

10 September 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Exhibition “Bahrain: Making Policy a Reality
Meeting the Millennium Development Goals”**

Secretary-General
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank H.E Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations and all of you here today for joining us at the launch of the Exhibition entitled “Bahrain: Making policy a reality, meeting the Millennium Challenges”. It is an honour to inaugurate the exhibition organized on the occasion of the awarding of the 2006 Scroll of Honour in the field of urban development and housing to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The award is granted by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in appreciation of efforts and achievements in the fields of housing and urban development, the building of popular housing, poverty reduction and ongoing efforts to raise standards of living.

The award was conferred on His Highness the Prime Minister by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, on the 2nd of July 2007 at an international ceremony held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It is a recognition of His Highness’s tireless efforts to develop and modernize Bahrain, and a reflection of the collaboration existing between the Government and the people under the reign of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the King of The Kingdom of Bahrain and his reform plan aimed at building a modern State that will hold an important place in its region and in the world.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Housing, development and raising the standard of living for all citizens are fundamental issues for the Bahraini Government headed by His Highness the Prime Minister. This focus reveals the Kingdom’s commitment to the millennium development goals, socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Moreover, it confirms the close cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and UN-Habitat in an effort to realize commitments that would benefit not only Bahrain, but the whole region. It was in this spirit of cooperation that the Programme's Arab regional conference was held in Manama in 2000 in preparation for the 2001 Review Conference, Istanbul +5.

As well as the announcement by His Highness on the 2nd of July 2007 in Geneva upon receiving the Scroll of honour, of an annual reward for best research on Human Habitat Issues. The award

is sponsored by His Highness and designed to encourage research into applicable methods for poverty reduction.

Upon receiving the award His Highness the Prime Minister stated that he strove to strengthen the economy, because a feeble economy will not enable a society to support the most deprived and vulnerable among them. The efforts of the Bahraini Government under his leadership have also been responding to concerns raised in Human Development Reports, namely that the measure of development does not depend merely on economic growth and national income levels, but also on the proper channelling and utilization of resources.

Within this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain is exerting considerable effort to encourage human development and capacity building at all levels. Its leadership realizes that there exists an inverse relationship between poverty and education and that the latter acts as catalyst for international competitiveness. Hence, from the outset His Highness the Prime Minister was aware of the need to develop the Kingdom's Human resources by providing education for all.

Bahrain was in the forefront of Arab States that concerned themselves with education for all citizens including girls, opening the first girls' school as far back as the 1920s. The positive effects of that act have not been confined to economics and higher growth rates, but have also affected the social and cultural fabric of the Kingdom.

Thus development is not a purely economic concept, but rather a combination of socio-economic and environmental elements within a political framework.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Development is a reflection of a society's wellbeing, and its pursuit, is the underlying goal and constant element in the initiatives pioneered by His Highness The Prime Minister. At the heart of this approach, as in the Bahraini model, the needs of the poor must be paramount. For poverty, just like unemployment and illiteracy, reinforces the foundation upon which tension, fanaticism and violence thrive.

Let us today, at the Bahraini Exhibition here at the United Nations headquarters, remember that: Development is indispensable for advancement, prosperity and safeguarding the future. It is a fundamental human right that we must all strive to protect and promote.

Thank you.