



Speech by

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Your Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all!

Let me tell you how pleased we are to be in this magnificent city of Doha.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of the State of Qatar for the very warm welcome extended to my delegation since our arrival yesterday.

We bring you the greetings of the Government and People of Mauritius.

Thanks to the High Patronage of His Highness The Emir of the State of Qatar, this Forum has now become one of most thought provoking -and must-attend- global platforms of our times.

Indeed, by engaging political, business and other leaders as well as academia to go beyond conventional thinking on global affairs, the Doha Forum has established itself as a prestigious international framework to promote dialogue among decision-makers, to shape new thinking and share best practices as well as strengthen relationships with partners.

I wish to congratulate His Highness for his dedication and commitment to the continued success of this Forum.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure and utmost pride that I address this august gathering to share my thoughts on the centrality of stability and prosperity in a fast changing, yet unequal world.

Our deliberations are very timely as we are living in an era when the world is facing a multitude of threats and when peace and stability can no longer be defined as the mere absence of international armed conflict.

Humanitarian crises and mass displacement of populations are clearly threats to regional or international security.

In parallel, the international security dimensions of pandemics such as AIDS, weapons and drugs trafficking, international terrorism and environmental calamities as well as the high frequency of extreme weather events have become an essential element of our political discourse.

We are also witnessing a proliferation of transnational crime networks which operate from different distant places simultaneously and affect national overseas.

Infectious diseases and pandemics are spreading today as rapidly as planes and trains travel the world.

The fact that many of these new challenges are created by non-state actors adds a new dimension to the international security debate.

Economic and social threats, including financial crises and poverty, human trafficking, cyber security, competition over

scarce resources, inter and intra-State conflict, largescale atrocities, alongside the spread of nuclear chemical and biological weapons are some of the global security issues which weigh heavily on the stability and prosperity equation.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

My premise is that at the heart of this debate also lies the fundamental question of inequality.

Inequality is indeed one of the key factors that challenge the very foundations of global stability and prosperity'

Let me highlight a few facts -

- **More than 80% of people in the world live in countries where the income gap is widening and the poorest 40% of the global population accounts for 5% of global income, while the richest 20% accounts for 75%. This is clearly unsustainable.**
- **The world's population is projected to reach 9.5 billion by 2050 and this poses the huge challenge of equitable access to the global commons.**
- **Population growth is mostly occurring in the cities of developing countries due to rapid urbanization. It is estimated that by 2050 more than two thirds of the world's population will live in cities. This rapid, often unplanned urbanization brings risks of profound social instability.**

These risks can only be further exacerbated as this unprecedented transition, with its load of inequalities, from rural to urban areas continues.

- The increasing trend of feelings of nationalism, separatism and identity politics, within and across national boundaries, often with calls for autonomy, devolution and secessions, have become part of the international system.
- They can lead to a wide array of consequences that range from the collapse of governments and civil wars to more political disputes and peaceful protests.
- Although, such feelings are underpinned by a variety of complex factors, a common thread is a deep-seated resentment of political and economic dominance by one group, again, raising, an element of injustice and inequality.
- And lastly the knowledge divide.

While drawing attention to these realities, I am not oblivious to the fact that a multi-polar, inter-dependent and increasingly complex, globalizing world also offers opportunities.

The expansion of international trade has been one of the channels through which globalization has contributed to world prosperity in the past decades.

Other channels have included connectivity through the ICT, technological innovation, especially in transportation, communications, and medicine, rising standards of education, the spread of democratic governance.

But, it is also true that while the world has been witnessing unprecedented economic growth, lifting millions of people from the poverty trap, deep and recurrent challenges still remain.

These include poverty, environmental degradation, persistent unemployment and jobless growth, political instability, violence and conflict, marginalization of large sections of the population

In varying degrees, these problems are closely related to inequality.

Indeed, inequality, within and between states, is one of the intractable challenges of our time and has deep implications on our ability or otherwise to achieve stability and prosperity.

For instance, income inequality entails inequality of opportunity and this extends to gender, ethnicity, disability, and age, among others.

An inherent danger of inequality is that some sections of our populations, including women and young people, feel excluded from the mainstream and end up feeling disenfranchised and become an easy fodder of conflict.

Systemic deprivation of opportunity creates societal cleavages, unrest and violence.

This, in turn reduces the sustainability of economic growth, weakens social cohesion and security, encourages inequitable access to and use of global commons, undermines our democracies, and our hopes for sustainable development and peaceful societies.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Equity and equality of opportunity are essential to sustainable growth strategies and achieving stability and prosperity.

I am convinced that governments have a central role to play in building the policy framework required to stimulate more inclusive and participatory forms of growth, including through investment in public infrastructure, education and health as well as social empowerment.

Governments also need to provide the leadership and good governance required to implement the right policies which generate ownership models.

At the same time, new business models that make inclusive growth a core strategic component, rather than a peripheral activity, are needed.

The current prevalent business model- excessively focused on shareholder value - is flawed and heightens inequalities in society.

Its relentless pursuit will sow the seeds of destruction.

In our legitimate aspirations to accelerating growth and sustainable development, inclusive growth should be an individual goal as well as an institutional goal.

Inclusive growth as a process entails continuous social dialogue, sustainable and responsible creation as well as just distribution of adequate public goods, both wealth and welfare.

It entails responsible and responsive governance creating opportunities for those excluded from current growth models and where self-empowerment is generated.

Developing inclusive economies in which men and women have access to decent employment, legal identification, financial services, infrastructure and social protection, as well as building societies where all people can contribute and participate in global, national and local governance should, to my mind, become national priorities for Governments.

The leaders of the 21st century – at all levels, business, government, civil society, academe, intellectuals, artists – will be those who have the vision and the means to embrace an integrated agenda which generates inclusive growth across the social, economic and environmental dimensions, a prerequisite for stability and prosperity.

It has been said that the great cause of the 19th century was against slavery.

The great cause of the 20th century was against the ideological extremisms – fascism, nazism, communism, and chauvinism – which also resulted in various forms of human extermination and bondage.

The battles have not been entirely won.

There are still slaves today and forces of ideological fanaticism are still present.

But this makes the great cause of the 21st century all the more relevant, and that is the battle against poverty and extreme and iniquitous inequality.

Inclusive growth can contribute considerably to reducing poverty and inequality and thereby also contributing to erasing the vestiges of slavery and of ideological extremism.

We owe this responsibility to our future generations

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

We all aspire to political stability and the organization of society in such a way that peace prevails and all citizens have the space and opportunity to develop their full potential.

I will take the view that stability or political stability, as a concept, is a balancing act; it is a time when a number of key factors are aligned and stability becomes the tangent on the curve of continuous change.

In that sense, stability may sound as if it were a period of rest.

In fact, we all know that stability is achieved as a result of sustained efforts and, all too often, at a high price.

It has been and is still a challenge for many countries to maintain peace and stability in their regions.

Sadly, the greatest challenge of our times is still to find the tangent for peace and stability to prevail.

Addressing challenges of that magnitude remains a difficult task.

People engaged in the noble task of finding and preserving peace and stability must be doing a lot of experimentation.

The conduct of international relations, sometimes, is a trial and error activity.

As with all relationship, you are never too sure where you might be heading!

My message to you today is that, although the words and deeds of the so-called ordinary people usually count for little, there are moments in the grand scheme of things when, speaking as one, their collective voice should resonate loud enough to make a difference.

Technology is on their side.

Social media today is a global phenomenon.

People communicate instantly around the globe now.

The only difference, is that we should all use that energy as a force for doing good, not spreading hate and violence.

Terrorism and extremism should be treated with the contempt and severity they deserve.

Civil society has a crucial role to educate, especially the younger generation; they should be empowered to do so.

We all have to join hands and build the future we want for our planet, for our children and for ourselves.

Peace and stability are the beacons.

We need to ensure that they remain alight so that we remain focus on the route to achieving progress and prosperity.

I thank you for your attention.