

Time and place challenges: ocean, religion and values

Ladies and Gentlemen...

Our valued Brothers...

Doha and Qatar are proceeding forward amidst two eras that are dominating the world in the first half of the twenty-first century: namely, the era of globalization, which is the time of changing of the terms and conditions of economic and commercial exchange at the international level, and the time of meeting, reconciliation or alliance between civilizations, which is an expression of religious progress or globalization of the religious issue.

On the one hand, it becomes clear that those two factors; the economic globalization factor, and the religious globalization factor, are causing severe dilemmas that affect the stability and people's lives and livelihoods, as well as the relations between nations and cultures. On the other hand, this globalized tendency seems to serve as a spur for openness as to escape from the coercions of the recent and distant past. Thus, both the two eras of the economic and cultural globalization constitute an opportunity and challenges at the same time. They are a chance in terms of the limits that they decline, and the new means that they outspread to communicate, exchange, affect, influence and make new, useful and advanced means. On the contrary, they form a challenge because of the arrogance of severe power and national interests that is found sometimes in economic and political relations, and due to the rise of fundamentalist trends sometimes within major religions.

In fact, the joint factor in the religious, economic and political issues, is the values factor that govern and control, and could be taken as a measure, or that it would be an area of convergence and access to common factors. The nature of the religion is originally the ethics of trust, communication and setting out to help and assist in the great humanitarian issues. This

contribution declines upon the domination of tension as a result of religious or authoritarian rivalry, or the chaos of conflicts in the name of religion, or the imposition of barriers and obstacles on religion under the pretext of protecting the community or the state.

The previous Forty years have witnessed economic and religious conflicts, the core of which is directed towards the devastation caused to the place and time, and to the violence produced with the other parties.

I am confident that we passed or about to pass the era of clash of civilizations' arguments. We; both Arabs and Muslims, are getting into the worlds of participation, religious and humanitarian values, and the worlds of political and moral change. The subject matter has changed, and the set of religious values that was torn up by the conflicts of the past decades, is about to return stable by virtue of the efforts of people of values and mission, the work ethics of whom are associated with religion and high values.

Professor Hans Küng has considered the Interfaith dialogue as a condition for the peace of the world if it leads to a consensus on global ethics. We see that this moral consensus occurred, but we need more participation among people of other religions, who are living with them without having religious faith, in the standard moral values, which appeared in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

In order to build on one or more practical model, I would like to point out in this speech to the third sub-session at this conference entitled: "Teaching history in order to change perceptions and modify conflicts", and the eighth Action Network session entitled: "Dealing with the increasing restrictions on religions." Religions and cultures are related to time, while, unlike the usual, the history in our region in particular has been associated with the place. With place, I mean this large-scale represented in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, which, as mentioned in the history lesson between the ninth and sixteenth centuries, was an environment for convergence, communication and

trade and cultural exchange between three civilizations represented in the **Islamic civilization**, the **Chinese civilization** and the **European civilization**. It is well known that this exchange reveals its communicative and flourishing meaning in the trade, religions, cultures values and human relations, Portuguese Artillery erected on merchant ships, which led to other European military interventions launched the colonial era or times to Asia and Africa proceeding from the military control of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea.

The events witnessed in the recent decades including the return of the Indian Ocean, the link between place and time, represents at the same time: the era of globalization, and the time of the rise of Asia and Africa, the change of the environment of control, slavery and colonialism to a large cultural, commercial and economic milieu, into which peace and communication return gradually to stability in conjunction with the commercial and humanitarian exchange between East and West, North and South.

However, this renewed communication based on the freedom of trade, economic and humanitarian advancement which inaugurate a new era is obstructed by the tension which hinders its stability, public peace and mobility. This tension prevents maintenance of public peace and peoples is caused by the increased constraints on religious freedoms in dealing and communicating; including the pressures exerted on Islam throughout the world, especially in its historic environment in the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa.

It's the pressures that still constitute an environment for aggravation and conflict, which preclude the correlation between place and time, i.e. the expansion of exchanges and the predominance of peace and cultural communication, as was the case between the ninth and sixteenth centuries.

Therefore we have two matters: **the economic and commercial globalization** that is based on the freedom of exchange and peace, and which introduced the world to a new era for which the Indian Ocean with its Eastern, Southern and Western banks has become a symbol. We also have

this **great trend of** religious progress, which is a communicative trend despite the contrary appearances and phenomena.

What is needed for the Asian, African and Arabian peace, security and freedom is that the two globalizations should meet, communicate and contribute to the progress of the world, in addition to offering its safety and freedoms which is a historical lesson that we have learned from the developments occurred in the Indian Ocean over many centuries. The free commercial, cultural, religious and humanitarian exchange is the main condition for the advancement and progress.

The freedom, peace and prosperity of exchange require parity, and the ability to participate on equal terms, on its own humanitarian conditions, and the adoption of religious and cultural pluralism, and the absence of threat of force for intimidation or blackmail.

At this conclusion, I would like to highlight the efforts of the State of Qatar in the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which is the historical lesson which we become more aware of it through our religion and culture, and by falling on the outskirts and the centre of the Indian Ocean.

We know that the contributions of the State of Qatar exceed this large initiative to other economic, political and strategic areas, including the hard work in the Arab region, the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean, to settle disputes and make the economic, humanitarian and religious communication safer and more peaceful.