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## **Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held at the Embassy of France, on the International Francophonie Day**

**Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Dear Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal and Dean of diplomatic corps,

Madame the Ambassador of the Republic of France

Dear Ambassadors of Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Egypt, and Lebanon,

Dear Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps,

Dear the Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

Our Francophone Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to meet you on this annual occasion to celebrate the International Day of the Francophonie. This occasion has become an important meeting that I have been participating in for the last seven years and a distinguished cultural event through which we express our admiration for the French language and its role in the enrichment of modern civilization. I would like to thank Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of France, Senegal, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Egypt, and Lebanon for the celebration of this occasion during the last years and for the organization of continuous cultural events, such as this beautiful distinguished evening.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our celebration of one of the international languages is an affirmation of the importance of the language in human life. It is no longer just a tool of expression, but it has become the tool that shortens distances between speakers and gives them a sense of belonging to the culture it represents. The preservation of international languages is, in fact, the preservation of diverse cultures, and perhaps this is what pushes us to always emphasize the importance of cultural diversity in the globalized society. Indeed, the dominance of one language in the international community could weaken other languages and deprive humanity of their rich linguistic heritage and diverse cultures. Our



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insistence on the need to give importance to international languages comes from our care to keep the relationship of successive generations with the humanity ancient heritage and from the fear of repeating the past mistakes when languages of many ancient civilizations disappeared in front of the domination of a single language. With this disappearance, we have lost the rich ancient history of humanity and its cultures. Without the enormous efforts of archaeologists in studying and deciphering the cuneiform writing and hieroglyphic writing, we would have never known the history of the ancient East. The language is not only the register of a nation's memory and the pot of ideas, concepts and values, but it is also a power, as expressed hundreds of years ago by Ibn Khaldoun who said: "The power of the language in a nation means the continuation of that nation to play its role among the other nations"

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although there are universal languages that precede the French language as to the number of native speakers, but the modern world cannot but express its admiration of the distinguished capacity of the French language in the industry of thought, in philosophy, law, literature and art. This ability was reflected by the great works of eminent personalities in these fields from the beginning of the Renaissance to the present day. The French language did not stop at the borders of France; it travelled long distances and crossed oceans to become the expression tool of other peoples' cultures in America, Africa and Asia; it used its vocabulary and writing styles to record the emotions, ideas, thoughts and knowledge in a charming way, in form as well as in substance, so that it would fascinate the listeners by its strength, durability and romance. The French language has not only crossed the boundaries of geography but has managed to cross history and time. With its linguistic richness, it has succeeded in transmitting ancient cultures and reviving the literatures of ancient Egyptians, Sumerians, Acadians, Babylonians and Assyrians. In fact, the world owes it to the French archaeologist Jean-François Champollion who studied the ancient Egyptian language "hieroglyphics" when he discovered the symbols of the Rosetta Stone in 1828, during the Egyptian campaign. We also owe it to the Swiss archaeologist Édouard Naville, who restored the life of the religious texts of the ancient Egyptians, and to the French archaeologist Jean-Vincent Scheil, who revealed to us the Code of Hammurabi of the ancient Iraq, after he discovered the Obelisk on which were inscribed the oldest laws and legislations of human civilization

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the evocation of the contributions of the French language in the revivification of the ancient cultures of the world, I am proud to say that we in Kuwait, we are happy to host the French Center of Archeology and Social Sciences, which



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activity is to probe the depths of the Arabian Peninsula in order to discover ancient civilizations, because we believe that we can provide the best cultural environment for such scientific activity, thanks to our cultural environment characterized by freedom and diversity, and by the encouragement of all kinds of cultural activities. We are a people who lived on the coast, who visited the various ports of the world, and who was integrated with the cultures of the Indian Ocean's peoples, which pushed us to open up to others, to their languages, cultures and ideas. We have got used to take and give, and to exchange ideas, opinions and new visions, and this may be the reason behind the growing number of Kuwaitis learning different languages of the world, including French.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the end of this word, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the organizers of this celebration, Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of France, Senegal, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin , Egypt, and Lebanon, and to all their residents in the State of Kuwait. I would like to thank in particular the Ambassador of France, who took care of the organization of the ceremony tonight. I hope to see more cultural cooperation between Kuwait and the French-speaking countries in the years to come. I would also like to emphasize the solidity of our diplomatic relations with your countries, and to remind you that we will never forget the honorable position of your countries during the aggression against our country.