

3 August 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Fourth Thematic Debate of the 61st Session of the General
Assembly “Climate Change as a Global Challenge”**

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of a very successful thematic debate on ‘climate change as a global challenge’.

This outcome underlines the important contribution that the General Assembly can make to the debate. But also, the importance which you the Member States, and the broader international community place on this issue.

I would like to thank again, the expert panelists for the quality of their presentations.

I would also like to thank all member states for their strong interest, in particular, those delegations that came from capital.

I was impressed to hear that there is already a lot of activity at the national level to deal with the consequences of climate change.

We now have the momentum. What we do with this is more important.

We need to ensure that we agree an equitable, fair and ambitious global deal to match the scale of the challenges ahead.

The United Nations Climate Change Convention is the appropriate forum to take this forward. Other initiatives should complement and reinforce these ongoing negotiations.

Excellencies,

The science tells us that industrialized countries are most responsible for the problem.

But the consequences of climate change will be felt most by the poorest - who are least responsible for it.

Climate change is at the same time, an issue of economic development, as much as one of global justice and equality.

Without action, climate change will magnify existing inequalities between men and women – as well as developed and least developed.

Developed countries must do more by setting more ambitious targets.

Developing countries face difficult challenges.

Managing them effectively requires institutional and human capacity building.

Developing countries will be able to do more with support from the international community, including the private sector and civil society.

In particular, we need to take urgent action to strengthen the capacity of Least Developed Countries and Small Island States, to address adaptation and mitigation.

These are the basic principles behind the notion of common, but differentiated responsibilities.

But we must also remember that as the majority of the world's poor, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Excellencies,

The experts made it clear that responsible action now will reduce the risks and costs.

They also agreed that strong economic growth and development are compatible with climate responsibility. Many member states supported this position.

However, long-term mitigation and adaptation will require significant financial resources and market incentives.

In this regard, many supported the principle of carbon caps and trading as an effective mechanism to deliver resource and technology transfers.

We also heard that capital markets have an important role to play. But, that more of this capital needs to be invested in clean energy in developing countries.

Many of you have stressed the need to integrate our discussions on this important matter with our determined commitment to achieve the MDGs.

Taking this holistic approach to the challenges does not however mean that resources allocated for achieving the MDGs are diverted to climate change priorities.

Progress on the broad development agenda - economic growth, social justice and human dignity - must go hand-in-hand with our efforts to combat climate change.

It will therefore be vital, that our discussions on financing for development, integrate the urgent concerns to adapt to the effects of climate change, in support of our sustainable development goals.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We now have all of the issues more clearly in our mind. What we need next is a clear political vision for the future.

I trust that you will carry the momentum achieved here back to your capitals and to your leaders. To achieve results we will need strong political direction from our leaders.

The opportunity is before us at the Secretary-General's High-level Event on September 24th.

With strong political leadership, when we meet in Bali, in December, clear and achievable solution to combat climate change will be within our grasp.

Decisive action is necessary to safeguard our future.

A summary of the debate will be circulated to you shortly.

Thank you.