The second Forum of Businessmen in the Arab States and Latin American countries

Doha: 29-30/3/2009

We the businessmen in the Arab States and South American countries participating in the second Forum of businessmen in the Arab States and South America, held in Qatar on 29-30/3/2009, extend our deepest thanks and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, for the initiative to host the activities of this important gathering.

Since our meeting on the sidelines of the first summit for the Arab States and the States of South America in Brasilia in 2005, relations between the two regions witnessed a quantum leap in the various areas of cooperation especially in the field of economic cooperation when two meetings for the economic ministers took place, the first in Quito, that issued the "Declaration of Quito" which stressed the need to encourage trade and investment between the two regions and economic relations as they constitute effective means to promote balanced and sustainable development of the regions.

The second meeting was held in Rabat and issued the "Rabat Declaration" which emphasized the strengthening of the institutional framework for the development of economic cooperation between the two groups and the creation of joint mechanisms for the development of projects on the ground that reflect the objectives of cooperation in a number of priority sectors. The symposium on investment and trade held on the sidelines of this meeting began work on the implementation of the "Rabat Plan of Action" which was adopted by the Second Ministerial Meeting for the implementation of joint economic projects, which included
a proposal to convene the second meeting of businessmen on the sidelines of the second summit of the Arab States and the States of South America. The plan also included the strengthening of cooperation in various areas, including the establishment of forums in the areas of energy and mining, and sectors of finance and capital markets, as well as promoting tourism and enhancing air maritime links, training and capacity building.

The volume of trade exchange between our countries witnessed big jump in recent years, which we must build upon and strengthen through the continued implementation of the Rabat Action Plan and in particular the establishment of consortia, such as joint business associations and the Council of the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, agriculture and services between the two groups, and the Council of Investors Union, and facilitation of business through the search for ways to facilitate the movement of businessmen and to simplifying procedures for granting of visas for businessmen, in accordance with the national policies and legislation.

The Forum for businessmen is being held amid a global economic crisis that erupted out of our regions but nevertheless affect our economies, and to address and overcome its negative effects would require solidarity and coordination of efforts in our regions, as well as consensus on vision and ideas to contain its repercussions. The participants in the forum stressed the importance of establishing a new international financial system and the need for the international financial institutions and developed countries to play a role on tackling the repercussions of the global financial crisis to support the developing nations.

The agenda of this meeting included a number of important issues on economic relations between Arab states and South American countries, to highlight the most important is the strategic opportunities for growth, economic indicators, at the top of the
economic climate and the opportunities and the possibility of investing in the two regions. The agenda also included examples of the success stories of business in a number of Arab States and South American countries and bilateral meetings between businessmen in the areas of common interest.

The organization of such forums will support economic and trade relations between businessmen in both regions, and will strengthen the partnership to take advantage of strategic opportunities for growth in both regions, cooperation in the development of small and medium industries, and contribute to the achievement of the social function of capital, and its positive impact on employment and income, thus contributing to reduce the level of poverty in the regions.

The participants recommended the following:

- Establishing easy and effective mechanism, such as launching a joint website on the internet to access and exchange information about mutual treaties and available investment opportunities and projects, and the legal framework adopted in each country, in Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese languages.

- The removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, facilitating the opening of markets, promoting bilateral trade to alleviate the impacts of the global economic crisis.

- Promote the establishment of an Arab-South American bank to finance projects.

- Establishing regular maritime and air transportation routes to facilitate transportation of goods and people and to stimulate bilateral trade.

- Work on organizing trade fairs periodically to introduce both regions’ product with preferential features.
- Establishing of an Arab-South American University, and developing academic cooperation between universities and specialized institutes.

- Establishing a mechanism to promote cooperation and exchange of technical and scientific expertise.

- Singing agreement about standards, metrology, and quality standards.

- Facilitating the issuance of visas to businessmen according to the adopted national policies and legislations.

- Promote the establishment of a general union for the Arab and South American Chambers of Commerce, and establish Arab-South American Chambers of Commerce in the rest of the South American Countries.

Furthermore, the participants in the conference stressed their support to the steadfastness of the Palestinian People, and denounced the unjust siege on the Gaza Strip and all the Palestinian territories. They demanded the lifting of the siege and alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian People and the opening of the crossings. The participants recommended supporting the Palestinian People to develop their economy and support their steadfastness and open areas for investment in Palestine, particularly that there are viable investment opportunities.

We promise our leaders that we shall play a key role in the effective implementation of the "Doha Declaration" in the relevant sectors of trade and investment; we also stress that our Governments must take every possible action to facilitate and strengthen this role, which requires action for the removal of all obstacles that prevent the movement of people and goods between the countries of both regions, and provide an appropriate investment climate for promoting trade and investment. Furthermore, updating and developing the legal frameworks for
economic and investment cooperation and the joint projects of businessmen from both regions, and establish an attractive systems for promoting investment in all South American and Arab countries, as well as sign treaties to prevent double taxation.

In conclusion, we extend, once more, gratitude to His Highness, the Emir of the State of Qatar for his generous hospitality of this successful Forum, which shall undoubtedly contribute to the strengthening of the economic relations between or countries and to the realization of our peoples hopes in attaining more progress and prosperity.

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