

24 September 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Women Leaders Intercultural Forum**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the co-chairs for inviting me to the Women Leaders Intercultural Forum. This event comes at a time when scholars and policy makers, are closely examining the notions of peace and security in particular its definitions and implications.

In his Letter to Future Generations, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said, "Peace means much more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."

This perspective is what brings this forum to the fore; where women from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds can come together to reinforce a much needed understanding of the interdependency between state and human security.

I believe it is essential to better understand our differences and benefit from each other's experiences while developing our method of interpretation; as there is no absolute reality. We are looking for a world of peace and justice where no one is more equal than the other. Thus, sharing the same aspiration of Emile Zola in the conclusion of his statement in defense of the famous Dreyfus case, "I have only one passion that of light, in the name of the humanity who has deeply suffered and who has the right to happiness".

It is unfortunate that I am unable to participate in this stimulating and fruitful discussion over the next two days. However, I look forward to the outcome of this forum and to working closely with you in the near future.

Thank you and Good luck.