

29 November 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Meeting on our common Humanity in the Information Age:
Principles and Values for Development**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you here today and would like to thank Mr. Sarbuland Khan for organizing this important event.

In this era of globalization, changes are taking place at a tremendous speed. Despite growing global interdependence, sharp social and economic disparities persist. Many poorer nations are becoming increasingly more vulnerable.

The rise of terrorism and the threat of global pandemics demonstrate that the new global challenges know no borders. Environmental degradation, global warming and climate change pose threats to agricultural productivity and food security creating greater uncertainty for the poorest and most vulnerable.

In 2005 World leaders reiterated their commitment to tackling these challenges and promoting freedom, human rights, and a more secure world. They also, reiterated their commitment to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

As the Secretary-General recently reminded us, achieving the MDGs by 2015 is the greatest gift we could give to humanity.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We now have the necessary tools to realize our shared goals. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have an important role to play. They can reach across borders, generations and populations; raise awareness and have practical benefits on the ground; provide a voice for marginalized groups and create global human networks for development. For example, ICT has the potential to link poor rural farmers to international markets or local environmental activists to a global community of advocates.

The emphasis must be on partnership because the development goals of Member States will only be achieved if the private sector, civil society and governments are fully engaged.

Our message is simple: if we remain committed we can overcome the challenges we face and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

In a global world multilateralism is indispensable. That is why we need a strong United Nations at the heart of our efforts. The UN alone possesses the political legitimacy and authority to address global challenges. But these issues cannot be dealt with by the UN alone; all sectors of society have a crucial role to play.

I remain convinced that the development goals of Member States will only be achieved if the private sector, civil society and governments are fully engaged. The UN must therefore continue to play a critical role in fostering global and local partnerships.

That is why on Monday 27th of November, the General Assembly held an informal debate on development, including the private sector and civil society, to ensure a broad discussion. It was a very fruitful meeting that examined how to forge a stronger partnership between civil society and the UN.

We heard that it was time for action on the ground, time for new partnerships, and time to deliver on our commitments and promises. But also, that delivering our development goals will help to make the world a safer, more stable and prosperous place for all.

There will be a follow up to this debate in the New Year and two further thematic debates on gender issues and dialogue among civilizations.

I look forward to your full participation at these events.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us send a strong, unified message to the world: that the global community is one family, with common values and ideals. Today we can reaffirm the Millennium Declaration's call for "broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity".

Thank you.