

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Unofficial Translation

**The Address of His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar**

At

**Doha 8th Forum on
Democracy, Development and Free Trade**

**Doha
13 April 2008**

**In the Name of God,
The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful**

**Your Highnesses and Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Honourable Audience,**

I welcome you all to the Doha Forum on Democracy, Development and Free Trade in its 8th Session. Undoubtedly, this high level participation in this Forum is a sign of progress and an added value to the importance of the effective role it plays in the service of political, economic and social development programs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A glance at the outlines of Doha Forum this year shows that the road before us is still long in spite of what we have achieved. It also comes with a visible indication which makes me feel that the rate of moving forward is gaining double strength in all aspects and directions; and that the past seven years since the Forum was established confirm that we are firmly standing the right stand in our time which is challenging us in many of its issues, one of which is "Democracy"; it is our means to the concept of progress and without it we could not find for ourselves a place in our time. We need to prepare the suitable environment for innovation and modernization, which could only be realized by means of popular participation and respect of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second issue is development, the success of which depends on the level of stability. It is the optimum means to achieve decent living standards befitting human ambition and values. Stability is the frame that protects the economic development process and strengthens the links with its time. Therefore it is essential to provide a stable climate to support the development process, encourage investment, attract capital, provide new job opportunities and increase the flow of trade. Non-optimal exploitation of resources would undermine the foundation and pillars of development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Great nations realize by their historical sense that the rate of progress depends on what they have prepared and provided for their citizens who are their future, and who can change what should be changed in these nations, for the civilizational renewal to be possible.

The third issue that represents a basic part of the activities of this Forum is free trade, which enhances the value of comprehensive development. Hence we find ourselves before a triangular challenge: "a democracy" with its own means of strength, "a comprehensive development" backing it, and managing its affairs to be its support, and "a free trade" supporting it. I am confident that we are up to the level of this civilizational challenge with all its turbulences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You would agree with me that we live on a planet raging with unprecedented conflicts and contradictions which raises concern especially as the fate of our countries is that they are located in an area where fires are endless. In this climate which is heavily clouded with dense smoke, we should, in addressing the issues of democracy, development and free trade, consider them as issues of destiny.

Once again, I welcome you, and wish you and the Forum all success.

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