



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20 June 2007

Excellency,

It gives me pleasure, once again, to update you on the work program of the General Assembly and to outline the outstanding issues that we need to address in the last few months of the 61st session. I would also like to take this opportunity to brief you on my official visits.

Following our first thematic debate on **“Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward”** held in **November 2006**, I Co-Chaired with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, His Excellency Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, a follow-up meeting entitled **“Financing Development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”** on 17 and 18 June 2007, in Doha, Qatar. Allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the State of Qatar for their initiative to host this important meeting. I would also like to thank all delegations that participated in this event alongside UN agencies, civil society and the private sector.

The second informal thematic debate on the promotion of **“Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women”** took place on 7 and 8 March 2007; and the third on **“Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace: Obstacles and Opportunities”** was held on 10 and 11 May 2007. I once again wish to thank all Member States for their support and active participation at these important events. I have communicated summaries of these respective meetings to you. The summaries, as well as additional important information regarding the thematic debates, are posted on the website of the President of the General Assembly.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

We are currently preparing for the fourth thematic debate of the 61st session on “**Climate Change as a global challenge**”, which will take place on Tuesday 31 July and Wednesday 1 August 2007. This debate will highlight the pivotal role the United Nations can play in addressing climate change. Member States will have the opportunity interact with experts on key issues related to climate change; and to exchange views and experiences on their own national strategies and international commitments to address this issue of global concern. In particular, the debate will help to build momentum in preparation for the Secretary-General’s High-level event in September.

We have also begun preparations for three important high-level meetings scheduled to take place in the 62nd session: the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, which will be held on 4 and 5 October 2007, including the interactive hearing with civil society on 4 October; the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, which will be held on 22 and 23 October 2007; and, the Commemorative High-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the special session on children, scheduled for December 2007.

On Revitalization of the General Assembly, the two Co-Chairs, Their Excellencies Ambassador Bodini, Permanent Representative of San Marino and Ambassador Badji, Permanent Representative of Senegal, are continuing consultations with Member States on the most preferred format for taking this issue forward. I trust Member States will continue to work with them in a constructive and pragmatic manner in this collective endeavour to strengthen the role and authority of the General Assembly.

I am also pleased to inform you of the good working relations I have developed over the past few months with Presidents of the Security Council. In this context, at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Slovakia, I delivered a statement at the debate organized by the Security Council on 20 February 2007 on the “Role of the Security Council in supporting reform of the security sector reform”. I have also accepted the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Belgium to address the Council, on 25 June, on “Maintenance of international peace and security: natural resources and conflict”.

On the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, I have appointed His Excellency Ambassador Davide, Jr., the Permanent Representative of the Philippines, to undertake further consultations on the Declaration on my behalf. I encourage Member States to participate in these consultations and expect Ambassador Davide, Jr. to report back to me on the outcome of his consultations by mid-July 2007.

On System-wide Coherence, we have begun the intergovernmental process of considering the report of the Secretary-General. I appreciate the effort of the Co-Chairs, Their Excellencies Ambassador Hackett, the Permanent Representative of Barbados and Ambassador Hoscheit, the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, to steer the consultations on this important matter. I expect to receive their first progress report at the end of June. I call on Member States to engage in these consultations in a constructive and flexible manner.

On Security Council Reform, we held informal consultations on 3 and 4 May 2007, to discuss the Facilitators' Report on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters related to the Security Council. These consultations were constructive and built further momentum on this reform issue.

To carry this process forward on the basis of the report of the five facilitators, I have asked Their Excellencies Ambassador Muñoz, the Permanent Representative of Chile, and Ambassador Wenaweser, the Permanent Representative of Lichtenstein, to consult with all Member States, and I invite you all to continue engaging in this process so that they can report back to me by the end of June on the outcome of their consultations.

On Mandate Review, we have extended this exercise until the end of the 61st Session. I trust that the Co-Chairs, Their Excellencies Ambassador Mbuende, the Permanent Representative of Namibia and Ambassador Cooney, the Permanent Representative of Ireland, will continue the consultations on this essential aspect of the reform process with a view to updating the work program of the Organization.

On Counter-terrorism, I am encouraged that the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is underway. I wish to commend Member States and the Secretariat for their commitment to this objective and look forward to furthering progress on the implementation of the Strategy by all. In the same vein, I call on Member States to continue negotiations, in order to finalize the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which is long overdue.

In April 2007, the General Assembly adopted a new system for the **Administration of Justice**. This resolution addressed the many major concerns conveyed to me by the Staff of the United Nations. Yet, there is still a long way to go, to develop a new independent, transparent, professional and adequately resourced System for the 55,000 staff of the UN Secretariat, Funds and Programmes.

On 24 May 2007, the General Assembly elected the President of the 62nd session, His Excellency Dr. Srgjan Kerim of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I trust that during this transition period, Member States will work closely with Dr. Kerim in order to assist him as he prepares to assume his important responsibilities in September. I wish to take this opportunity to remind Member States of the need to finalize the consultations for the election of the Vice-Presidents for the Bureau of the 62nd session.

In the context of the relationship between the General Assembly and global constituencies, I am also pleased to inform you that, on 22 June, my office will convene a briefing for NGOs and civil society, featuring remarks by the Permanent Representatives who are conducting consultations on the various tracks of work of the General Assembly.

As for my official duty travels, in late February and early March I visited both Italy and Germany. In Italy I met with the Pope, the President of the Italian Republic, the Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister as well as with a number of senior UN officials; and, addressed the Italian Senate. I also paid a visit to the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi. In Germany I met with the Foreign Minister and Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development.

In the latter half of March, I visited Morocco and Kuwait and held high level meetings with Government officials including the Emir of Kuwait and heads of both Governments. I then travelled to Saudi Arabia where I addressed the Arab Summit on the work of the General Assembly.

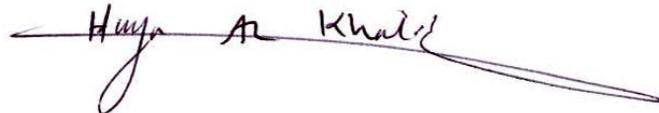
Last Month, I was invited to Vienna by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria to participate in an international conference on 'Women Leaders: Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East', on 31 May 2007. The conference was co-chaired by the Secretary of State of the United States of America. The meeting was attended by ministers and senior government officials from all over the world. I also visited the UN Headquarters in Vienna as well as UN agencies based there and held bilateral meetings with government officials in Austria.

In early June 2007, I also visited Spain at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I held bilateral talks with government officials; and delivered a statement before the Spanish Senate entitled "Towards a Culture of Gender Equality in the 21st Century".

At the conclusion of the follow-up meeting in Qatar on **Financing Development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals**, I began an official visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese Government. During this trip, I will address the Tenth International Meeting of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (IAESCSI), meet with high-level government officials, as well as UNDP officials and women's NGOs representatives.

In closing, I commend you and your delegation for your support throughout this session of the General Assembly and hope that we can continue working closely together in the spirit of transparency, understanding, mutual trust and collective responsibility to make further progress on the outstanding issues before us.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Haya Rashed Al Khalifa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Haya Rashed Al Khalifa