



## CyFy Africa: The Conference on Technology, Innovation and Society

Tangier, Morocco | 10-12 May 2018

### **Address by Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation**

Honourable Ilyas El Omari, President, Regional Council of Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, and

Honourable Moulay Hafid Elalamy, Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy

Esteemed Excellencies, dignitaries, members of the media, friends and colleagues. A very good morning and on behalf of the hosts and the entire team let me extend a warm welcome to all of you.

As the Chair of CyFy since its inception five years ago, I have sought out a dynamic leader to partner with at each of our conferences, one who would lend new energy and direction to the proceedings. This year I am pleased that I met and was able to work with the extra ordinary Asma Greimish to shape, design and host this inaugural edition in Africa. She and I have been co-conspirators, and equal partners in this effort and any missteps and shortcomings are to my account alone. Thank you Asma for being a leader and dreamer.

CyFy was originally created as a platform and a space where new and excluded voices could be heard, particularly from the emerging world. It was a venue to encourage these voices to influence key global debates, and to build capacities of people to engage with a domain that will surely change all of our lives forever.

It is thus vital and indeed natural to locate these debates in Africa, the cradle of civilisation. The continent that incubated human life as we know it will also be the vital geography that will influence human-machine engagement and the norms that will define singularity, a moment when synthetic and organic intelligence will be indistinguishable. African voices will be critical and must be heard now.

Today, CyFy is not creating a new conversation in Africa, but in a way, CyFy is coming home, to the continent where resolutions await many of the debates provoked in the developed world. Africa and each of its communities and countries will play a seminal role in defining the future for all of us.



In Africa, there could be no better partner than Morocco. A proud civilisation, a frontier country, occupying the special place where tradition blends with modernity, the developed world engages with the emerging world and where diversity of cultures all create a fulfilling flavour of reality. Much like the internet.

In many ways this partnership between institutions in India and Morocco is natural. We hold similar world views, albeit in different parts of the world. We share similar pasts and motivations, we have similar intentions and objectives of fair and equitable development that benefits not a few, but the many. We negotiate and resolve diversity with keeping the difference intact. We at ORF are proud to partner with the Regional Council of Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, and the Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy in hosting this conference. We are especially honored that the conference is being held under the high patronage of the King Mohammed VI.

This effort is designed around six central pillars that include; connectivity, digital inclusion, security, innovation, trade, and society, and we look forward to rich discussions over the next two days and we are confident that this platform will be able to incubate new partnerships that will serve different purposes and larger objectives.

Before I invite our first dignitary for the opening address, I would like to extend a special thank you to Manar Mahraz, and her team, and Bushra Amari and her team, without them this effort would be impossible.

And finally, let me acknowledge the role and contributions of the curators of this conference, Megan Cress, Danielle Kayembe, Sonali Mittra and Bedavyasa Mohanty. Most of you would already know them as they are responsible for you being here.

A special mention and thanks to Ineke Buskens who has been a motivator for us even before CyFy Africa was conceptualised and for her role in organising a session, which I am in particular looking forward to.

So a warm welcome once again and now I am delighted to invite:

The Honourable Ilyas El Omari, President, Regional Council of Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima.

Honourable Moulay Hafid Elalamy, Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy.

Sunjoy Joshi, Chairman, Observer Research Foundation.