

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Speech

**4th United Nation's Conference of the Least developed
Countries**

Istanbul

9 May 2011

In The Name of God the Most Merciful the Most Compassionate

His Excellency Abdullah Gül

HE General Secretary Ban Ki- Moon

Mr. Sheikh Diyara President of the Conference

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me from the outset of this speech to express my personal appreciation for the your Excellency Abdullah Gül for his country's hosting of this important event.

It gives me further pleasure to thank the organizers for extending me the invitation to participate in the first plenary session of this conference.

I have stated on many previous occasions that I am not a professional politician. Today I stand before you in the same capacity.

I am happy with this capacity because it gives me more freedom and bigger flexibility to express other ideas and offer more discussion away from any preconceived political agendas.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are all gathered here today because we believe that the issue of human development should be at the forefront of the interests of the international community

This is due to the fact that development, unlike mere growth, increases the ability to achieve peace, justice and the awareness of rights.

Therefore, I do not think that our 4th Conference will stop at merely deliberating this axiom.

The problem lies in implementation. We have before us some thorny issues. They basically relate to widely spread abject poverty, ignorance, difficult living conditions and ever increasing unemployment. This is of course in addition to inability to tackle the blatant violation of the environment.

These issues had other consequences like causing a wide rift between human beings especially when they turned into conflicts which cut across cultural differences which supposed to be a source of good and growth for humanity. Instead and in conditions of inequality, deprivation and a feeling of graveness and contributed to creating an environment conducive the spread of conflicts and consequently bequeathing instability.

These are formidable challenges which, frankly speaking, place us in a critical situation Vis-a Vis our future generations, the reason being is that although it was we who planned the Millennium Declaration with its Goals and plans, we are still stumbling in translating this declaration into a living reality.

I am not here to belittle or underestimate what has been achieved until now, it is just that I believe in the capacity of the human mind to face difficulty and especially in its ability to change course and provide constructive solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the time remaining of my speech, I shall endeavor to contribute some ideas which I hope will enrich the debate in order to reach a convincing answer for the question: what can be done?

Now there are four years standing between us and 2015 which we set as the initial deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We have come some way since the year 2000 in this regard, but we are still facing complexities like for example the conditions of the least developed countries as a result of conflicts and wars.

The Development Goals themselves did not offer answers to these situations.

Therefore, we must raise the ceiling of our challenges and commitments. In the case of development, raising the ceiling of commitment is what makes more realistic.

By that I mean a more realistic approach is an approach which is based on our joint responsibility to achieve the required change.

In the context of this responsibility, we must be aware that there is no alternative which can compensate for the role of education which should always remain at the top of our priorities.

Education here is not just a means to acquire knowledge, it is rather the bases upon which awareness and participation in the public affairs can be raised and desired citizenship society can be built on proper bases.

Some might say that the Millennium Development Goals have made eradicating ignorance a pillar for them, and have also made the right to primary education and gender equality a strategic aims for them.

In my conviction, what is required here is to consider education as the key to achieving the development goals.

Of course education on its own is not enough to achieve this end unless a just social – political system is in place.

In other words, the availability of an environment which believes in the importance of preparing a citizen who is aware of and realizes his rights and duties, and appreciates his role in building a society based on good governance. A society saturated with the values of justice, rights and fairness.

I think that such an approach had become a special necessity in the current context of our Arab region in view of current dynamism which is witnessing at the moment which confirmed the fact that people's longing for living in freedom and dignity transcends borders and cultures.

This new reality reaffirms to us that living societies are those that are rich in the potential of their educated youth and not blessed only with material wealth.

Therefore, it is highly important to involve the youth in decision making, for they have revealed a tangible awareness and an enormous amount of maturity alongside a realization of needs and also a strong sense of citizenship.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The participation in this conference of the representatives of governments alongside parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector is a joint commitment on the part of all stakeholders concerned with issue of tackling

poverty, ignorance and exclusion and is a confirmation of the determination to achieve the required change.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to maintain this constructive and positive spirit which brought us here together and utilize it to launch creative partnerships to follow up and implement any conclusions that we may reach.

In our current situation, I think it necessary to enhance the participatory role of civil society organizations and social movements in the implementation of projects. This is aside from the fact that these organizations are closely linked to the socially active individuals in the fields which matter to us.

By the same token, and with an equal degree of interest, we must benefit from the scientific qualifications of the private sector and from its experience in finding innovative solutions for the challenges of technology.

Once again, I reiterate that our real success in embodying this constructive spirit will not be achieved except through placing education at the heart of our list of priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In conclusion, I would like to stress that there is no way to achieving the Millennium Development Goals if we are not successful in achieving them in the least developed countries.

Our success here is real criterion of our commitment.

There is no way of talking about peace, stability and recognition of cultural diversity when poverty, wanton need, ignorance and exclusion are on the increase.

Furthermore, these manifestations which are in fact affront to what is right and dignified living can not be eliminated unless education was really available to all.

This is what is really at stake here.

I thank you, and wish your conference every success.