

Qatar reiterates support for development in developing world

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Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud has Sunday reiterated his country's support for development and fighting poverty in developing countries. The Qatari minister made the remarks while addressing the inaugural session of the Follow-up Meeting on Financing Development to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), co-organized by the Qatari Foreign Ministry and the UN General Assembly, which kicked off here Sunday and will run for a couple of days.

In his speech, the Qatari minister reiterated Qatar's commitment to becoming a constant supporting partner to development efforts being made, especially in fighting poverty and fairly distributing international economic growth fruits.

This, he noted, would have a positive effect on international security and peace.

He noted that the support the government and people of Qatar were giving to developing countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development, and Qatar's spontaneous response to relief calls was out of its values and culture which call for helping the needy and supporting the reconstruction and cooperation quest to achieve sustainable social and economic development in developing countries.

He noted that within this context, the state of Qatar hosted the World Trade Organization's 4th conference in Doha in 2001, which produced Doha round that calls for having fairer international trade rules.

Doha also hosted the second south summit at which the Qatari Amir announced his initiative on establishing the south fund for development and human situations, he said, noting that at the world summit held in 2005 the Amir announced his donation of USD 10 million for the democracy fund.

The minister said Amir offered his initiative to host the First Follow-up Meeting for the International Conference on Financing Development, which the UN General Assembly decided to convene in Doha during the second half of 2008.

He referred to the bilateral and relief aid Qatar offered at times of disasters and its contributions to the different UN funds and programmes, saying that Qatar had committed itself to allocating 15 per cent of 0.07 per of its net national income to annual developmental aid to the least developed nations.

The minister of state for foreign affairs expressed conviction that the dialogue that would be conducted during these meetings would reflect determination to implement the millennium developments goals, including reducing poverty by 50 percent by the year 2015, a matter that would accelerate development in developing countries, especially the least developed ones. However, he deplored a recent UN report, saying that Sub-Saharan Africa countries were behind schedule for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which provided for slimming poverty level by half by 2015.

For her part, UN General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain said the MDG came to urge everyone to face a key challenge of common action in fighting poverty and fair distribution of human development benefits.

She hailed some positive indications of economic growth in Africa, including receding conflicts and clashes and rising investment as well as growing transparency and democracy. She expressed hope that the ongoing conference would be a good opportunity for the conferees to share views on relevant progress achieved so far and mull over how to meet challenges and obstacles facing human development.