

Ramtane Lamamra, Algerian Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: Interview

AlgeriaEconomy

Interview



What are the key components of Algerian foreign policy in the medium term?

LAMAMRA: Algeria is actively involved in implementing the peace agreement in Mali, and contributes to combating terrorism and organised crime by means of consultation and coordination with countries in the Sahel. The strengthening of bilateral relations between Algeria and all African countries through active participation in the activities of the African Union is also among the most important priorities of Algerian diplomacy.

In addition, Algeria promotes a joint-Arab vision of security that integrates a multitude of parameters to ensure the emergence of the Arab world as a political and economic player on the world stage.

With respect to institutional relations with the EU, a decade after the implementation of the Association Agreement, we have had time to find some discrepancies which must be corrected in this agreement. The time has come to go beyond the strictly commercial aspects and to make the Association Agreement a true development instrument.

At the multilateral level, there are several objectives. These include the continuation of efforts for harmonised strategies for security and the fight against terrorism; a new dynamic with respect to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; the stimulation of activities with the Group of 77 and China; the continued contribution to the African Union Committee of 10; reform of the UN Security Council; and further negotiations for the accession of Algeria to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

As part of the country's active participation in international and regional conferences, Algeria served as co-chair of the intergovernmental negotiating committee at the recent and important Paris climate agreement meeting, during the preparation for the 21st session of the Conference of Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

How are negotiations progressing with regards to Algeria's accession to the WTO?

LAMAMRA: Admittedly, the negotiations on the accession of Algeria to the WTO have been slow. However, this is explained by the importance of the strategic challenges posed by this membership for Algeria; the complexity of issues involved in adapting the national legislative and regulatory corpus to WTO standards and regulations; and the preservation of legitimate interests as a developing country. However, significant progress has been made. These efforts are now accompanied by a dynamic diplomacy, better able to convey our political will to join this organisation and assume the rights and obligations of membership.

What measures can be taken to boost trade between Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa?

LAMAMRA: While economic and trade relations with African countries are currently modest, the growth potential is considerable, hence the need to establish real mechanisms to increase trade with these countries. Algeria has historically demonstrated itself to be an active promoter of African causes with multilateral institutions and major economies. It is useful to recall in this regard that since 2010 Algeria proceeded unilaterally in the cancellation of the debt of 14 African countries, representing an amount of \$902m.

The development of transport infrastructure is one of the most important catalysts for strengthening the competitiveness of domestic economic agents in the region, hence our commitment to work towards the completion of infrastructure projects, such as the Trans-Saharan highway between Algeria, Niger and Nigeria; the realisation of the Algiers-Abuja fibre link; the creation of new air routes between Algeria and certain African capitals; and the reactivation of certain maritime links.