

22 December 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing Session of the Main Part of the 61st Session of the
General Assembly**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the final plenary meeting of the main part of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. It has been an honor for me to preside over this busy and productive period during the past few months.

The Plenary has met eighty three times; the General Committee five times; we have held four meetings of the 10th Emergency Special Session; twenty Informal Consultations; and, adopted two hundred and twenty five Resolutions.

I would like to thank the Chairpersons of the Main Committees for the leadership they have shown to enable us to conclude our busy schedule in an efficient and timely manner. I wish also, to extend my sincere appreciation to all Vice-Presidents, and the Bureaus of the six Main Committees for supporting the work of the General Assembly.

As I noted in my opening statement at the beginning of the session, we are an Organization of hope based upon commitment, consensus and co-existence. We all have a stake in achieving a safer and fairer world. It is only by working together to address the many challenges our world is facing that we can make this a reality.

During this part of the session I have worked with Member States, and the Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to build bridges and trust. I intend to continue to do so, when Secretary-General Designate Ban Ki-Moon takes office in the New Year.

You have shown that when we are united in partnership, and overcome mistrust, that we can achieve much more for each other. The adoption of the resolution on the strengthening of ECOSOC is a good example of this.

We have also made progress on many other areas of our common agenda; we had important debates on Security Council reform and General Assembly revitalization; and, we adopted two important international conventions to Protect and Promote the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, and to Protect All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

During this important and busy transition phase, we were also able to finalize the appointment of the Secretary-General Designate, Ban Ki-Moon, and, pay tribute to the successful tenure of Secretary-General, Kofi Annan and bid him farewell.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I was encouraged by the constructive spirit that prevailed during the debate on Security Council reform. And, I believe there is clearly a growing desire to establish a credible process to achieve a meaningful outcome to this outstanding area of reform. Though some differences remain, I believe that in the New Year we will be able to look at this matter in a fresh and innovative manner.

We also had a successful debate on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. Many of you noted that we should become more focused on strategic issues and more action-oriented so that our work would have greater visibility and impact.

The informal thematic debate on development was an example of the General Assembly increasing its visibility. We broadened our discussions to involve the private sector and civil society, and the Islamic Development Bank announced the creation of a US\$10 billion poverty eradication fund, to which even the poorest developing countries will contribute.

We have made progress on Secretariat and Management Reform, and worked hard to get a satisfactory conclusion on a new Scale of Assessment. In addition, work on the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, will soon commence with the adoption of the resolution on the Capital Master Plan.

Working together we have built confidence among member states to make good progress on the Mandate Review exercise, which has now been extended until the end of the 61st Session.

We have also established a process on Environmental Governance, to reach agreement on steps to enable the United Nations system to have a more effective impact on environmental issues.

I hope that building on the work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force we can fully implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. And, in the New Year, reach consensus on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is an integral aspect of achieving the MDGs. In March next year, the General Assembly will hold its second informal thematic debate, on the 'promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women', to help make this a reality. A successful outcome will again demonstrate that the General Assembly can have an impact on the issues that really count.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

While the forces of globalization and mass communication have brought us closer together, they have also made us more aware of our cultural differences. In order to promote greater dialogue and tolerance among civilizations and cultures, I intend to convene a third informal interactive thematic debate in the summer of 2007.

We have many important matters of common concern that require our close attention when we return. I hope that we can begin the New Year by working even more closely together, in the spirit of cooperation, mutual trust and collective responsibility.

And finally, I would also like to commend the dedication and commitment of all the staff working in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the interpreters and everyone else working behinds the scenes to ensure our work runs smoothly. May I thank you once again for all your support and hard work, and wish you all a very happy holiday.

Thank you very much.