

9 July 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the United Nations Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed
Countries “Making Globalization Work for LDCs”**

Your Excellency Abdullah Gul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to join you today at this Ministerial Conference on how to “Make Globalization Work for Least Developed Countries.”

I would like to thank the Government of Turkey for hosting such a timely meeting. I would also like to pay tribute to the United Nations Development Programme, and Administrator Kemal Dervis, as well as the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for their contribution in the preparation of this conference.

Globalization is not only a phenomenon that shaped the world in the last century, it is part of the day-to-day life of each and every one of us. While there are many who question whether globalization has been good or bad, we all agree that the world today will continue to be shaped by the many aspects of this phenomenon.

One thing is clear; it provides vast opportunities for development and advancement for all societies. But, not all of us are provided with such opportunities. The paradox is evident when some in the world are waiting in line to buy new consumer technologies, at a cost almost equal to the annual per capita income of hundreds of millions of people.

This sad fact poses serious questions, especially when we are at the midpoint of the target date of achieving the MDGs. Why are we failing? And what should we do?

Mahatma Gandhi once said that in poor places, people see God in a piece of bread. This still holds true after many decades.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

LDCs have found themselves in an unfortunate situation. They have benefited least from globalization, and have been affected most by its negative impact.

Although some progress has been made on education and gender targets during this ‘decade of action’, the number of people living in poverty in LDCs is expected to increase to almost 500 million in 2010, from 334 million in 2000.

LDCs are unlikely to achieve international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Brussels Programme, at the target dates. What we are in urgent need of, is greater collaboration, not just among governments, but also civil society and the private sector.

This collaboration should build upon good governance at the local, national and international levels.

Donor Countries must live up to their aid, trade and debt commitments. We should ensure the enhancement of the quality and quantity of assistance.

Our ability to deliver on our promises – partner and donor countries alike– is a reflection of our commitment to effective multilateralism, and building greater trust among the global community. But we have to go beyond this. South-South cooperation is increasing and should continue to increase. New donors are also emerging from the South. This is a very positive trend.

Realizing the full potential of South-South cooperation is an important aspect for achieving the development goals. Stronger developing economies have an obligation to champion the needs of the most vulnerable countries; namely: the Least Developed Countries.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I can assure you that the concerns and interests of LDCs have been a central part of the General Assembly’s program of work during the 61st session.

In September 2006, the General Assembly held a High Level Meeting on the midterm review of the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs. This meeting reaffirmed our political determination to meet commitments set out in the 2001 Brussels Programme, by building stronger partnerships between LDCs, donor countries, civil society, and the private sector.

Then in November 2006, we held a high level debate on “Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward”. It was a platform to announce a 10 billion dollar fund by the Islamic Development Bank for the eradication of poverty.

And just recently, in June 2007, I Co-Chaired a follow-up meeting 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,

Globalization fundamentally changed the divide between developed and developing, donor and recipient countries. More importantly, globalization made us profoundly aware of the suffering of millions who live in poverty, disease and neglect. It made us realize that the suffering of people belongs to the entire world. Development should not remain merely a moral obligation, but rather a strategic one.

The United Nations is at the heart of all development activities, and should remain so. Dag Hammarskjöld once said, and I quote:

“The United Nations was created not to lead mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”.

Although this was said when the threat to peace and security was inter-state conflicts, it remains true today. Yet the threat has changed. It is now, poverty, hunger, famine, disease, environmental degradation including global warming, desertification and draught.

I am optimistic that this meeting can set out the way forward, and help find lasting solutions to assist LDCs.

I thank you for your attention and wish you every success in your deliberations.