



ADDRESS BY HIS HIGHNESS SHAIKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL-THANI, AMIR OF THE STATE OF QATAR, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT (Doha, 5 December 2004)

In the name of God The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful

Your Excellencies,
Honourable Audience,

It is a source of pleasure to host this important Forum, which aims at strengthening and consolidating cooperation between countries of the South and enriching it in the major fields of trade and investment.

This is not the first time that Qatar takes the initiative to host an activity that contributes to the promotion of the new world economic order. The most ambitious rounds of trade negotiations have been held in Doha. I am sure that the Doha High-level Forum on Trade and Investment will contribute to enhancing cooperation between countries of the South, which, in turn, will pave the way to the success of the Summit of the South, to be held in Doha in 2005.

The recent years have witnessed radical changes in the world in both the economic as well as the political spheres. Interdependence among nations and among the various economic sectors has greatly increased as a result of globalization. The complex nature of the issues confronting the international community at present and will confront it in the coming years needs a universal vision and perspective. This vision must respond to the challenges represented by both the security and developmental needs. Experience has up to now proved that security without development is not sustainable in the long term. The difference of levels of economic development is still negatively affecting international relations. The way to the solution can be found when the concept of collective security includes that of social solidarity. The partial solution practiced up to now on narrow and immediate bases does not address the needs of a stable world. That is why we look forward to the conclusions reached by the body on threats, challenges and change which was formed by the U.N. Secretary General, which may provide a clear vision as to the courses that could be adopted to integrate peace, security and development in a harmonious way.

Development is one of the decisive issues in this century. It is the means to eradicate poverty, improve the standard of living of the people, make optimum use of resources, restructure exchange and raise the standard of health services and education. The Millennium Declaration and the United Nations conferences and major summit meetings have shown the need to address the various developmental needs of the developing countries. The 2005 review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration will provide an opportunity for evaluating the results achieved up to now.

However, initial assessments show that the issue of realizing developmental objectives internationally agreed upon represents one of the major challenges facing the international community, particularly the advanced countries. The implementation of resolutions is also a decisive issue for the United Nations. Realizing great success in this respect will have great impact on the work and credibility of the United Nations and on its contribution to the realization of the targets stated in the Millennium Declaration.

In this context, the contribution of the Group of 77 and China, in its capacity as the organ that can coordinate and crystallize the positions of the developing countries in the economic field, assumes paramount importance. This Group is capable of contributing to drawing an integrated, coherent developmental agenda based on the developmental objectives of the Millennium Declaration, and taking into account the Doha Program of Action as well as the outcome of Monterrey and Johannesburg.

As Chair of the Group of 77 this year, Qatar will spare no effort in promoting developmental issues. We are confident that the coming Chair of the Group, Jamaica, will continue providing the appropriate leadership in 2005, a year that is expected to be eventful.

The Group of 77 can contribute to practical solutions in addition to its contribution to changing conceptions. In the light of its economic weight and negotiating capability in defense of its interests, it is a principal partner in negotiations and the making of major international decisions.

The growing role played by the developing countries has led to forming the new geography of international economic relations. Cooperation among countries of the South has become a basic aspect in the new trends in world economy.

Combined, the countries of the South represent today one third of world trade. They also constitute the most dynamic group in production and trade on the international sphere. The Inter-South trade is not a substitute that excludes the South-North trade; in fact it represents a major axis that integrates with the exchange among countries of the North and those of the South.

We hope that the Doha Forum, which is being convened for two consecutive days, will come up with innovative and practical contributions presented and discussed by people of thought and decision makers to draw the adequate ways and means for developing cooperation in investment and trade. We are all looking forward to the outcome of this Forum and the Summit of the South that will be held in Qatar next year, namely the agreements in the fields of investment and trade that leads to activating the integration and development potential of our countries, and contribute to providing prosperity and sustained development for our countries and those of the whole world.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your attendance. I also thank the organizations and authorities that have taken part in the preparation of this Forum, as well as all participants in its actions. I wish you all success in realizing its objectives, and a good stay in Doha.

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.