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## The American Moroccan Competencies Network (AMCN) Forum New York City, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012

By Abdelmajid Kassem  
HC-MASA President  
kassem2k@yahoo.com

The Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad, The Embassy of The Kingdom of Morocco, The Consulate General of The Kingdom of Morocco, and The American Moroccan Competencies Network (AMCN) organized a Forum June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Sheraton Hotel in New York City. During the meeting, the Moroccan Minister of Moroccans Living Abroad, Mr. Abdelatif Maazouz, addressed the audience from Rabat , Morocco through Skype; however, his Special Envoy Mr. Mohamed Bernoussi-the secretary general; the Moroccan Consul General Mr. Mohamed Karmoune, the director of USAID-Morocco Mr. John Groarke; the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United States Mr. Rashid Bouhlal have been present and addressed the audience.



Dr. Mohamed Boutjdir also addressed the audience on behalf of AMCN.

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## Save the date!!

**AMAS Conference I**  
*The First International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I*

**March 18-19, 2013, Rabat, Morocco**



*Details in page 3-4*

## The American Moroccan Competencies Network (AMCN) Forum

*Continued from page 1*

After these speeches from Moroccan officials, Mr. Groarke, and Dr. Boutjdir, the audience split into 4 workshops where project holders presented their projects in 4 thematic areas of interest to the Moroccan Government. These thematic areas were 1) Industry and New Technologies, 2) Education, Higher Education, and Scientific Research, 3) Renewable Energies and Environmental Protection, and 4) Human Development. The total number of projects presented by the Moroccan-American Diaspora was 51 with 12 projects in Industry and New Technologies, 21 projects in Education, Higher Education, and Scientific Research, 8 projects in Renewable Energies and Environmental Protection, and 10 projects in Human Development. It is noteworthy to mention that representatives of the Moroccan Government spoke at the beginning of each workshop and gave an overview of priorities for the government in those areas of critical need. After the workshops, the meeting reconvened and moderators presented their reports about the projects to the general audience. Further discussion and a Q&A session have been held to hear from the audience especially from the representatives of the Moroccan Government.

A follow up Forum will be organized in Morocco at the end of February or beginning of March 2013. Before this meeting, the Moroccan government will select the projects that best fit its economic needs and call the project holders to the February-March forum. During this forum, project holders from the AMCN will give more details about their projects, how they will carry them, and be partnered with interested parties in Morocco.

The Forum was followed up by an AMCN meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup> where the members of the network elected the AMCN officers as follows: President: Dr. Mohamed Boutjdir; Vice-President: Amine Chigani; Secretary: Nadia Serhani-Eltobgi; Treasurer: Houda Rabah. Other Board Members include Dr. Tahar El-Korchi, Hanan Chaibanou, Saad Zouak, Mohamed Belkhat, Leila Hanafi, Hafida Torres, Dr. Abdelmajid Kassem, Yazid Boutejdi and Loubna Ennadir.

*By A. Kassem*





## AMAS Conference I

### *The First International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I*

**Rabat, Morocco, March 18-19th 2013**

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We have a great honor to invite you to attend **“The International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I”** that will be held in the beautiful capital of the **Kingdom of Morocco, Rabat on March 18-19, 2013.**

Rabat is famous for its historic monuments such as the Hassan Tower, the Oudayas, the old town (Medina), and much more.

The Conference will take place at the Hassan Tower Hotel in Rabat which is a *"Prestigious Moorish-Andalusian style 5\* Hotel in Rabat city center. This prestigious hotel is close to Hassan Tower, Mosque and Mausoleum of Mohammed V. 15 minutes from the Dar Es Salem Royal Golf course, and the international airport"*

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### Conference Committees

The Scientific Committee which is composed of world known scientists in various fields of Agricultural Sciences developed an attractive program with sessions in the Plant and Animal Genomic Sciences, and Higher Education. The conference will host a variety of speakers including internationally recognized experts in their fields, young scientists, and graduate students.

#### Organizing Committee

##### Chair

**Abdelmajid Kassem, PhD**

Professor and Chair

Department of Biological Sciences

Fayetteville State University

Fayetteville, NC 28301

USA

##### Co-Chair

**Khalid Meksem, PhD**

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**Klaus Theres, Professor**

Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research, Germany

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**Nacer Belaloui, Research Scientist**

USDA-ARS, USA

**Abdelmalek El Meskaoui, Ph.D.**

National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Morocco

**Abdelhamid El Mousadik, Professor**

Ibn Zohr University, Morocco



## AMAS Conference I

*The First International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I*  
Rabat, Morocco, March 18-19th 2013

### Confirmed Speakers

**Peter Gresshoff, Professor**

The University of Queensland, Australia

**Julia Kehr, Professor**

Madrid Polytechnical University, Spain

**Gunter Kahl, Professor**

Frankfurt University (and GenXPro, Frankfurt), Germany

**David A. Lightfoot, Professor**

Southern Illinois University, USA

**Klaus Theres, Professor**

Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research, Germany

**Abdelhafid Bendahmane**

INRA, France

**Prasad M.V.N., Professor**

University of Hyderabad, India

*~Please check the conference website for updated list of speakers and more details about the meeting ~*

<http://www.amas-conference.org>

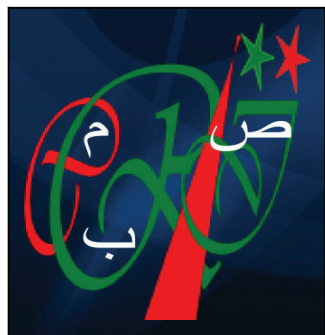
### Sponsors

Atlas Publishing, LP, is the main sponsor of “The International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference” which is going to be a biannual international conference that will be organized in Morocco. However, the conference is also co-sponsored by the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad, The Moroccan Airline (Royal Air Maroc), and several other entities.



***Welcome To Beautiful Morocco!***





## Research/Industry II meeting

### *Plant Biotechnology and Socioeconomic Development in Morocco: Achievements, Opportunities and Prospective*

Fes, Morocco, May 18-19th 2011

The second edition of Research/Industry meeting “Plant Biotechnology and Socioeconomic Development in Morocco: Achievements, Opportunities, and Prospective” was held in May 18 - 19, 2011 in the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Fez, Morocco, and the National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Taounate, Morocco.

The meeting was hosted by the Plant Biotechnology Unit, Department of Botany, National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Fez, Morocco.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Abdelmalek El Meskaoui, our vice-president in Morocco.





## Research/Industry II meeting

### *Plant Biotechnology and Socioeconomic Development in Morocco: Achievements, Opportunities and Prospective*

Fes, Morocco, May 18-19th 2011

There were two major sessions:

**I.** Agricultural and Forest Biotechnology

**II.** Biotechnology of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants.

A roundtable was held at the end of the meeting under the topic of “research and development, technology transfer and entrepreneurship: Opportunities and constraints”.

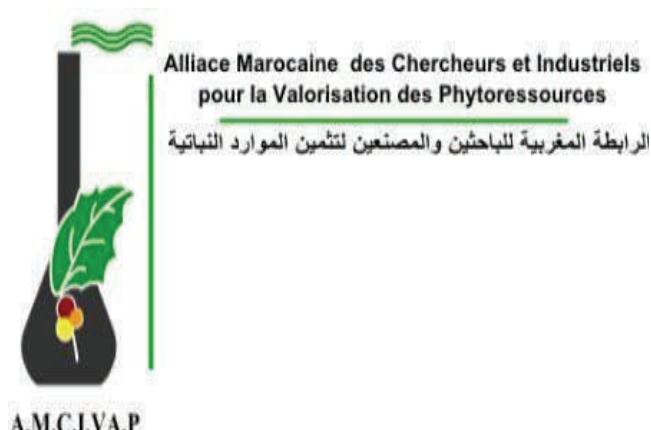
The meeting brought together national and international researchers from across different areas of plant biotechnology, experts from diverse industries, and students.

*A. El Meskaoui*



## A New Moroccan National Association

### “Alliance Marocaine des Chercheurs et Industriels pour la Valorisation des Phytoressources (AMCIVAP)”



The Moroccan alliance of researchers and industrialist for the valorization of plant resources was created in June 18th 2012 at the National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Taounate, Morocco.

The main goal of the association is to promote research and development, training, and exchange of ideas between the academic and industrial sectors of plant resources.

### Executive Office Members of AMCIVAP

|                            |                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>           | Abdelmalek El Meskaoui, Ph.D.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Vice-President</b>      | Rachid Mentag, MBA, Ph.D.                                                                                                           |
| <b>Secretary</b>           | Nadia Wahid, D.N.                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Assistant Secretary</b> | Iraqi Driss, Ph.D.                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | Aicha Nordine, M.Sc.                                                                                                                |
| <b>Assistant Treasurer</b> | Yassine Maach, Ing. Agr.                                                                                                            |
| <b>Assessors</b>           | Fadwa Naimi, M.Sc.<br>Pr. Farah Abdellah, D.N.<br>Pr. Chahed Abdellah, Ph.D.<br>David Assayeg, Directeur<br>Abdellah Benhamadi, PDG |



## Other Activities at the Plant Biotechnology Unit

Department of Botany, National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Fez, Morocco

### King Mohammed VI visits the Plant Biotechnology Unit



### The visit of the minister of higher education and scientific research to the unit





## Members Recent Publications

- Aly R, **Hamamouch N**, Abu-Nassar J, Wolf S, Joel DM, Eizenberg H, Kaisler E, Cramer C, Gal-On A, Westwood JH. (2011) Movement of protein and macromolecules between host plants and the parasitic weed *Phelipanche aegyptiaca* Pers. *Plant Cell Rep.* 30(12):2233-41.
- Barakat A**, Staton M, Cheng CH, Park J, Yassin NB, Ficklin S, Yeh CC, Hebard F, Baier K, Powell W, Schuster SC, Wheeler N, Abbott A, Carlson JE, Sederoff R. (2012) Chestnut resistance to the blight disease: insights from transcriptome analysis. *BMC Plant Biol.* 19;12:38.
- Belkhiri A, Zhu S, Chen Z, **Soutto M**, El-Rifai W. (2012) Resistance to TRAIL Is Mediated by DARPP-32 in Gastric Cancer. *Clin Cancer Res.* 18(14):3889-900.
- Berbel A, Ferrándiz C, Hecht V, Dalmais M, Lund OS, Sussemilch FC, Taylor SA, **Bendahmane A**, Ellis TH, Beltrán JP, Weller JL, Madueño F. (2012) VEGETATIVE1 is essential for development of the compound inflorescence in pea. *Nat Commun.* 24;3:797.
- Brodersen P, Sakvarelidze-Achard L, Schaller H, Khafif M, Schott G, **Bendahmane A**, Voinnet O. (2012) Isoprenoid biosynthesis is required for miRNA function and affects membrane association of ARGONAUTE 1 in Arabidopsis. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.* 109(5):1778-83.
- Casals F, **Idaghdour Y**, Hussin J, Awadalla P. (2012) Next-generation sequencing approaches for genetic mapping of complex diseases. *J Neuroimmunol.* 248(1-2):10-22.
- Chang YL, Chuang HW, **Meksem K**, Wu FC, Chang CY, Zhang M, Zhang HB. (2011) Characterization of a plant-transformation-ready large-insert BIBAC library of Arabidopsis and bombardment transformation of a large-insert BIBAC of the library into tobacco. *Genome.* 54(6):437-47.
- Conrad DF, Keebler JE, DePristo MA, Lindsay SJ, Zhang Y, Casals F, **Idaghdour Y**, Hartl CL, Torroja C, Garimella KV, Zilversmit M, Cartwright R, Rouleau GA, Daly M, Stone EA, Hurles ME, Awadalla P. (2012) Variation in genome-wide mutation rates within and between human families. on behalf of the 1000 Genomes Project. *Nat Genet.* 43(7):712-4.
- Ferreira JC, Mochly-Rosen D, **Boutjdir M**. (2012) Regulation of cardiac excitability by protein kinase C isozymes. *Front Biosci (Schol Ed).* 4:532-46.
- Foucart C, **Boualem A**, Lasseur B, Eleblu J, Fahraj I, **Bendahmane A**. (2012) Sex determination in cucurbits. *Biol Aujourd'hui.* 206(1):57-62. Review. French.
- Hamamouch N**, Li C, Hewezi T, Baum TJ, Mitchum MG, Hussey RS, Vodkin LO, Davis EL. (2012) The interaction of the novel 30C02 cyst nematode effector protein with a plant  $\beta$ -1,3-endoglucanase may suppress host defence to promote parasitism. *J Exp Bot.* 63(10):3683-95.
- Hong A, Zhang A, Ke Y, **El Idrissi A**, Shen CH. (2012) Downregulation of GABA(A)  $\beta$  subunits is transcriptionally controlled by Fmr1p. *J Mol Neurosci.* 46(2):272-5.

## Members Recent Publications

**Korrida A**, Jadallah S, Chbel F, Amin-Alami A, Ahra M, Aggrey S (2012) Patterns of genetic diversity and population structure of the threatened Houbara and Maqueen's bustards as revealed by microsatellite markers. *Genetics and Molecular Research (in press)*.

**Korrida A**, Nahashon SN, Amin-Alami A, Aggrey SE (2012) Modeling absolute and allometric growth in Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata undulata*) in captivity. *Atlas Journal of Biology* 2(1): 94-99.

Manescu C, **Hamamouch N**, Maios C, Harfouche A, Doulis AG, Aravanopoulos FA. (2012) Linkage mapping of the Mediterranean cypress, *Cupressus sempervirens*, based on molecular and morphological markers. *Genet Mol Res.* 10(3):1891-909.

Momparler RL, **Idaghdour Y**, Marquez VE, Momparler LF. (2012) Synergistic antileukemic action of a combination of inhibitors of DNA methylation and histone methylation. *Leuk Res.* 2012 36(8):1049-54.

Okechukwu CA, **El Ayadi AM**, Tamers SL, Sabbath EL, Berkman L. (2012) Household food insufficiency, financial strain, work-family spillover, and depressive symptoms in the working class: the Work, Family, and Health Network study. *Am J Public Health.* 102(1):126-33.

Purkayastha S, Ford J, Kanjilal B, Diallo S, Del Rosario Inigo J, Neuwirth L, **El Idrissi A**, Ahmed Z, Wieraszko A, Azmitia EC, Banerjee P. (2012) Clozapine functions through the prefrontal cortex serotonin 1A receptor to heighten neuronal activity via calmodulin kinase II-NMDA receptor interactions. *J Neurochem.* 120(3):396-407.

Qu Y, **Boutjdir M**. (2011) TRPC channels, an overarching Ca(2+) paradigm in the developing heart. *Cardiovasc Res.* 92 (2):189-90.

Ragin B, R Bazelle, W Clark, S Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. (2012) QTL for Yield and Yield Components Mapped in the PI 438489B By 'Hamilton' Recombinant Inbred Line (RIL) Population of Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.]. *Journal of Agricultural Science* 9 (4): 98-105.

***Congratulations to all members!  
Keep up the good work!***

***Council's Publications Team***

## Congratulations to Saadia Bihmidine

Saadia Bihmidine, the council's secretary, defended her dissertation and Graduated with her Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her advisers are Tala Awada and Thomas Clemente and her topic is: *Crop Improvement Through Biotechnology: Targeting Drought Resistance and Photosynthesis*.

Saadia is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Division of Biological Sciences, University of Missouri-Columbia. Her main research project aims at characterizing sucrose transporters in sweet sorghum. In addition, she is also involved in other projects aiming at characterizing carbon hyper-accumulation mutants in maize. Her postdoctoral adviser is Dr. David Braun.

**Congrats Saadia!**



Hooding Ceremony



Receiving the diplomat from UNL  
chancellor Harvey Perlman



## *The council welcomes all the new members who joined us in 2012*

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**Skype ID: hc-masa**

*(to attend our meetings)*

### **Contact**

HC-MASA  
971 Pepperwood Drive  
Fayetteville, NC 28311  
USA  
(910) 584 1515  
kassem2k@yahoo.com

*The council committee members welcomes your  
feedback and questions*

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