

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Unofficial Translation

The Address of His Highness

**Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani,
Heir Apparent of the State of Qatar**

At

**The Opening of The Second Forum on
Democracy & Reform in the Arab World**

Doha

27 May 2007

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

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to welcome you at the 2nd Forum on Democracy and Reform in the Arab World, a meeting that brings together a cream of prominent figures in thought and politics and opinion leaders, who have illuminated the path to freedom and democracy.

Qatar had previously hosted the first forum three years ago. In implementation of the recommendations of that forum, Doha had, since then, hosted several meetings, workshops and forums where deep extensive thought was given to the best framework that should be created to serve reform and democracy in our region.

I must stress here that our meeting would not have been held without the ceaseless efforts of the civil society organizations whether in supporting democracy or reinforcing success in a number of other spheres, which we in Qatar fully appreciate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our efforts in this forum will not stop at discussing conceptions nor looking for a number of general conclusions, but must go further to exploring the proper programs of action for supporting democracy and reform in our region, which is characterized by a structure that would inevitably lead to an era where the will of freedom will triumph and the humanity of peoples and their right in decision-making and sovereignty over their fates be respected.

Hence, talking about democracy and reform cannot, in my view, be separated from the region's need for sustained development. Democracy, like development, is a continuous project of several forms and aspects, and combining the national outlook and the international dimension. Moreover, democracy and development are two concerns

shared by all Arab countries. Hence, they must be tackled in a wide scope, transcending the narrow borders of any one definite country to take into consideration an uneasy challenge faced by the entire region. The relation between democracy and development is similar to that of two hands where the one cannot perform efficiently if not supported by the other. Therefore, it would be a mistake to postpone democratic reform with the pretext of being engaged in executing development or justifying the failure in development performance with the pretext that voices have been raised demanding democracy. Both democracy and development are a pair that go hand in hand. That is why progress in development enhances the chances of success of the democratic change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Democracy means participation from the base to the top and establishing the state of law in which all rights are respected. This can only be achieved under good governance.

That is why I hope that your meeting would consider the best means for promoting the status of the civil society and qualifying it as it is a strategic partner in establishing democracy and reform and achieving development.

Since it is not enough to have a mechanism of accomplishment only, it is necessary in the same context that the participation of youth in development and building of a democratic society gets a great deal of your attention. By youth I mean both males and females alike. We must realise that the broad base in our communities, which is represented by the youth sector, constitutes a source of power and a factor of progress once considered a basic part in popular participation in decision making. I cite here an experience we lived in Qatar few months ago where the volunteers from the youth of this country had an effective role in the success of the activities of the Asian Games when they showed a high degree of enthusiasm for participation. Therefore, nothing is more needed for the success of reform and opening the doors for participation in this nation than the youth generation, who have paid a high price, despite their young age, when they fell before those closed doors as victims of frustration and extremism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I welcome you, and wish you a pleasant stay, and all success for your meeting.

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