



**Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad
Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held at the Embassy of Canada,
on the International Francophonie Day
Monday, 18th March 2019**

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

Madame the Ambassador of the Republic of Canada,

Dear Ambassadors of France, 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,

We meet again, like every year in March, to celebrate the Day of the Francophonie in Kuwait and express our gratitude for all that the Francophone culture has offered to humanity throughout its history, especially in the fields of literature, philosophy, politics, arts and sciences. I would like to thank their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the French-speaking States, Canada, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Egypt and Lebanon for their contribution to the annual celebration of this occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The French language is one of the languages that has been able to highlight the idea of civilized communication between peoples. It is one of the languages that has exchanged vocabulary, meanings and expressions with other languages and has proven itself capable of giving as much as taking throughout its long history. In the Andalusian



era, it interacted with Arab culture, borrowing a vocabulary and terminology that became an integral part of the French language, as pointed out by many scholars, such as the famous Belgian orientalist, Henry Lammens. Pope Sylvester II of the tenth century (940-1003) is considered one of the pioneers of this interaction at the time. Yet the French language was also a language that gave its vocabulary to other languages; many Asian and African peoples have borrowed from the French language a large part of their vocabulary which they use in their local dialects, and which is very obvious in some Arabic dialects.

In my previous speeches pronounced on the occasion of the Francophonie, I emphasized that the Francophonie preserves the history and experiences of nations across the different continents: the French language is no longer the private property of the French, nor the tool of expression of their cultural production. It has become the language of expression of the cultures of other peoples in America, Africa and Asia. its vocabulary and linguistic structures became the tool used to register emotions, ideas, thoughts and knowledge in a remarkable way, both in substance and in form, so that its users and audience are impressed by its charm, its elegance, its creative colors and its important rhythms. And since my speech today highlights the mixture and the cultural exchanges between the Arabic and the Francophonie, I would like to underline the first pioneers who bridged the two cultures, such as the great Orientalists Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, Gustave Le Bon, Gaston Wiet, Henri de Boulainvilliers, Régis Blachère, Jacques Berque, the Swiss Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and others.

However, on the other side of the bridge, there are the Arabs, or people who grew up in an Arab environment, who chose the French language to express their thoughts and feelings, especially those who lived in the cities of Mediterranean basin, such as the West Bank, Beirut, Alexandria, Tunisia, Casablanca and Algeria. Their works written in French reflected their interaction with the Arab world. From these people we quote Albert Cossery, Andree Chedid, Kateb Yacine and Tahar Ben Jelloun. There are also those who chose to sing in French to express their artistic feelings, such as



Enrico Macias, the son of the Algerian city Constantine or Dalida the daughter of Shubra in Egypt.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the end of this word, I wish to reiterate my thanks to Her Excellency the Ambassador of Canada and the staff of the Embassy who contributed to the success of this evening. I salute their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the Francophonie and all their residents in the State of Kuwait. And I would also like to take this opportunity to underline the strength 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 of Saddam Hussein against our country, and your contribution to the liberation of our dear Kuwait.

Thank you.