

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**STATEMENT  
BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY  
SHEIKH HAMAD BIN JASSIM BIN JABR AL THANI  
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**BEFORE  
THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON  
AGENDA ITEM 45  
CULTURE OF PEACE**

**NEW YORK, 12 NOVEMBER 2008**

**Mr. President,**

Allow me at the outset to convey to you the greetings of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, the beloved Emir of our country, and His Highness' sincere appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for his kind invitation to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations on interreligious dialogue, as well as for his presence, his opening of its work and his significant contributions to the promotion of interreligious dialogue. I also greet His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the President of the General Assembly for the enthusiasm he has shown to convene this important meeting. I commend the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to continue the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and religions at all levels.

**Mr. President,**

Dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions has been one of the most prominent issues in the recommendations of the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit in which we have unanimously agreed that furthering the relations among nations is the only means to avoid misunderstandings and the appropriate way to fight extremism, for such an approach ensures the establishment of a just and lasting peace for mankind. Dialogue has become a central policy pillar at the national, regional and international levels for achieving peace and sustainable development. The values of tolerance and respect for various religions and cultures have thus become the foundation of the State of Qatar policy that respects and is guided by the tolerant Islamic Sharia. The State of Qatar views interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a strategic choice that urgently requires the creation of an open space that ensures coexistence, peace and stability among peoples. As you may already know, we have been keen since 2003 on hosting the Doha Conference on Interreligious Dialogue on an annual basis as a concrete expression of the importance of such choice. On the ground, we gave permission for the construction of places of worship for the followers of other monotheistic religions residing in the State of Qatar as a concrete expression of the principle of respect for the freedom of creed and worship called for by the tolerant Islamic Sharia.

**Mr. President,**

All religions share common grounds and have joint pluralistic universal values. They all call for equality, harmony, tolerance and



acceptance of others. Throughout the ages, political and economic interests rather than religious and cultural differences have been the root causes of confrontations among nations. While those differences do exist in today's world, they are not a cause for confrontation, but on the contrary, they must provide a motive to expand our understanding and continue our dialogue, as stated in the Holy Quran "and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other ..." Despite the conflicts that took place at times among the followers of the three monotheistic religions throughout history, the continuation of dialogue and coexistence among them have been widely pursued, a fact that stresses the importance of communication and narrowing of differences

**Mr. President,**

It is very regrettable to see tendencies fuel interreligious and intercultural intolerance and escalate the confrontation among them, for such tendencies undermine the process of awakening based on the understanding among peoples. Therefore, we cannot but recognize that we do need to make progress in moving from the stage of debate to the stage of concrete action. In this context, we in the State of Qatar fully agree with the recommendations of the Madrid Conference, most notably the urgent need to agree on setting global rules for dialogue among the followers of different religions and cultures, with a view to agreeing once and for all on the human values and moral principles that represent the common denominator among the followers of various religions and human cultures, and hammering out a global document that helps disseminate and promote a culture of respect for religions and religious symbols and places of worship. Such result-oriented approach is the best way to ensure the preservation of the human heritage and the promotion and protection of common values against the threats of isolationism and intolerance. In this regard, efforts should be made to launch that stage not only among governments, but also to involve all the mind-shaping actors in society in the religious, social, economic, academic and artistic fields, and even at the family level, that constitutes the bedrock and nuclear unit of society.

The lofty objective we are striving to achieve by making all those efforts is to preserve the human dignity, promote the common development of human society and build a harmonious peaceful world for future generations.

**I thank you Mr. President.**