



Kingdom of Bahrain

Speech of

H.H. the Prime Minister
Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa

at the

Fourth World Urban Forum

Nanjing, China.

November 3, 2008

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

The Vice Premier of China – H.H. Dejiang Zhang,
H.H. the Vice President of the Philippines,
Your Excellency Fellow Prime Minister of Kenya,
The U.N. Under-Secretary General and Representative of the
Secretary of the U. N.

Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive
Director of UN-HABITAT

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here today at this World Urban Forum, and to have this opportunity to greet such a distinguished audience who have taken the responsibility of pursuing the process of sustainable urbanization and implementing balanced and sustainable development, and where appropriate, observed environmental and human - related concerns.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation for your efforts in promoting individual and collective initiatives that are aimed at improving the living conditions of the world population, so that human beings are able to enjoy a decent life.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities, with urbanization rates rising and expected to reach 70% by 2050. Based on this fact, I call for the establishment of a comprehensive strategy to foster sustainable urban development and to support countries of the third world in this area.

The international community today has a great responsibility, especially in the shadow of a global financial crisis that could prove detrimental to whatever has been accomplished in terms of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Fourth World Urban Forum, with its theme on harmonious cities, is of great importance in view of the current challenges facing

the international community which calls for designing and implementing policies that could lead to growth and development and realization of sustainable and inclusive development for the benefit of the poor in the development countries, and enhance partnerships aimed at implementing sustainable development

Realizing the importance of planning in our world, the Kingdom of Bahrain has laid down a structural strategic plan that charts use of land until 2030 where large areas are allocated for future residential and construction projects, and for other relevant public service facilities.

We strongly believe that development is in the common interests of the people, and therefore implementing our citizens' prosperity, and meeting their aspirations, are the turning point of development efforts.

The international recognition of Bahrain's efforts by granting it the 2006 United Nations' Special Citation of the Habitat Scroll of Honor Award was further motivation to continue our efforts in the same direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having recognized the importance of the efforts of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme that are aimed at implementing the new Millenniums' goals, we have taken the initiative and decided to launch an annual award, overseen by U.N. Habitat, to encourage innovative ideas with respect to urban development. This Award, which is intended to honor the best habitat development-related practices, comes in conjunction with other global endeavors to boost relevant and outstanding programs and projects.

It is a great pleasure for me to take part in this ceremony and to grant the Award for the first time ever, Green Brigade from Burkina Faso project. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winning project and extend my appreciation to the project organizers for the ground-breaking ideas they have presented and which made it

the leading and distinguished model of best practices in the field, in terms of handling urban and habitat - related difficulties.

Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to the Chinese Government for having hosted the World Urban Forum. My thanks also go to the UN Under-Secretary General and the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, and to the staff of the Forum's Secretariat General as well as organizers.

I wish you all success.

God's peace and blessings be upon all of you.