

## Remarks at the beginning of the state visit to the United States

Washington, 22 May 2000

Mr President and Madame Hilary Clinton,  
Members of the Cabinet of the United States,  
Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and members of the diplomatic corps,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen of the media:

I would like to thank you, Mr President, most sincerely for inviting us to visit the USA. We were happy to respond positively to this invitation because we are convinced that the government and people of USA are critical and long-term partners in our struggle to address the many challenges facing both our two countries as well as many other parts of the world.

These challenges, which require our collective wisdom and action, include the human threat posed by deepening underdevelopment, widespread poverty, diseases such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, as well as the violent conflicts and wars afflicting especially the Continent from which we come, Africa.

As we meet today and the next four days with the government of the USA, members of the US Congress, various business people and community leaders, academics and media people, in the context of a world defined by the vast inequalities between one person and another, between one country and another, between one continent and another, we are compelled to work together, as partners, to bring about peace, social and economic justice for the billions of poor people who inhabit our common world.

We also see these challenges in the ever widening income and development gap between the rich and the poor both within and between states.

We believe we must act together in solidarity with these many people around the world and especially in Africa. The best possible ways have to be found to end poverty and disease, and, to help people to extricate themselves from the indecencies of wars and violent conflicts.

These challenges require of us not just standard responses, but urgent and extraordinary interventions that will ensure that the benefits of the current scientific and technological advances are shared by everyone including those in the most remote and isolated villages of the world.

Indeed as we grapple with all these problems facing most of humanity, we witness on the other side of the same universe an abundance of resources, and, an unprecedented economic prosperity occasioned in great measure by vast technological advances.

As has happened before, the offensive against poverty and underdevelopment calls for interventions that are comprehensive, integrated, deliberate and driven by all of us.

At the same time, we must continue to encourage the further entrenchment of democracy and the institutions that underpin it. We have to continue to strive for an answer to the seemingly elusive but important question of peace, particularly on my own continent.

We must ensure that we end the wars, the military coups and violent conflicts that continue to disfigure the face of Africa, and bring about the required levels of stability.

Together we have to adopt the measures we need to bring about a world where women, everywhere, are free to participate fully in the affairs of their nations, where children are given the space to enjoy their

childhood without being forced into premature adulthood, where we deal a decisive blow against the insult of racism.

I have no doubt that humanity has the leadership capable of responding accordingly to all these challenges, in the interests of the entire humanity. You have yourself, Mr President, on numerous occasions called on all of us to meet these challenges. I can assure you, Mr President, that we share with you the desire not just to act on all these problems, but to do so as a matter of urgency.

I am pleased, Mr President, that we will also have the opportunity to look at ways and means further to strengthen our already excellent bilateral relations, among others through that important agency, our Bi-National Commission.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr President, to express my sincere appreciation of the fact that in the years that we have worked together, you and your Administration have treated us with dignity, whatever our differences on specific matters, with sensitivity for our problems and an unwavering commitment to help us resolve these and with a willingness always to learn, so that you could assist us better.

We, for our part, will not relax our efforts to create the possibility for all our people to realise their dream of a better life.

I thank you