



Praise be to God

Peace and blessings be upon the
Prophet, His Kith and Kin

**Your Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairman of the Summit,
Your Majesties,
Your Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,**

I should like, first, to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to our very dear brother, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, for the good arrangements that have been made to ensure the success of this important Summit.

I also wish to commend the State of Qatar for the successful efforts it has made under His Highness's leadership, since taking over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 + China, last year.

The holding of this Summit, the second of its kind, attests to our shared will and strong ambition to forge ahead with confidence and optimism, and to build a better future, so that our peoples may enjoy a decent life as well as progress, security and stability.

With this objective in mind, when Morocco was chairing the Group in 2003, we endeavoured to ensure implementation of the Havana Plan, and we were happy to note all countries of the South were receptive to this practical approach, and eager to give shape and substance to this orientation, which was endorsed by the evaluation conference in Marrakech.

In spite of an environment marked by economic liberalism, technological progress and declining ideological divisions, developing nations are, regrettably, still grappling with real dangers and major challenges, as a result of increasing tension spots, greater poverty and marginalization, and the spread of deadly diseases.



To tackle this dramatic situation, I should like to reiterate our call for the countries of the North to honour their commitments, mainly by implementing the agreements reached at the Monterrey Conference, and by seeking to achieve the Millennium objectives, through the mobilization of financial resources, at national and international levels. Steps should also be taken to facilitate market access, reduce foreign debts, and even cancel those of the least developed countries, most of which are in Africa. When Morocco was chairing the Group of 77, it decided, as a token of support for African nations, to convene a special Ministerial Conference to look into possible solutions to their worsening problems.

I should like to take this opportunity to commend the positive step taken by the G8 to write off the debt owed to them by the least developed countries.

However, calling on countries of the North to help make globalization a humane, solidarity-based process, should not obscure the fact that we are called upon, first and foremost, to rely on our own assets, and to use every opportunity to strengthen our cooperation and achieve complementarity among our nations, making the most of our economic, human and intellectual resources. We must shoulder our responsibilities instead of depending on others and blaming them systematically for our ills and shortcomings.

I am sure you, too, are convinced the achievement of the above objective requires a series of inter-connected steps and measures, starting from the national, then the regional, continental and inter-continental levels, for the accomplishment of stronger South-South solidarity.

In this connection, Morocco has taken bold, innovative steps and introduced sweeping reforms which have enabled our country to make significant accomplishments in a bid to consolidate democracy, promote human rights, build a modern, open, productive economy, and strengthen the bonds of solidarity in the new information and communication society.



In a bid to enhance social cohesion in our country, we have recently launched the National Initiative for Human Development, as part of an innovative vision whereby man is regarded as the central element and ultimate goal of any development policy. The Initiative is based on practical, well-defined programs, within the framework of integrated public policies which advocate democratic participation, along with good governance, hard work and creativity. They are designed to reduce social and regional disparities, and to fight poverty, exclusion and marginalization, as well as to encourage job-generating activities.

As far as the regional level is concerned, we feel driven by a sense of partnership and solidarity and by a keen desire to strengthen the ever-growing ties of reinforced cooperation with a number of African sister nations. We are mobilizing our resources and offering our know-how to support their quest for sustainable development, through concrete, well-designed projects.

Similarly, we are determined to carry on resolutely and steadily with our joint effort to build the Arab Maghreb Union on sound and solid foundations, especially as it is a strategic option of absolute necessity. Not only is this a prerequisite for integration and complementarity among the Union's five Member States, but it also constitutes a strong, fundamental link with the other African regional groupings, which is likely to contribute significantly to the success of the ambitious NEPAD project. In addition, the Maghreb Union is a key player in stimulating Arab-Islamic joint action.

I should like to commend the Jakarta Conference initiative to renew the African-Asian partnership as well as cooperation with some influential Asian states, especially within the framework of the Sino-African Forum. By the same token, we welcome the fact that fruitful, constructive dialogue was initiated between the Arab world and South American countries at the Brazilia Summit, whose second session the Kingdom of Morocco will have the honour of hosting in 2008. We are looking forward to the same cooperation being fostered between African countries and South America.



Through these harmoniously linked components, this series of measures and a coherent, interactive approach, we will each help consolidate South-South cooperation and its promising prospects.

**Your Majesties,
Your Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,**

Aside from the expected resolutions calling for closer ties between our nations, this Summit is a good opportunity for us to send a strong signal, on behalf of our Group, to the world community, on the eve of the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, which will convene in a special Summit session this year to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Organization. This signal is a call for prudence and wisdom, since the widening economic and technological gap between the North and the South does not only have adverse effects within developing countries, but it also poses a threat to global security in a world which has been reduced to a global village. It is an appeal to world conscience about the problems of exclusion, poverty, seclusion as well as extremist and terrorist inclinations.

The message is also one of optimism, the hope that this important Summit will be an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to fair, balanced multilateralism, which is likely to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of present and future generations yearning for comprehensive, sustainable development and aspiring to national and universal citizenship, in a more secure and prosperous world, where greater solidarity, justice and humanness prevail.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.