

**Statement**  
**by HE Sheikh / Ahmed Bin Jabor Al Thani**  
**Assistant Minister for International Cooperation**

**in the Opening Ceremony of the meeting of**

**Senior Officials of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement on the Advancement of Women**

**Doha: 12 - 14.02.2012**

Ladies and gentlemen

Dear Guests,

I am pleased to declare open the meeting of senior officials of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement on the Advancement of Women, hosted by the State of Qatar, and gives me great pleasure to welcome you in Doha and I wish you a pleasant stay.

Your participation today reflects the interest of NAM in issues of gender equality and the advancement of women. I would like in this regard to note the important role played by the previous ministerial meetings, which were platforms to exchange experiences and learn about the experiences of countries on how to deal with the challenges that women face in our world today, and propose solutions, and suitable mechanisms to overcome these challenges.

As part of our permanent endeavor to promote the protection of women's rights and empowerment in all areas, politically, economically and socially; and in confirmation of our commitment to the importance of continued dialogue, consultation and work for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and out of our full conviction of the importance of correcting prevailing negative stereotypes related to community concepts that negatively impact women; the State of Qatar today hosts the this important Ministerial Meeting on the advancement of women, in the hope that we can achieve the desired goals, for which this meeting takes place.

Excellencies;

In spite of the existence of awareness, the remarkable progress and achievements in many countries of the world, through the enactment of laws, and development of comprehensive action plans to improve the status of women to the status of the highest, the phenomenon of violence, in all its forms, is still the scourge afflicting women in different parts of the world. In an effort to curb this phenomenon, we must commend the great role played by United Nations entities, where the General Assembly on 25 November announced the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and invited governments, international organizations, and NGOs to organize activities on that day that aim to increase public awareness of the issue. In a related context, the campaign "United to End Violence against Women", launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2008, also seeks to mobilize efforts in all parts of the United Nations system, and invites all

countries to have, by the year 2015, strong laws and multi-sectoral action plans, as well as preventive measures to address violence against women.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The Doha final document expected to be adopted by this Ministerial Conference, which was negotiated in New York, and is very much in line with the Declaration of Putrajaya and the Declaration of Guatemala, will reaffirm the commitment of all Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, to make every possible effort for the advancement of women and promote their participation in all spheres of life, and work to assess progress and address the gaps and challenges, and take the necessary measures towards the full implementation of the Declaration and Program of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Women held in 1995.

No doubt that everyone agrees that women are the cornerstone and pillar of the foundation of society. Hence, the outcome document of Doha comprises nine main headings centered on promoting gender equality and empowering women economically in order to promote their full and effective participation in society; including the eradication of poverty, universal primary education, participation in decision-making process at all levels, combat violence against women, strengthen and improve overall health, reduce mortality in children, and the fight against HIV and other epidemics, as well as to promote the global partnership for development.

All of these principles contained in the Doha document create several obligations on all Non-Aligned Movement member states, and require that we play a prominent role and key role in raising awareness, and action to meet these challenges, as the problem does not lie in the existence of laws, legislations and constitutions promoting the advancement of women, but lies in the ability to implement laws and legislations, and the existence of political will to implement these on the ground.

In this context, it must be noted that the limited or lack of access of women and girls to education, is a major obstacle to the achievement of the goals of equality and development. Hence, women's access to educational qualifications is an effective element of change, and is one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and desired economic growth. It is possible to achieve this through taking all appropriate measures to implement the compulsory free primary education, removal of economic, social and cultural barriers to achieve gender equality in primary schools, and the adoption of measures that address the obstacles to girls' access to education.

Ladies and gentlemen;

In line with those reported in Doha document, I would like to commend the efforts and activities undertaken by the United Nations on gender equality and empowerment of women, which are gaining importance not only through being a protagonist main global women's issues, but as a global body that coordinates overall international efforts to support the full realization of women's rights and the provision of opportunities to them. One of the goals considered by the meeting today, as addressed by the Doha document, aspires to reach a world free from all forms of violence against women, and though this task is of difficulty and complexity, it is yet not impossible if the efforts combined to raise awareness and culture of anti-violence against women in all segments of society, and the tightening of sanctions on the perpetrators of such acts.

The question of the advancement of women, enhancement of their capacities, their participation in various areas, and securing them a safe and healthy environment, shall contribute to the empowerment at all levels. This task is the

responsibility of society as a whole, and can be achieved only through the combined efforts and cooperation of everyone at the national, regional and international levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to avail this opportunity to express my hope that this meeting will be a part of a lasting tradition, and a platform for dialogue and constructive debate, and to develop knowledge, strategic and practical ideas, that can be activated to gain access to the results desired. There is still a lot of work ahead of us; therefore, let us reaffirm our commitment to work to bridge the gap between men and women, and to employ more resources in the fight against violence, to do whatever necessary to empower women, prepare them and build their ability, in order for them to have their essential and effective role in the process of establishment of peace and development.

We may not be able today to promise that we will achieve all that we hope by the year 2015, the deadline for achieving the goals of the Millennium Development Goals; but we can promise that we will spare no effort to continue to strive for the advancement of women, in the hope that the outcome of this meeting shall have a direct positive impact on the hopes and aspirations of millions of women who are still in need of support and assistance to overcome the obstacles they face.