

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's Address on the occasion of the end of the Referendum

Carthage, May 27 2002

Fellow citizens.

The Tunisian people, all categories included, took part yesterday massively, for the first time in their history and in a context marked by freedom, democracy and absolute transparency, in the referendum and expressed their will by unanimously opting for the constitutional reform.

We thus inaugurate a new stage on the path of change, with a view to building the republic of tomorrow, on the basis of a constitution which is in tune with the evolution that the Tunisian people experienced at the political, cultural, social and economic levels

This is a stage which strengthens the foundations of the rule of law, consolidates the protection of liberties, human rights and the values of solidarity and tolerance, and paves the way for a new stage of modernity to our republican system.

This is an important stage in the life of our society, one that will be marked by a greater enrichment of political life and the people's participation, and will offer the widest opportunities for the participation and useful contribution of the various components of civil society, the political parties, organizations and associations, as well as the various categories and competences from all regions.

I would like, on this occasion, to express my thanks and my consideration to all Tunisian men and women, here at home as well as outside the country, for the clear-sightedness, enthusiasm and commitment they demonstrated all along the information campaign on the constitutional reform, for the attachment to the homeland they showed and their faithfulness to the choices and ideals which have always characterized our people and affirmed their authenticity.'

"I would also like to extend my thanks and consideration to all political parties that participated in the explanation campaign and assumed the role incumbent upon them in backing up the future choice, and at the forefront of which the Democratic Constitutional rally. my thanks also go to the national organizations, notably the Tunisian general union of labor (UGTT), the Tunisian union of industry, trade and handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian union of agriculture and fisheries (UTAP) and the Tunisian national women's union (UNFT), as well as the various associations and other components of the civil society, as much as to all media and journalists, intellectuals, creators, academics and educators who contributed to a better awareness of the dimensions and finalities of this constitutional reform and all of whom were at the forefront of the forces of good and of the building of new era Tunisia.

Fellow citizens,

Now that the people said its word on the reform, may I congratulate the Tunisians, in all parts of our territory and abroad, for this historical gain which enhances our confidence in the future and opens up for our country the broadest horizons of success in the achievement of the hoped-for qualitative leap, so that it raises to the

Tunisia... out of fidelity to the commitments taken and out of love for the homeland."