

29 May 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the 15th Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South
Cooperation**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Ambassador Al-Nasser for inviting me to speak at the Fifteenth Session of the High-level Committee.

Excellencies,

In this era of globalization the importance of greater cooperation between the countries of the developing world cannot be underestimated.

Harnessing the full potential of South-South cooperation is vital to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The current global economic outlook is being driven by buoyant growth in emerging market economies. This is changing the economic balance of power and creating new opportunities for the South.

To be fully appreciated these trends should be understood from a long term perspective.

In the sixteenth century, China and India were the world's largest economies. By 1820 this had firmly shifted to Western Europe and North America. By the end of the Second World War this shift had become much more pronounced.

In the last two decades, the integration of China and India, and the tiger economies of East Asia into the global economy has had a major impact on global growth, trade and production.

By 2017, China and India will have nearly doubled their share of world income.

Globally developing countries now account for over 40 per cent of GDP – on a purchasing power parity basis; over 30 per cent of manufacturing exports; and, over one third of Foreign Direct Investment.

Long-term world GDP growth is rising annually by around 4 per cent, but most rapidly in developing countries. Global trade has grown even more rapidly at around 7 per cent annually.

Globalization brings opportunities, and has also brought challenges.

Excellencies,

Globalisation has catalysed new economic relations, and South-South cooperation is increasing and should continue to increase.

New donors are also emerging from the South. This is a very positive trend and over time should increase the quantity and quality of development assistance.

But while globalization is having a significant positive impact on many countries, some regions, in particular Africa, are still to be integrated fully into the world economy.

As new economic realities unfold - new patterns of trade, investment, technological collaboration, and development assistance are emerging in the South.

Just as donors must fulfill their commitments, the stronger developing economies have an obligation to champion the needs of the most vulnerable developing countries; the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

In future, maybe the foreign exchange reserves that have accumulated in many developing countries could be used to stimulate development in other countries of the South.

Excellencies,

In the face of all these changes however, we must remember, that for the benefits to be sustained they must be shared – by all.

The new drivers of change have clearly produced tangible development results and contributed to global growth.

Developing countries will need to continue to address the challenges ahead in order to take full advantage of the opportunities.

The international development architecture as a whole also needs to change to respond to the new dynamism of the South. There is clearly an urgent need for reform – to increase the voice and equitable representation of the South.

Increasing the strength of regional organization will also give the South a stronger voice and greater influence over policy.

For the United Nations to make its full contribution there is an urgent need to enhance system-wide coordination and coherence to more effectively support the agenda and priorities for South-South development cooperation.

The United Nation's thematic support for South-South cooperation is dispersed among various organizations and specialized agencies. Drawing more effectively on the Resident Coordinator system is one way to facilitate greater support between developing countries.

In addition, at the 2005 Doha South Summit, Heads of State and Government asked the Secretary-General to take urgent action to strengthen the Special Unit as the focal point for South-South Cooperation within the UN system.

Excellencies,

Achieving the Millennium development Goals and wider development objectives, dealing with the sharp social and economic inequalities that persist, is central to our collective global economic stability and prosperity.

The High-Level Committee on South-South cooperation can make a vital contribution to this objective.

The first UN Conference on South-South cooperation was some 29 years ago in Argentina. It is clear the world has since undergone dramatic changes. Next year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

Given the changes in the pattern of global development maybe now is an opportune time to seriously consider holding another United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

Thank you very much.