

**Presentation by H.E Ghazi JOMAA**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to**  
**the UN on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the**  
**International Human Solidarity Day**

We are just a few days away from December 20, and I would like to thank you for organizing this Press Conference to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Human Solidarity Day.

Solidarity is at the core of the concept of brotherhood of all humankind. Ibn Khaldoun used the term '*Asabiyyah*' in its 'Muqaddimah' to refer to social solidarity with an emphasis on unity, group consciousness, and social cohesion. It's described as the fundamental bond of human society and the basic motive force of history.

In Tunisia, Solidarity is seen as a value rooted in the society and has been raised to the rank of the constitution, to become one of the fundamental pillars of social policy in Tunisia.

In a world increasingly pushed towards globalization and market economics, putting the world solidarity into action is crucial in the fight against poverty .

Yet, today we see solidarity within and between nations still far away from what it's needed. While there's a common agreement that solidarity is the central element in implementation of the development agenda, the major task of putting our words into action still largely lies ahead of us. We continue to be faced with the challenges of extreme poverty , disease and natural disasters continue to plague lives of millions.

By proclaiming, in its Resolution 60/290, the “International Day of Human Solidarity”, based on a Tunisian initiative, the General assembly has conferred more visibility to the concept of Solidarity.

The value of Solidarity has thus acquired a multidimensional and operational meaning including the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Solidarity is a concept that should be emphasized locally in order to be rightly implemented at the international level. Intergenerational Solidarity enables knowledge sharing and interactions across ages, including youth, those at the middle and the elderly. By promoting “dialogue and mutual understanding” on the reality of poverty across the generations, we can be both more thorough and more innovative in our efforts to combat it.

The World Summit for Social Development emphasized that poverty eradication is not possible without simultaneously working for social inclusion, which requires solidarity with

often excluded groups, such as the disabled; the elderly and youth. Inter-generational solidarity is then of great importance. Increased intergenerational dialogue would serve as a means to finding solutions to promote development. Thus, older generations are encouraged to recognise that the youth perspective is relevant today, in order to create a better future, and to respect youth as equal thinkers. Youth are experiencing the world deeply through their wide reaching social networks, and global media exposure, and would thus be more inclined to see themselves as global citizens. Their perspective is thus invaluable in seeking to solve global problems. Similarly, youth are encouraged to draw on the knowledge and experiences of older generations, and extrapolate those elements relevant and applicable in the current context. Solidarity, dialogue and mutual understanding across generations are key elements for forging stability, development and peace.

Based on Tunisia conviction of the role that “Solidarity, dialogue and mutual understanding across generations and between nations” can play in forging stability, development and peace, President of the Republic launched successful national humanist initiatives that prompted numerous other International humanist initiatives aiming to spread values of peace, justice and solidarity among peoples and foster bridges of dialogue and co-operation to serve mankind.

The unanimous adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of President initiative to proclaim 2010 International

Youth Year is added to the rich record of noble humanist initiatives of Tunisia.

As far as solidarity is concerned, its value has helped by its dynamism and via a package of programmes and mechanisms to enhance social links and strengthen cohesion and harmony between the various categories that make up Tunisian society.

The 26-26 National solidarity Fund, launched on 8 December 1992, was part of Tunisia development approach based on the correlation between economic development and social progress. The 26-26 fund was set up as a mechanism for action in vulnerable, cut off areas to provide them with the basic amenities of life and all the attributes of development, improve the residents living conditions and encouraging the creation of productive activities and income sources.

The amount of contributions collected by the Fund is growing continuously. It rose from 5.112 millions dinars on 8 December 1994 to 40.794 million dinars in 2009. The number of donors has increased from 182.000 in 1994 to 5.866.000 in 2009. This clearly indicates the spread of the culture of solidarity among citizens and their deep perception of the positive results achieved. Generally speaking, the Fund's actions have helped improve important social and economical indicators such as lowering the poverty rate to about 3.8%, reducing the rural exodus, improving the rate of vaccine cover for children which was over 97% in 2009, increasing the rate of drinking water supply to rural areas from 60.6% in 1994 to 95% in 2009, improving the electrification rate in these areas from 66.3% in 1994 to 98.2% in 2009, and reducing the rate of substandard housing to under 0.3% in 2010.

The National Solidarity Fund has been strengthened by new mechanisms of solidarities such as the Tunisian solidarity bank which task is to grant small loans to the promoters of small projects, a system of micro credits granted by associations, the 21-21 national employment Fund, that started in 1999 and whose aim is to promote the training and employment of young people and other categories of Job seekers and the Charitable Drugs Bank, a new mechanism launched in 2008 to help provide medicines.

Many countries have shown an interest in the success of the national solidarity fund . Belgium, Luxemburg, Italy and China and Czech Republic have backed it.

UNDP and UNFPA have taken the Tunisian experience as a model of comprehensive social development for various developing countries. In this context, Mali has set up a Solidarity fund and a Malian Solidarity Bank. Senegal, Burkina Faso, Congo-Kinshasa and Djibouti also set up solidarity Funds inspired by 26-26 Fund. Other countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and Guinea envisage taking their inspiration from the Tunisian experience.

The International Community, on its part, adopted a similar approach when it adopted by its resolution 57/265 of 20<sup>th</sup> December 2002 President of the Republic initiative to establish the World Solidarity Fund. And, although this Fund still lacks resources to become operational, its existence is testimony to the need for effective innovative financial mechanisms complementing traditional ones in order to eradicate the scourge of poverty within the date limits set in Millennium Declaration.

Our country has allocated part of donations made to the 26-26 Fund to contribute directly to helping the areas affected by epidemics and natural disasters in many parts of the world.

We hope that the International Human solidarity Day, which the General Assembly decided to be on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December each year will create the necessary impetus for the International Community to give a new appreciation of the value of human Solidarity.

Thank you