

Welcome Speech

His Excellency Sheikh Hammad ben Gassem ben Gabr Al Thani  
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The State of Qatar

Doha 7<sup>th</sup> forum for Democracy, Development and Free Trade

Doha 23 April 2007

In the name of God the Most Gracious the Most Merciful

His Highness Sheikh Hammad ben Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar

Her Highness Sheikha Mozza bent al-Mesnad

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like first to welcome you all here and to express our appreciation and honour to have His highness Emir of Qatar opening this forum. We would also like to express our pleasure and appreciation for your participation in the works of this forum.

Doha 7<sup>th</sup> forum for Democracy, Development and Free Trade is inaugurated today, as a highlight of our activities under the honourable auspices of His Highness the Emir of Qatar. The forum is attended by six hundred participants from 71 countries, including politicians, diplomats, academics, researchers, businessmen, media personnel in addition to the attendees from Qatar.

The forum started its activities in 2001 under a conference on Democracy and Free Trade. Regular conferences ensued with expansive and comprehensive discussions on the activation of Democracy, Free trade, economic rights, human rights, freedom of the press, the importance of the role of women, dialogue among religions and civilizations, education, the virtual relation between free trade and development. Since 2005, the conference developed into a forum for democracy, development and free trade. It reflected a host of diverse issues, methods and procedures of discussions. Online proceedings of the forum are published in many languages. It set an exemplary model for other fora in the whole world.

The agenda and programme of this forum is rife with issues that are directly linked to the main objectives held within. Discussing and holding dialogue around such issues will definitely promote our mutual efforts towards the betterness and progress of humanity as a whole, reform and development at the political, economic and development levels.

The State of Qatar heeds democracy as a core issue of concern. We had hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> international conference for the modern and restored democracies last October. It was attended by representatives of different governments, parliaments and civil society organizations. We shall also host another conference on democracy and reform in the Arab world next May.

It is our pleasure and on behalf all of you to invite His Highness Sheikh Hammad ben Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar to honour us by opening the works of this forum. You are kindly invited to open the forum your Highness.