

5 July 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Global Compact Leaders Summit**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here at the Global Compact Leaders Summit. I am delighted to see so many business and civil society representatives from different sectors and backgrounds.

Your presence here, today, confirms your willingness to align your own strategies and operations with universal principles. And this is not always easy.

For the General Assembly, your role as partners is significant in promoting many of our areas of work such as human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption, which are the areas addressed in the UN Global Compact.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the UN to gain greater relevance in today's world, we need to learn better how to work with you. The United Nations on its own cannot confront the many complex and fast-changing challenges before us. Effective international cooperation among Governments is certainly more important than ever before. But this is not enough. We need to strengthen partnerships with business and civil society in order to better utilize their: knowledge, expertise, access and reach.

The Global Compact and this Summit offer us a platform for doing so. We understand that markets and business activities go beyond national boundaries. We also know that commerce and trade help reinforce multilateral cooperation. This reaffirms that the engagement of business and civil society organizations is complementary to the work of Governments.

When you embrace UN goals, you are helping to lay the foundation for closer cooperation between the North and South, East and West.

In order to enable sustainable partnerships, we must, firstly, ensure that local actors from Government, business and civil society are engaged in the formation and implementation of these partnerships. We must, secondly, ensure that these partnerships are managed transparently. This means that the roles and responsibilities of each actor are clearly set out, not only to foster accountability but also to agree on a realistic and actionable work agenda.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the 61st Session, the General Assembly convened two successful high-level meetings which effectively engaged stakeholders from governments, the private sector and civil society. In November 2006, we held a debate on “Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward”. The objective of the debate was to give impetus to the implementation of MDGs, by providing a forum to examine practical measures and strategies that would lead to tangible results.

In June 2007, I Co-Chaired a follow-up meeting to the debate in Doha, Qatar, entitled “Financing Development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of delivering the commitments on aid, and emphasized that it is still within our grasp to achieve the MDGs if the right policies are put in place and supported by sufficient resources.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations needs to continue on its path of reform, putting all the necessary skills, policies, tools and mechanisms in place to foster sustainable partnerships. It is my hope and expectation that you will use this meeting to explore how progress can be made on implementation of all the Global Compact’s principles, giving new support for UN goals, and inspiring many tangible actions.

I trust you will have a productive meeting, and, I look forward to hearing the Summit’s outcomes, in order to convey to all Member States.

Thank you.