16 November 2006

Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
before the International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here today.

We have come to the end of this closing event for the first United Nations Decade on Poverty.

Over the past ten years, we have come a long way in our joint efforts to reduce poverty. But we all know that much more needs to be done.

During this Forum, we have listened to many distinguished experts, who have identified the challenges we need to address, and the strategies we need to adopt, in order to keep our promises and achieve our goal of eradicating poverty by 2015.

There have also been many helpful comments and concrete ideas from the floor to guide us in our joint task to fight poverty.

During the 61st Session of the General Assembly, it is my goal to work to make further progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

That is why; I have called for an informal thematic debate at the United Nations on the 27th of November, involving donors, partner countries, the private sector and civil society. The detailed discussions and ideas that you have generated during the Forum will provide very helpful input into this debate.

I would like to thank the organizers of this Forum for putting together such an interesting programme.

And also, to thank all of you - the Departments, Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies of the United Nations, civil society, academics and donors - that have worked together during the Forum in true partnership, demonstrating your willingness to overcome poverty.

We all bring different expertise and perspectives from our own fields. If cultivated effectively, we can all work together towards achieving our common goal of reducing poverty.

I would now like to invite Assistant-Secretary-General Jomo Kwame Sundaram to briefly summarise the main conclusions of these past two days.