hour before the match. Finally the Federation continued to opt for dual nationals from the start of their careers such as Hakimi, detected at 16, Mazraoui at 18, and Amrabat at 19. With his locally trained players and foreign-born stars, Walid Regragui succeeded to guide this team, which had chances to equalize against the Blues, with a strike from Azzedine Ounahi (10th) or an overhead kick from Jawad el-Yamiq (44th). □

A.T.

Weekly highlights

Fauna at the Rabat zoo “immortalized” by the National Geographic

“IMMORTALIZING” by studio portraits the endangered animals of the zoological garden of Rabat to raise public awareness of their preservation: it is with this in mind that the American international photographer from National Geographic Joel Sartore recently collaborated with the Rabat zoological garden. Artistic and atypical shots that reveal these species in a whole new light and will significantly feed his photographic Ark project, started more than 16 years ago. Several endemic Moroccan and African species housed in the zoo have passed under the photographer’s lens, including the Atlas lion, the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*), the African elephant, the gazelles, as well as several species of reptiles. The goal is to make the general public aware of the importance of safeguarding these animals and their respective habitats. Another goal of the approach is to provide a documentary fund that is strategic for researchers who regularly look into the dark future of these species about to become extinct. No less than 13,435 animals have been photographed to date around the world through this project, including many residents of zoos and aquariums. Sartore plans to photograph a total of



The zoological garden of Rabat has just collaborated with international photographer Joel Sartore from the National Geographic to “immortalize” via studio portraits 20 endangered animal species of the park, among which the lion of the Atlas, the African elephant, the Barbary sheep, or the gazelle



20,000 species of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The catalog will represent an invaluable scientific resource for the experts who are regularly committed to this cause. The “Moroccan” shots will complement the specialist’s photographic Ark project. Morocco is full of extinct or endangered animals, such as the Atlas lion, the panther, the cheetah, the deer, or even the scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*). Other species are endange-

red, such as the striped hyena, the dama gazelle (*Nanger dama*), the Barbary sheep, the wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), the fennec fox (*Vulpes zerda*), and the otter. As for the extinct birds, it is worth mentioning the red-necked ostrich (*Struthio camelus camelus*) and the eastern imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*).

Among the causes of this threat, in particular the pressure exerted by human activity on their natural habitat through overexploitation of forests, fires, forest clearing for agricultural purposes, or even the trafficking of endangered species. □

Karim AGOUMI

Casablanca: The tramway, 10 years later

357 million, this is the number of inhabitants of the city of Casablanca who have chosen tramway as a mode of transport over the last decade or so. The inhabitants of the business capital city have adopted the tramway and integrated it into their travel habits. Casatramway is no longer considered a simple mode of transport, but a way of life. Indeed, more than 97% of users and 86% of non-users are ready to recommend it to those around them. The tram offers peripheral populations rapid access to the heart of the metropolis. In addition, the cost of tram travel continues to be subsidized up to 40% by the public authorities and in particular by the Municipality of Casablanca. The service connects the main boulevards, shopping areas, as well as leisure centers and businesses. On the occasion of this symbolic anniversary, a survey on the satisfaction



and perception of Casablanca residents and travelers concerning this mode of transport was carried out by Casatramway. Overall, the customer satisfaction rate hovers around 95%. Users are convinced that there is no better place for diversity and social peace: all ages, all genders and all socio-professional categories do travel

daily on board the tram. According to the same perception and satisfaction survey, 61% of tram users are regular users using it more than 5 times a week.

With an average age of 15-34 years, students, who represent almost one quarter of tram users during the school year, and young working people,

have adopted tram as a mode of travel. Women represent nearly 49% of tram customers, which is their preferred means of transport because of the feeling of security and independence it provides.

The two lines 1 and 2 were a real success during this decade. The people of Casablanca have thus benefited from a public transport combining comfort, reliability, and sustainability, intended to facilitate their travels through the essential thoroughfares of the city in complete safety.

After its launch, Casatramway was able to defy prejudices and fears, registering very few cases of fraud, attacks, harassment, or vandalism in the trains. Equipped with a Centralized Command Post (PCC) active 24 hours a day, the Casablanca tramway lines have become the safest, simplest, and most accessible mode of transport. □

Aziza ELAFFAS