



TUNISIA

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High Level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

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**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Kamel Morjane
Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs
(New York, September 20th, 2010)**

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**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am delighted to take part in this high level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals to assess what has been so far achieved and to contribute in identifying the most appropriate means that would help attain all these goals within the scheduled time.

Mr. President,

It is widely agreed that development is a fundamental aspiration for all countries. Guided by our strong commitment, we have adopted the Millennium Declaration which reflects the aspiration of the people of the world to a better life through the realization of a carefully selected series of objectives defined by numerical benchmarks and a clear limited time frame.

We have already come to the agreement to halve the rate of poverty and promote elementary education on a global level as well as to enhance gender equality, reduce mortality among children and mothers alongside fighting AIDS, ensure sustainable development, while preserving the environment and building a global partnership for development.

Although many countries have managed in the last decade to achieve a significant progress towards attaining some of the Millennium Goals, we still notice that the pace of this progress is still slow and do not meet global aspirations due to the huge development challenges that most of the countries and mainly the African ones are facing. Most of the related reports pointed out to the slowdown of progress due to the acute world economic crisis.

Mr. President,

Projections for African countries which register a growth rate below 3% are still expecting a growth rate below the annual required of 7%. Such a rate is too low to help these countries realize the Millennium Development Goals within the fixed time frame.

On the other hand, the realization of the development goals in our African continent occurs through financing the economy and investing in the health and education systems which should involve also additional efforts for fighting poverty, ensuring early education and laying the ground for a better life to African citizens.

We are deeply convinced that establishing a genuine partnership with Africa represents the most suitable solution to advance development in the continent, help achieve development goals and bring hope to millions of Africans.

In this regard, we call upon the G8 and the G20 to renew their commitment towards the African continent so as to enable this continent to attain its development goals.

We are also of the view that the extent of the support extended by the North South cooperation in the endeavor to meet development goals will never affect the scope and importance of the South - South cooperation in promoting economic and social development in the African continent.

Mr. President,

Attaining the Development Millennium Goals within the initially scheduled time requires from all of us to work in solidarity and to exert common sustained efforts. In this spirit, allow me to highlight the success of the Tunisian national solidarity experience to promote development in poor areas. This experience which demonstrates the relevance and efficiency of this policy, earned international recognition through the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution calling for the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund, whose objective is to help poor countries advance their development goals.

Mr. President,

Though my country Tunisia is a medium income country with limited natural resources, it managed, in relying upon itself, to achieve significant economic development during the last two decades, which enabled it to enjoy a good ranking with regard to economic indicators.

The national report on the Millennium Development Goals prepared jointly by the United Nations and the Tunisian Government underscored the progress achieved by Tunisia with regard to sustained development. This report stresses that the increase in GDP reached 5% in the recent few years. Owing to sound policies of fair distribution of economic growth income, the poverty rate witnessed a sharp decline that brought it from 60% in 1960 to 7% in the mid nineties to reach 3.8% actually.

The report underlines the tremendous progress achieved by Tunisia in realising the remaining Millennium Objectives. This report stresses that my country will succeed in attaining these goals, if not going beyond most of these goals, by the year 2015.

Mr. President,

Tunisia has pursued sound development policies based mainly on the conciliation between the requirements of an efficient economy, and of a dynamic social policy aiming at ensure the fundamentals of a decent life.

This global vision of development stems from the firm belief that there exist an inextricable link and interdependence among all dimensions, and that there is no progress in the absence of economic prosperity. Moreover, there could be no sustainable economy in the absence of a social peace and concord. In fact, comprehensive development consecrates social justice, the fair distribution of growth dividends on all areas and on all sections of the population, while preserving and enhancing social assets. It also helps improve the living conditions of vulnerable sections of the population with specific needs and enhance solidarity among various national components.

Mr. President,

Thanks to this policy, and in spite of the turbulent international economic climate, our country managed, in the aftermath of the unprecedented financial and economic crisis, to secure various achievements encompassing all sectors, and succeeded in minimizing the impact of the volatility of world markets on the national economy, by immediately taking the appropriate measures to safeguard the development process which continues unabated to achieve positive results.

Tunisia has managed as well to achieve a tremendous progress in schooling at all levels of education and a significant improvement in health and demographic indicators, including medical service coverage, life expectancy at birth and the extension of the social security.

Among the various achievements in Tunisia, income continued to improve, poverty rate witnessed a sharp decrease and job creation continued to grow, thus improving living conditions in different areas and especially in rural ones, where a real progress in terms of accessibility to electricity and drinking water is noticeable.

Mr. President,

The world in 2015 will be one of our making. A world that will be a pure reflection of our common success or common failure in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and affording the means to ensure a decent life, free of needs and worries of the future to all people.

I would like to express at the end my best wishes for success to our conference and thank you all.