

Unofficial Translation

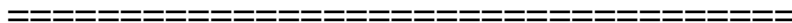
**The Address of His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar**

At

**The 5th Global Forum of The United Nations Alliance
of Civilizations**

**Vienna
27- 28 February 2013**

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



**Your Excellency President Dr. Heinz Fischer,
Excellencies and Highnesses,
Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency The United Nations High Representative for the
Alliance of Civilizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like at the outset to express my thanks and gratitude to His Excellency President Heinz Fischer for his kind invitation to me to participate in this important Forum and for the good organization and preparation to make it a success and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality.

I am pleased to express my deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Sampaio for his efforts to strengthen the role of the alliance.

I would also like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Nassir bin Abdulaziz Al-Nasr on taking over the post as the High Representative for this important alliance.

This Forum assumes a great importance at the present time in light of the circumstances witnessed by the world, where the severity of divisions have increased as a result of tensions, conflicts and instability in many parts of the world.

The world is replete with political and ideological divisions that require continuous efforts from the international community to eliminate the causes of disputes and the risks of conflict and to work hard and diligently to spread the values of the culture of understanding and coexistence, wherein dialogue, alliance of civilizations and development of sound relations between nations and peoples thrive.

There is no doubt that dispute and conflict are signs of power politics and domination throughout history, and will remain so, but the question faced by the international community is about the possibility of imposing dialogue and negotiation as a basis for conflict resolution, and the quest for the commonalities that constitute concerns and challenges for the whole humanity, as well as in coping with those who dress conflicts and disputes in the mantle of civilizations, as if we encounter a clash of civilizations.

Therefore we have to lay the foundation, through the political and popular will, for setting up a global human society based on commonality and respects the peculiarities and the nature of cultures and religions, and in which the international law prevails over everyone and where double standards and selectivity in dealing with other countries and peoples are non-existent.

Also it is a must to strive towards finding just solutions to global problems through genuine respect for the values, norms and principles instilled into the hearts and minds of humanity and which promote constructive cooperation, and achieve security, peace, prosperity and sustainable and equitable development for all nations and peoples.

If the ultimate goal for all of us is to achieve peace, security, stability and development, it is regrettable and unfortunate that violence prevails in many parts of the world. The acts of violence and gross violations of human rights occurring to the two peoples of Syria and Palestine constitute a disgrace to humanity, and the international community should bear its responsibilities by standing up to address these violations and to back the Syrian and Palestinian peoples to attain their legitimate rights.

Still there are major powers in the world that adopt an unfair attitude preventing the resolution of the last colonial issue in history, the Palestinian cause, which is exacerbating and constituting a constant source of tension in our region, and it also constitutes a source for people to believe that racism is still prevalent in the international community, and to make them skeptical about the fairness in implementing the international law. Recently we also have witnessed a supportive attitude by central countries of the genocide

committed by a regime that lacks legitimacy in Syria, while other countries only condemning that verbally.

Mr. President,

The previous period has witnessed an increase in the manifestations of misunderstanding about Islam and the Islamic civilization in addition to the Muslims' suffering from marginalization, discrimination and hatred in many parts of the globe.

These manifestations and others emphasize the urgent need for the Alliance of Civilizations initiative to build prospects of cooperation between various nations and peoples, and address tensions and conflicts and eliminate everything that might further widen the gap between the nations.

No doubt that the complexities of striking a balance between the freedom of expression and respect and protection of the rights, sanctities, beliefs and feelings of others, and the failure to criminalize racist practices, are all contributing to anchoring down the clash of civilizations' myth, helping root hate language in the collective consciousness, sparking the flame of conflict, and undermining efforts to disseminate the principles of convergence and co-existence and promotion of cultural diversity among peoples.

Understanding others and respecting their cultures and beliefs, and the renunciation of extremism, hatred and racism is the most effective way to plug the pretexts used by those who try to exploit these manifestations to encourage violence and terrorism.

In this context, the growing responsibility of media in portraying the right image of the other while avoiding precepts and stereotyping others, and looking at factual things to judge accordingly, make the success of the dialogue among civilizations depends largely on the availability of this level of rationality and impartiality in media that should take into consideration that they have a mission and a humanitarian responsibility, and that even under the domination of market laws its mission should surpass excitement, and to secure high rates of audience, and that their writers and journalists might be carrying preconceived notions as a result of their own upbringing and

nurture, and that freedom of expression is vital but not enough, and must be coupled with responsibility. I am talking here about the ethical and humanitarian responsibility, and not the political.

Therefore, we underline the importance of consolidating the effort to correct fallacies and address all destructive trends that promote the spread of hatred, extremism and violence and block the prospects of dialogue and alliance among civilizations.

The major test in this respect is not what we say in conferences but in tackling such destructive ideas internally, when they assume a form of political demagoguery that would embarrass rulers, or when their ban contradicts the freedom of expression, so we need methods of enlightenment, or even finding new legal means to address them.

May God's Peace, Blessing and Mercy be upon you.