

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER  
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

**ECOSOC ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW REGIONAL PREPARATORY  
MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION**

**2 June 2008, Manama, Bahrain**

Honourable President of ECOSOC,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express my deep appreciation and thanks to all participants, both from our region and from abroad, including the distinguished Permanent Representatives to the United Nations who traveled from New York.

This meeting would not have been possible without the effective cooperation of the United Nations system, and particularly DESA, UN-HABITAT and ESCWA.

I would like to express my gratitude for the wisdom shared with us in their addresses by the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Social Development, and Minister of Housing. I also wish to recognize the tireless work and dedication of my staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Like our neighbors, Bahrain faces a number of challenges in terms of sustainable urbanization, including those we have focused on: the implications of population growth, an increasingly large number of whom are youth; water scarcity, and climate change. To address them, we have examined some of the issues related to infrastructure, service provision and access, financing and technology transfer. We were also pleased to showcase some innovations from the region in the field of green architecture and urban planning.

Although Bahrain has seen great success in this field, including the award given to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa by the United Nations on July 3, 2008 in Geneva, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must take action to address not only the challenges of today, but -- more importantly -- to plan for tomorrow. For this, we need to design strategies that integrate policies in the economic, social and environmental fields in a coherent and sustainable manner. This needs to happen at not only the national level, but also the regional level.

Let me conclude by expressing our pride at having been the first country in Western Asia to volunteer to engage all members of the region in the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review process, something to which we attach great importance.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
The meeting is adjourned.