



**The address of His Highness the Prime Minister at the
inauguration of the Economic and Social Forum of the Arab
Economic, Social and Development Summit. 19-20/1/2009
The State of Kuwait**

17th January 2009

**Your Excellency the Secretary General of the Arab League
Your Excellencies, Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Esteemed attendance,**

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh,

It is an honour on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, to extend his sincere best wishes for success at this brotherly gathering in achieving our aspirations for progress and prosperity for the entire Arab World and its people.

We cordially welcome you all in the State of Kuwait, which is pleased to host the events of this Economic and Social forum, held within the frame work of the Arab Economic, Social and Development Summit on the 19th -20th January.

All eyes are on us as they look to the meeting of their majesties, their highnesses and leaders of Arab States which gains great significance in light of the circumstances and challenges witnessed by the Arab World, particularly with the continued brutal Israeli aggression on Palestinians in the Gaza strip.

We convey our extreme sorrow at the tragic situation taking place in the Gaza strip and the tremendous suffering of the Palestinian people. Thus, we reconfirm our demand on the International community for the immediate suspension of the barbaric aggression, and the prompt action to achieve a just, comprehensive and permanent peace in the Middle East; securing the right of the Palestinian people to live in their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

Hence, in light of these pressing circumstances and challenges, we are required to act swiftly and effectively to attain economic integration that empowers us to confront the challenges for a better future in a world that no longer has a place for weakness or disunity.



Ladies and Gentlemen:

Undoubtedly, that within the last ten years, a number of Arab countries sought further economic reforms to control the general budget, liberalization of trade and prices, improve the legislative environment in accordance with developments related to the informatics and communications revolution, and liberalizing markets.

Many Arab States have exerted tangible efforts to encourage local and foreign investment in order to accomplish its role of driving development and provide productive employment opportunities for citizens.

You are well aware that the challenges remain immense and the obstacles are intricate; at a time when aspirations are rising. Therefore, the desire to overcome difficulties is a necessary requirement with no alternative; it has become a wide spread obsession.

Since the State of Kuwait is keen to enhance and develop the ties of joint Arab cooperation in all fields, especially the economic field, subsequently the noble wish of His Highness the Amir to hold the Arab Economic, Social and Development Summit followed.

This stems from the belief of the State of Kuwait that exploring economic, social and development matters is considered a more effective means of deepening ties between Arab countries, and achieving the pursued integration between them, creating a qualitative leap in different fields of joint Arab economic action to serve the higher interests for our Arab Ummah, and the aspirations of its people.

I wish to point to the efforts exerted by the relevant bodies in the General Secretariat of the Arab League in Cairo and the relevant bodies in the State of Kuwait ever since the call for this summit in the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh), during the Arab Summit held in March 2007. I would like to particularly commend the rigorous efforts of these bodies by organizing meetings and deliberations aimed at activating and highlighting the role of the private sector and the civil society institutes; considering them major partners in suggesting and implementing necessary plans and programs fundamental to boosting development in Arab States on firm and sustainable basis.

Hosting this economic and social forum represents the fruits of sincere efforts aimed at widening the participation of the private sector and civil society institutions in examining means of confronting the economic and social challenges facing Arab States.

Ladies and Gentlemen:



As you are aware, Arab States are confronting at the present time, various economic and social challenges that confirm the need to prioritize and develop methods and procedures which we all seek to apply in confronting these challenges. The issues and points of discussion on the agenda of the economic and social forum reflect the most important economic and social challenges confronting our Arab States. At the forefront of the issues to be raised and explored in the sessions of this forum are aspects of the global financial crisis, their impact on the situation in the banking and financial sectors in the Arab States, the role required to coordinate and cooperate between the relevant bodies to tackle these circumstances, means of enhancing aspects of efficiency in the performance of the banking and financial sectors in various Arab States in order to overcome the challenges of the current phase effectively and competently.

The agenda also includes numerous issues that reflect the desire to strengthen ties of joint Arab action in matters related to developing and diversifying Arab capability and structural production; primarily probing ways of expanding Intra-Arab trade and investments, as well as aspects of Arab food security and agricultural policies, energy, water, climate and environmental changes.

The Forum also discusses issues concerning education and scientific research, which are fundamental elements of comprehensive and sustainable development, and the basic pillars for the bright future we seek to attain and devise its strong and firm structure.

A special session has been designated to discuss the situation of youths, unemployment, emigration and drugs; considering them vital issues of which decision makers in our Arab States are mindful of their grave impact.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We attach high hopes on the results of this forum, where numerous experts and specialists participate to reach practical recommendations on means of achieving the required qualitative leap in the course of joint Arab action, and towards attaining its objectives on the long run.

We welcome you once again in your second home Kuwait, and wish you every success in your endeavours.

"And say: Work; so Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers"

Al-Tawba, 105

Almighty Allah has spoken The Truth.

Wassalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh.