

14 February 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at “The NGO Committee for Social Development” 45th Session of the
Commission for Social Development**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

I am pleased to join you today at the 45th Session of the Commission for Social Development.

The social development agenda has been a fruitful partnership between Member States, the United Nations system, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Indeed, it is in part thanks to your dedication to poverty eradication, that the voices of the poor have been amplified at the United Nations.

Poverty eradication is a shared goal which can only be achieved if we all contribute our expertise. It is also vital while working towards this goal, that we have an informed understanding, and develop solutions that respond to the needs and aspirations of the poor.

It is therefore particularly relevant, that this session highlights the importance of employment and decent work opportunities for all.

Our experience suggests that confidence and dignity, as well as economic progress, can be realized when marginalized communities have the opportunity to actively contribute to society through work.

Youth employment is also essential. Neglecting to empower young people with the respect earned through decent work, will not only undermine the youth of today, but also future generations.

We must remember that everyone - indigenous peoples, the ageing, persons with disabilities, migrants, and women - are potential sources of knowledge, innovation, and skills that stand to benefit society as a whole.

Unemployment and the lack of decent work can lower self-esteem. We must make it our common responsibility to counter these effects, and create the conditions in which all individuals are able to recognize and develop their strengths and talents.

Let us remember that international progress is achievable, as demonstrated by the recent adoption, by the General Assembly, of the Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

And, as we approach the mid-point of the Millennium Development Goals target date of 2015, we must reflect on our successes, but also on those areas in which we can do better.

On 27 November 2006, I convened the first thematic debate of the General Assembly on development, engaging Member States, the UN system, civil society and the private sector in an interactive discussion. There shall be two further debates on gender equality and the empowerment of women on March 6th and 7th, and on the dialogue among civilizations on May 10th and 11th.

I look forward to your participation at these events and wish to thank you for your continued engagement and collaboration with the United Nations.

Thank you very much.