

**CLOSING STATEMENTS OF THE SESSIONS  
OF  
THE SUPREME COUNCIL**

<b>TITLE</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the First Session of the GCC Supreme Council The United Arab Emirates - Abu Dhabi 21-22 Rajab 1401 AH / 25-26 May 1981</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the Second Session of the GCC Supreme Council The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Riyadh 14-15 Muharram 1402 AH/ 10-11 November 1981</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the Third Session of the GCC Supreme Council The State of Bahrain - Manama 23-25 Muharram 1403AH/9-11 November 1982</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the Fourth Session of the GCC Supreme Council The State of Qatar - Doha 3-5 Safar 1404 AH/7-9 November 1983</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the Fifth Session of the GCC Supreme Council The State of Kuwait 4-6 Rabi al-Awwal 1405 AH/ 27-29 November 1984</b>
<b>The Closing Statement of the Sixth Session of the GCC Supreme Council Sultanate of Oman - Muscat 19-22 Safar 1406 AH/3-6 November 1985</b>
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<b>The Closing Statement of the Eighth Session of the GCC Supreme Council The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 6-9 Jumada Al-Ula 1408/26-29 December 1987</b>

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**The Closing Statement of the Twenty Fifth Session of the GCC  
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Supreme Council**

**Abu Dhabi - United Arab Emirates  
16-17 Dhul-Qadah 1426 AH/18-19 December 2005**

**The Closing Statement of the Twenty Seventh Session of the  
GCC Supreme Council**

**Riyadh Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia  
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***The Closing Statement***  
***of the Eighteenth Session of the Gulf***  
***Cooperation Council Supreme Council***  
***Kuwait City - The State of Kuwait***  
**20 to 22 Sha'baan 1418 Hijri**  
**Corresponding to 20 to 22 December 1997 A. D.**

In response to a gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arab States convened its Eighteenth Session in the State of Kuwait from 20 to 22 Sha'baan 1418 Hijri, corresponding to 20 to 22 December 1997 A. D.. The proceedings were chaired by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait. Present at the session were:

His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan,  
President of the State of the United Arab Emirates

His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa,  
Amir of the State of Bahrain

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,  
Heir Apparent, Deputy Prime Minister and  
Chief of the National Guard,  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed  
Sultan of Oman

His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani,  
Amir of the State of Qatar

Also, His Excellency Sheikh Jameel Bin Ibrahim Al Hejailan, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arab States participated in the meetings.

The Supreme Council reviewed the cooperative efforts and joint actions undertaken in the political, security, military, economic, social and legal areas since its Seventeenth Session. It also took note of the papers and recommendations made by the Ministerial Committee and the Ministerial Council. It stressed the genuine desire to strengthen common action within the framework of the Cooperation Council in pursuance of the high goals envisioned in the Statute of the Council. It called for expanding vistas of cooperation in tandem with regional and global developments with a view to fulfill the aspirations and hopes of the governments and peoples of the Council member states as well as to ensure regional security, stability and economic prosperity.

**Common Cooperation:**

## **Advisory Board to the Supreme Council**

With a view to enhance the involvement of the individual citizen in shaping and implementing the agenda of the Supreme Council, the Council decided to establish an Advisory Board to be composed of nationals of member states who enjoy the appropriate qualifications and expertise. The Board will provide advisory opinion in regard to matters referred to it by the Supreme Council.

### **Military Affairs:**

In the military sphere, the Supreme Council approved the decisions recommended by the Ministers of Defense at their 16th session held at Doha. Foremost among those decisions were those relating to the concrete steps to connect member states with a secure communications network for military purposes, radar coverage, early warning and military games.

The Council noted with satisfaction the progress made in military cooperation across the board, and stressed the need for further expansion of cooperation in this area with a view in particular to improve the collective defense capabilities of member states which share common goals, heritage and destiny.

### **Security:**

In the area of security, the Supreme Council endorsed the decisions adopted by the ministers of the interior at their 16th session, including those relating to facilitate the travel of nationals within member states, free flow of goods and trade exchange. In particular, nationals of the Council member states will be issued with electronically-read passports within a period of no more than two years. This measure would eliminate the need to fill out the entry and exit forms for citizens traveling within the member states which still use those immigration forms. Also, land border crossing points will be operating more smoothly by manning them with better trained personnel and using more advanced equipment.

### **Economic Affairs**

The Supreme Council reviewed the reports and conclusions of the ministerial committees on the plan of action for economic cooperation among member states.

With regard to the establishment of a customs union among member states and the completion of procedures towards developing a common customs tariff system vis-a-vis the outside world, the Supreme Council took note of the arrangements reached by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee. The Council also noted with satisfaction the progress made in the commodities nomenclature classification. The Council called for completion of measures aimed at creation of the customs union, including a proposal to standardize the customs duties on goods and to set a date for enforcing the standardized common customs tariff system for member states.

To underscore the importance of cooperation and interdependence among member states in the area of banking and the need to strengthen such

cooperation, the Supreme Council decided to allow national banks in member states to open branches in any member state subject to the adhoc rules and regulations. The Council also decided to allow the Gulf International Bank to open branches in member states.

Emphasizing the need to tie and coordinate the economic interests of member states in the area of infrastructure projects, the supreme Council directed to start the implementation of the first stage of the electric network project. The Council agreed that the project will be owned and operated by an independent authority run on a commercial basis.

In pursuance of steps taken by individual member states to modernize their respective economic plans with a view to encourage investments and to attract more private and foreign entrepreneurs, the Supreme Council authorized the Ministerial Council to adopt the model guidelines articles (law) relating to the promotion of foreign investments in the member states. The Supreme Council assessed the economic situation in member states and noted with satisfaction the clear economic prosperity in member states. The Council paid tribute to the private sector for its robust investments in various segments of the economy.

The supreme Council also took note of the paper submitted by the State of Kuwait on the strategic parameters of economic growth of and integration among member states. In view of its positive content and valuable perspective on economic growth strategy in both medium and long range terms for member states, the Council decided to refer the paper to the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee for careful examination.

### **Legal Affairs**

The Supreme Council approved the uniform civil statute (law) for member states to be known as the Kuwait Document. It also approved the uniform penal code (law) for member states, to be referred to as The Doha Document. Both Systems are drawn from the Islamic religious law (Al-Sharee'ah). The two legal sets will serve as guidelines towards unification of the judiciary systems in member states.

### **Humanitarian and Environmental Affairs**

The supreme Council reviewed the recommendations made by the Ministerial Council on cooperation in the humanitarian and environmental spheres.

While the Supreme Council appreciates the efforts of individual member states to constantly raise the ratio of their nationals in the work force and to facilitate national manpower mobility within member states, it stresses the importance of pursuing demographic policies that enhance social coherence, stability and security for the peoples of the region.

In the area of environmental protection and conservation, the Supreme Council approved three systems for the preservation and promotion of natural habitat, handling of radioactive materials and waste management, including the measures that must be complied with when moving hazardous waste across the borders of member states. All the measures are in line with relevant international regulations that represent a minimum of safety and protection procedures.

On the basis of the decision taken by the ministers of the interior at their 16th session, the Supreme Council endorsed the modalities and procedures relating to facilitate the transfer and exchange of organs among the organ transplant centers in the member states.

### **Political Affairs**

#### **Implementation by Iraq of Security Council Resolutions Emanating from its Aggression Against the State of Kuwait**

The Supreme Council discussed the most recent developments relating to the carrying out by Iraq of United Nations Security Council Resolutions relating to its aggression against the State of Kuwait. The Supreme Council affirmed the necessity for the Government of Iraq to implement all relevant Security Council Resolutions without selectivity, especially those relating to the elimination of mass destruction weapons that remain in the hold of Iraq, the release of Kuwaiti and third country prisoners, the return of all Kuwaiti property, in addition to compliance with resolution 949 by refraining from any act of aggression or provocation against neighboring states.

The Supreme Council stresses that the invasion and occupation of the State of Kuwait by Iraq was a breach of inter-Arab and international treaties. Therefore, Iraq must solemnly acknowledge that by its occupation of the States of Kuwait, it had violated the Charter of the League of Arab States, the Common Arab Defense Pact and the Charter of the United Nations. The Supreme Council invites Iraq to take the necessary steps to demonstrate its good intentions towards the States of Kuwait and other states in the region in both words and deeds with a view to save the region the horrors of another similar catastrophe and to ensure security and stability for all states of the region.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep concern over the serious escalation of tension between Iraq and the United Nations as a result of the continued efforts by the Government of Iraq to hide dangerous and lethal biological and chemical weapons that endangered the life of the brethren people of Iraq and the peoples of the region. In this context, the Supreme Council applauded the coherent international position, represented by the United Nations Security Council, in the face of the last standoff. It reaffirmed its support for the United Nations Special Commission in charge of elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and its Executive chairman with the intent to enable it to fulfill its mandate and invited the Government of Iraq to cooperate in earnest with the Special Commission without any restrictions or conditions. It stressed the need for Iraq to carry out all relevant Security Council Resolutions in a bid to mitigate sanctions and alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, a suffering with which member states of the Supreme Council are sympathetic thus prompting them to welcome the "oil for food" formula as a means to provide food and medical drugs need for the brotherly people of Iraq, as well as to welcome any other initiative that might ease their hardship.

The Supreme Council followed the recent developments in Northern Iraq and expressed concern over the regional repercussions of those events. It reaffirmed its firm position that the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be preserved.

## The Question of Occupation of the Three Islands of the State of the United Arab Emirates and Relations with Iran

### **A. The Question of Occupation of the Three Island of the State of the United Arab Emirates.**

The Supreme Council reviewed the developments relating to the question of occupation by Iran of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Smaller Tunb and Abu Mousa of the States of the United Arab Emirates. It reiterated its deep regret over the continued failure on the part of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond favourably to the repeated, earnest and sincere calls by the United Arab Emirates as well as regional and international organizations, organs and groups to resolve this dispute peacefully.

The Supreme Council reviewed the announcements by His Excellency President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran in which he expressed a desire to meet His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates. The Council heard a welcoming reaction expressed by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan to this orientation. The supreme Council welcomed any leadership encounter between the two countries.

While the Supreme Council reaffirms the sovereignty of the State of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands of Greater Tunb, Smaller Tunb and Abu Mousa and its absolute support for all peaceful measures and means it might use to restore its sovereignty over the islands in question, the Council reiterates its demand to the Iranian government to end its occupation of the three islands, to cease its policy of imposing a fait accompli by force, to stop the construction of Iranian facilities on the islands with the intent of changing their demographic composition, to reverse all measures and to dismantle all installations unilaterally put in place on the three islands, and to pursue peaceful means to resolve the dispute over the islands in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including acceptance of the option to refer the case to the International Court of Justice.

### **B. Relations with Iran**

Starting from the firm positions of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states to build up good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of good neighborliness, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and in view of the positive indications and statements emanating from the Iranian ranking officials on the orientation of the government of Iran to open a new page in relations with the Cooperation Council member states, the Supreme Council discussed the new developments in relations with Iran. It expressed hope that the immediate future will see positive and tangible developments in relations between the two sides with a view to build mutual confidence and establish relations on solid foundation to ensure security and stability in the region.

### **The Middle East Peace Process**

The Supreme Council considered the peace process in the Middle East and the serious deadlock it has reached as a result of failure on the part of the

government of Israel to fulfill its commitments under the transitional accords signed with the Palestinian side and due to the unilateral steps it is taking prior to the final solution negotiations. Those steps include the expansion of existing settlements and the building of new ones, confiscation of Palestinian land, imposition of economic blockade against the Palestinian population, and obstruction of economic development prospects in the Palestinian territories. All these actions contravene the spirit and underpinning principles of the peace process as well as the provisions of agreements signed within the peace framework.

While the Supreme Council expresses its categorical rejection of the policies and practices of the government of Israel, it calls upon that government to honour all its obligations under the accords signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization, primarily completion of the redeployment phases throughout the West Bank and starting the permanent status negotiations with the Palestinian side with a view to achieve full Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories under occupation since 1967 and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their full national legitimate rights, including their right to establish their own independent state on their national territory, the capital of which would be Al-Quds Al-Shareef (the Holy City of Jerusalem). The Supreme Council demands that the government of Israel should resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point where all previous rounds have reached. It also demands that Israel must fully pull out from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan back to the border line of 4 June 1967 in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. It also demands that Israel must withdraw fully from Southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa and leave all occupied Lebanese territory to return under the sovereignty of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425.

While the Supreme Council appreciates the efforts made by the United States administration in support of the Middle East peace process, as well as the efforts of the Russian Federation, it calls upon them to continue and intensify their roles towards the resumption of negotiations on all tracks in order to put the peace process back in right normal course.

The Supreme Council applauds the international consensus in support of the maintenance of the peace process in the Middle East and the need to fulfill binding obligations and the resumption of negotiations on the basis of the United Nations resolutions and the “land for peace” formula in order to achieve just and comprehensive peace. In this connection, the Supreme Council pays tribute to the European Union and its member states for their efforts as well as for the political and economic support they have been providing to the Palestinian National Authority.

### **Elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

The Supreme Council expressed its concern over the continued existence of programmes for the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction in the region. It called for to turn the Middle East region, including the Gulf area, into a zone free of all mass destruction weapons including nuclear armaments. The Supreme Council stressed the need that Israel should accede to the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty and to subject all its nuclear installations to the international inspection system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

#### The Phenomena of Extremism, Violence and Terrorism

The Supreme Council reaffirmed that extremism, violence and terrorism are world-wide phenomena that are not exclusive to one particular people or region. It reaffirmed once again its denunciation and condemnation of these phenomena and its absolute rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism irrespective of their origin. The Council expressed its regret over the shelter provided by some states to extremist terrorist elements under the banner of human rights protection. The Supreme Council invites those states to draw a distinction between human rights and the terrorist destructive actions and policies pursued by those elements which jeopardize the security and safety of the affected states and pose a grave threat to their citizens and the alien residents living in them. It also calls upon those states to act with a view to prevent the exploitive use by those extremist terrorist elements and groups of their territory and laws to acquire funds and arms and to block them from undertaking any other activities that endanger the security and safety of states. The Supreme Council calls for the conclusion of an international convention on combatting terrorism.

The Supreme Council expressed its rejection and condemnation of the reaction by the European Parliament and other organizations and organs in terms of negative references to the judiciary systems and administration of justice in the member states of the Supreme Council. The Council considered such reactions as an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of member states what would encourage the commission of crimes and terrorist acts thus creating an adverse impact on the security and stability of the region.

Finally, the Supreme Council welcomed the decision adopted by the Eighth Islamic Summit held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, between 9 and 11 December 1997, that the State of Qatar would host the Ninth Islamic Summit to be convened in Doha in the year 2000.

The Supreme Council expressed its profound appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, and the government and people of Kuwait for their warm reception, gracious hospitality and sincere sentiments of brotherhood. It applauded the organizational arrangements made for hosting the meeting.

The heads of member states of the Supreme Council paid personal tribute to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, Chairman of the current session of the Council, for his outstanding role in presiding over the meetings thus facilitating to a large measure the adoption of important decisions and conclusions in line with the aspirations of the peoples of the member states.

The Supreme Council looks forward to convene again at its Nineteenth Session to be held, God Willing, in the United Arab Emirates in December 1998, in response to a kind invitation extended by His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

Issued in Kuwait  
on 22 Sha'baan 1418 Hijri  
Corresponding to 22 December 1997 A. D.

**The Closing Statement of  
the Nineteenth Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
The State of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Abu Dhabi  
18-20 Shaa'ban 1419 AH / 7-9 December 1998 AD**

**In response to the gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al - Nahayan, President of the State of the UAE, the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) held its Nineteenth session in Abu Dhabi, the State of the UAE, from 18th to 20th Shaa'ban 1419 AH, corresponding to 7th -9th December under the Chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al - Nahayan, President of the State of the UAE in the presence of Their Majesties and Highnesses:**

**His Highness Sheikh Issa bin Salman Al - Khalifa,  
Emir of the State of Bahrain**

**His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al - Saud,  
Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister and  
Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed,  
Sultan of Oman**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al - Thani  
Emir of the State of Qatar**

**His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al - Ahmad Al - Jaber Al- Sabah  
Emir of the State of Kuwait**

**H.E. Sheikh Jameel bin Ibrahim Al-Hejailan,  
GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.**

**The Supreme Council examined the progress made in the process of joint cooperation in the security, military, economic, social and information fields since the Eighteenth session. It studied the reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council and affirmed the determination of the GCC states to push forward the collective march of the Cooperation Council towards broader horizons so as to accomplish more achievements in line with the hopes and aspirations of the GCC citizens so that security, stability and development may be attained in the region.**

**The Supreme Council highly appreciated the presence of His Excellency Nelson Mandela, the President of the Republic of South Africa, in the opening session as well as the valuable speech delivered by His Excellency**

on this occasion. The Council also appreciated the meeting, which was held during the session between the leaders of the GCC states and His Excellency in Abu Dhabi and praised the role played by the His Excellency in strengthening the excellent ties between the GCC states and the Republic of South Africa. The Supreme Council expressed its honor at the appreciation expressed by His Excellency for the GCC and its regional and international role, wishing for His Excellency President Mandela happiness and success in his private and public life in the coming years.

The Supreme Council also highly appreciated the speech of His Excellency the French President Jaque Chirac, addressed to the leaders of the GCC states and broadcasted in the opening session, the speech in which His Excellency expressed his friendship and appreciation for the Cooperation Council.

The Supreme Council was pleased with the participation of His Excellency Kofi Anan, Secretary - General of the United Nations (UN), in the opening session and highly appreciated the speech delivered by His Excellency as well as the meeting held between the leaders of the GCC and His Excellency, expressing its support and backing for the activities of the UN, and extolling its leadership role in the international relations, the role that serves the cause of international peace & security as well as economic, social, and human development of all nations and peoples of the world. Further, the Supreme Council expressed its honor at the appreciation and respect manifested by His Excellency for the Cooperation Council and at his recognition of its importance in consolidating security, stability and development in the region.

Similarly, the Supreme Council appreciated the presence of His Excellency Ismat Abdul Majeed, Secretary - General of the League of Arab States, and His Excellency Izzuddin Al Iraqi, Secretary - General of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), in the opening session of Eighteenth session of the Supreme Council of the GCC as well as the valuable consultations and meetings, which were held with the leaders of the GCC states.

- **The Process of Joint Cooperation:**

**Holding Semi-Annual Consultative Meeting of the Supreme Council:** The Supreme Council resolved to hold brotherly meetings of Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC states between two summits.

- **Military Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the decisions submitted to it by Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Defense of the GCC states, which were adopted in their 17th meeting held in Riyadh with regard to developing the Dira' Al Jazeerah (Peninsula Shield) Forces, and to follow up of the implementation of the secure communication network, radar coverage, early warning system and other areas of military cooperation. The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction at the steps that have been taken and stressed upon

the importance of continuing to implement all military cooperation programs aimed at bolstering the collective defense capabilities.

- **Security Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the decisions made in the Seventeenth meeting of Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Interior Ministers of the GCC states held in the State of Kuwait from 3rd to 4th November 1998 AD, and expressed its satisfaction at the coordination and cooperation that was realized in the different spheres of the cooperation process in the field of security, particularly that which is related to the collective fight against the phenomena of violence and terrorism as well as the development of programs for vocational training & technical education in the reformatories and corrective institutions.

- **Economic Affairs:**

The Supreme Council studied the situation of the petroleum markets and its effects on the economies of the GCC states due to the decline in oil prices. The Council reiterated the keen desire of the GCC states to stabilize the petroleum market and to improve prices. It also stressed upon the importance of abiding by the pledge made by the oil producing countries in June 1998 AD to cut down production in order to achieve improvement in prices. And, based on this, the Council agreed to extend the enforceability of the reduction of production as pledged by the states until the end of 1999 AD. Moreover, the Supreme Council urged the other oil producing countries to take similar steps to achieve market stability, as therein lies the interests of producing and consuming countries as well as the safety and stability of the world economy. The Council further asserted that in the event of other countries abiding by their pledge to cut down production, the GCC states would be ready to enter into appropriate arrangements with other oil exporting countries in order to restore the stability of the market. In this regard, the Supreme Council decided to entrust the Petroleum Cooperation Committee to intensify contacts in order to achieve this goal.

In preparation for the new round of trade negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which are scheduled to begin in the year 2000, the Supreme Council entrusted the Petroleum Cooperation Committee and the Trade Cooperation Committee with the task of studying the effects and feasibility of placing petroleum among the imported products in the sectoral initiatives in which, the countries are committed to granting absolute exemption from customs tariff within the framework of the WTO.

The Supreme Council reviewed the process of joint economic cooperation, and followed - up the steps that have been taken with the goal of launching the Customs Union among the GCC states, and approved a timeline for completing this Union, bringing it into effect as of 1st March 2001 AD. Towards this end, the Council entrusted the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee with the task of

reaching an agreement on the uniform custom tariff by not later than December 1999 AD.

Desirous of achieving a balance in the demographic make up and the labor structure of the GCC states, a balance that would lead to increased rate of economic participation by the citizens, the Supreme Council ratified the document, " The General Framework of the Population Strategy for the GCC states."

In order to meet the challenges of comprehensive development and its demands, and to draw the broad outlines dealing with these challenges during the first quarter of the 21st century by outlining the strategic development goals, paths and mechanisms necessary for its implementation in the GCC states, the Supreme Council ratified the document, " Long - Term Comprehensive Development Strategy for the GCC states (2000-2025 AD)".

With a view to consolidating the process of industrial development in the GCC states, and to back the efforts for bringing about industrial cooperation among them on integrative principles and to increase the contribution of the industrial sector in the national income, the Supreme Council approved the "Unified Strategy for Industrial Development" in its amended form.

As part of the effort to complete the standardization of the economic regulations in the GCC states, the Supreme Council approved the Agricultural Quarantine Regulation, and the Veterinary Quarantine Regulation, terming them as mandatory regulations since the two regulations had been implemented as reference model regulations during the past years.

In order to bring about advancement of the Accounting & Auditing profession and to develop its standards in the GCC states, the Supreme Council approved the Basic Regulation for the Accounting and Auditing Commission of the GCC states.

With a view to protecting the human health and environmental safety, the Supreme Council endorsed the recommendations calling for the expeditious production of lead - free gasoline (benzene) and to market it in the GCC states within the time period not exceeding the year 2002, and to take all steps to bring down the percentage of sulfur in diesel, which is produced in the national refineries so as to be able to match with the most advanced international standards in this field.

The Supreme Council welcomed the establishment of the patents office and the start of its functioning. This confirms the Council's interest in protecting the intellectual property rights.

The Supreme Council assessed the economic situation of the GCC states and affirmed its keen desire for the continuous improvement of the investment environment, thereby strengthening the productive capacities of the member states and increasing the job opportunities for the citizens. The Council lauded the active participation of the private sector in the various economic sectors and activities.

In the field of broadening the circle of relationship with other countries and international economic blocs, the Supreme Council appreciated the efforts exerted to develop and deepen the dialogue and negotiations with these countries and blocs in order to ensure the shared economic and investment interests and eliminate obstacles preventing the reaching of the GCC exports to these blocs and international markets.

The Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council: Upon establishing the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council, the Supreme Council expressed its happiness with the start of its functioning, and entrusted it with the task of studying the employment and hiring of the national labor and facilitation of its mobility between the Member States so as to increase the job opportunities for the citizens and the inhabitants of GCC states.

- **Humanitarian and Environmental Affairs:**

The Supreme Council decided that the Education and Training Ministers of the GCC states should undertake a comprehensive study with the objective of developing the curricula in order to strengthen the correlation between the educational curricula with that which fulfils the needs of the member states, thus enhancing the progress of the GCC and helping to achieve its goals.

- **Information Affairs:**

The Supreme Council took cognizance of the outcomes of the ninth meeting of the Information Ministers of the GCC states held in November 1998 AD and approved the recommendations submitted to it in order to support and activate the media activities among the media organizations of the GCC states, and decided that these media organizations should continue to keep pace with the international developments in the field of media affairs in a manner that it conforms to the goals of the Cooperation Council.

- **The Higher Committee for Cooperation between the State of Qatar and the State of the UAE:**

The Supreme Council reviewed the Agreement on the formation of the Higher Committee for Cooperation between the State of Qatar and the State of the UAE, which was signed in Doha on 17th Shaa'ban 1419 AH, corresponding to 6th December 1998 A.D. The Council welcomed this Agreement for what it contains in terms of the interests and well being of the two peoples and their countries, considering it to be a blessed and important step which supports and strengthens the joint process and fits in with the higher goals of the

GCC states.

- **Political Affairs:**

- **Implementation by Iraq of the Security Council Resolutions pertaining to its aggression against the State of Kuwait:** The Supreme Council discussed the latest developments in the course of Iraq's implementation of the Security Council resolutions pertaining to its aggression on the State of Kuwait. The Council noted the successive creation of crises by the Iraqi Government with the United Nations and the consequent tension and dangers it causes for the security and stability of the region. In this regard, the Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction at the defusing of the latest crisis between Iraq and the United Nations due to the decision of the Iraqi Government to reverse its decisions taken on 5th August 1998 A.D. and 31st October 1998 A.D. to discontinue cooperation with the United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM) and the International Agency For Nuclear Energy (IAEA). The Iraqi Government has now decided to resume cooperation with the UN inspectors in accordance with the mechanism outlined in the Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Iraqi Government and the UN Secretary - General in February 1998 A.D. This has saved the Iraqi people and the region from additional dangers and will buttress the pillars of security and stability. The Council affirmed its support for the UNSCOM, which has been assigned internationally to disarm Iraq of all its weapons of mass destruction, and for the efforts of the IAEA. Further, the Supreme Council stressed upon the need for the Iraqi Government to comply with all the international resolutions, strictly and honestly, without any conditions or exceptions, in particular those aspects of the resolutions, which are related to the elimination of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; and the release of all prisoners and detainees of the State of Kuwait and those of other countries; and the return of all Kuwaiti assets; and compliance with resolution 949 requiring Iraq to desist from any aggressive or provocative act against the State of Kuwait and other neighboring countries in a bid to mitigate the sanctions being imposed on Iraq and to alleviate the sufferings of the brotherly people of Iraq, the sufferings for which the Iraqi Government bears the sole responsibility, and one which is also painful for the GCC states, prompting them to welcome the oil for food program aimed at meeting the food and medicinal requirements of the brotherly people of Iraq. The Supreme Council also welcomed the Security Council resolution 1210 for renewing the oil for food program. The GCC states have welcomed and shall continue to welcome all initiatives that aim at assuaging the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The Supreme Council renewed what it had stated in its previous sessions, and what it had expressed in the successive statements: Iraq must confess in a clear and frank manner that its invasion and occupation of the State of Kuwait constitutes a violation of the inter-

Arab and International Charters and laws including, the Arab League Charter, the Common Arab Defense Pact and the UN Charter. The Council renewed its call on Iraq to take necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions, in words and deeds, towards the State of Kuwait and other neighboring countries so that security and stability may be achieved for all the countries of the region.

In this context, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its abiding position that the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be preserved.

- **The Issue of Occupation of the Three Islands of the State of the UAE and the relations with Iran:**

**A. The Issue of Occupation of the Three Islands of the State of the UAE:**

The Supreme Council considered the latest developments with regard to the issue of the Iranian occupation of the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, belonging to the State of the UAE. While noting the continual claims by Iran with regard to the three islands, claims which are unacceptable, and the continuation of the Iranian measures aimed at perpetuating the occupation, the Council reiterated the need for the Iranian Government to respond positively to the numerous, solemn and sincere calls, issued from the State of the UAE, the Damascus Declaration countries and the Arab League as well as other regional and international organizations and blocs, to resolve the conflict in a peaceful manner, an act that would earn the Government of President Mohammad Khatami the credibility necessary for building mutual trust, promotion of cooperation and preservation of security and stability in the region.

In this connection, the Supreme Council renewed its affirmation about the sovereignty of the State of the UAE over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and the Council's absolute support for all measures and peaceful means being undertaken by the State of the UAE to regain its sovereignty over these islands. The Supreme Council calls on the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the three islands and to refrain from pursuing a policy of imposing a fait accompli by force and to stop carrying out the construction of Iranian installations with the objective of changing the demographic structure of the islands, and to reverse all measures, and to dismantle all installations established unilaterally on the three islands, and to pursue all peaceful means to solve the dispute in accordance with the principles and rules of international law, including the acceptance of the referral of the matter to the International Court of Justice.

**B. Relations With Iran:**

The Supreme Council undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the

relations between the GCC states and Iran, and the outcomes of the bilateral contacts between the Member States and Iran since the last summit in light of the positions of the GCC which, are based on the recognition of the importance of having good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the foundation of values and principles of good neighborliness, mutual respect, taking care of the shared interests, non - interference in the internal affairs, abandoning the use of force or the threat to use it, and solving conflicts by peaceful means. The Supreme Council expressed its belief that confidence building would be done by taking practical steps to solve the existing problems between the two sides in accordance with the principles and conventions of international law, foremost among those problems is the Iranian occupation of the three islands. The Council appealed to the Secretary - General of the United Nations to continue with his efforts to solve this issue and to patronize the negotiations.

It also invited the Iranian Government to respond seriously to the efforts of the UN Secretary - General so that security and stability may be achieved in the region.

- **The Middle East Peace Process:**

The Supreme Council reviewed the developments in the Middle East Peace Process and welcomed the "Wye Plantation Agreement", which was concluded on 23rd October 1998 AD, between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides and which, represents an important and positive step and should be followed by steps towards implementation of all agreements signed between the concerned sides so as to preserve all the rights of the Arabs on the one hand and to ensure security, stability and a comprehensive and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region on the other. The Council expressed its appreciation of His Excellency President Clinton for the enormous efforts made by him in order to facilitate the two sides to reach that Agreement. In this regard, the Supreme Council urged Israel to complete the implementation of this agreement faithfully and precisely without any procrastination or postponement.

The Supreme Council affirmed that the desired peace cannot be attained except by the restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Arabs, compliance with resolutions of international law, the principles enunciated by the Madrid Conference and the principle of "land-for-peace" in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 425 and 426. It also re-affirmed that the peace will not be just, enduring and comprehensive unless the Palestinian people receive their legitimate national rights, foremost among those is the establishment of their independent state with Holy Jerusalem as its capital; and the need for the complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including from the Syrian Golan Heights back to the border line existing on the 4th of June 1967 A. D. the Southern Lebanon and its West Bqaa area in line with the

resolutions 425 and 426, without laying any pre-conditions or qualifications.

The Supreme Council expressed its categorical rejection and condemnation of the Israeli policy of building settlements in the occupied Arab territories and of the Israeli decisions to enlarge the geographic borders of the Holy Jerusalem and to change its demographic structure as it constitutes a violation of the international laws calling for non - recognition or acceptance of any situation resulting from the settlement activities in the occupied Arab territories, demanding from Israel to stop these activities and to desist from taking actions that negatively impact the final settlement agreement with the Palestinian side.

While the Council appreciates the efforts of the American Administration, the Russian Federation and the European Union along with its member countries for supporting the peace process and helping to bring it back on its right course, the Council appeals to these countries to intensify the effective roles in pressing Israel to abide by its pledges and on the need to resume negotiations on the Syrian track from where it broke down, as also on the Lebanese track so that peace, security and stability may be achieved for the region and its peoples.

**- Elimination of the Weapons of Mass Destruction:**

The Supreme Council renewed its appeal to the international community to work towards making the region, including the Gulf region, free from all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council reaffirmed the need for Israel to join the Nuclear Non - Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear installations to the international inspection system of the International Nuclear Energy Agency (IAEA).

**- The Lockerbie Issue:**

The Supreme Council followed the developments taking place with regard to the Lockerbie crisis and considered the positive response of concerned parties to the diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving this issue, and expressed its hope that the recent visit made by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Anan to the Libyan Arab Republic would lead to the resolution of this issue.

**- The Phenomena of Extremism, Violence and Terrorism:**

The Supreme Council renewed its categorical rejection of all manifestations of extremism, violence and terrorism in all its forms and features, irrespective of its source, place, motivations or basis, and what it represents in terms of dangers and threats to the security, safety and stability of the nations, their citizens and residents. The Supreme Council reiterated the determination of the member states to confront this phenomenon and to oppose it

through intensification of inter - communication, coordination and cooperation in the field of security, calling at the same time on all countries, in particular those which are linked to the GCC states by a bond of friendship and shared interests, to avoid sheltering the terrorist elements and groups or granting them political asylum, and to prevent them from exploiting the territories and laws of those countries for carrying out terrorist and subversive activities, and terrifying the innocent and peaceful people. The Supreme Council also renewed its call for concluding an international agreement on terrorism, affirming its conviction that the one and the ideal way to combat terrorism is through an international initiative agreed within the framework of the United Nations, an agreement that would guarantee the elimination of this world - wide phenomenon that causes the loss of life and property. In this context, the Supreme Council lauded the signing of the treaty on combating terrorism in April 1998 AD within the framework of the League of Arab States.

- **Extension of the term of His Excellency the Secretary - General:** The Supreme Council expressed its appreciation of the enormous efforts being exerted by His Excellency the Secretary - General and his active contributions towards strengthening the collective process of the Council and resolved to extend the appointment of HE Sheikh Jameel bin Ibrahim Al-Hejailan as Secretary - General of the GCC for another three years beginning from 1st of April 1999 AD, wishing for His Excellency success in his endeavors during the coming period.

HE Dr. Ghazi bin Abdul Rahman Al - Qosaibi's candidacy for the Post of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Supreme Council welcomed HE Dr. Ghazi bin Abdul Rahman Al - Qosaibi's candidacy, who is currently the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Great Britain, for the post of the Director - General of UNESCO, for which elections will be held at the United Nations Headquarters during the 157th session in the month of October 1999 AD.

The Council expressed its satisfaction at the support of the Arab countries for this candidacy during the Conference of the Arab Ministers of Education and Training held recently at Tripoli in the Libyan Arab Republic, endorsing HE. Dr. Ghazi bin Abdul Rahman Al - Qosaibi as the candidate of the Arab countries, and expressed its hope that all the friendly countries all over the world would support and back this nomination.

The Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al - Nahayan , President of the State of the UAE, and to his Government and the people for the kind reception, warm welcome, generous hospitality and the spirit of brotherhood which have been accorded to the leaders of the Gulf

**Cooperation Council, praising the excellent arrangements made for hosting this meeting.**

**The leaders of the GCC have also extolled the great role played by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al - Nahayan, President of the State of the UAE and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, in facilitating the meetings, a matter which had greatest impact on reaching the important decisions and outcomes in line with the aspirations of the peoples of the GCC states.**

**The Supreme Council presents its greetings and wishes to His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al - Nahayan, President of the State of the UAE and his people on the occasion of the 27th National Day, wishing for the State of the UAE constant progress and prosperity.**

**The leaders of the Supreme Council expressed their happiness at the winning of the International Peace Prize by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed, Sultan of Oman, seizing the opportunity to express their sincere congratulations to His Majesty, considering especially, what this award represents in terms of global appreciation for the wise policies of His Majesty and his role in serving and promoting the causes of regional and international peace.**

**The Supreme Council lauded the sincere efforts exerted by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al - Ahmad Al - Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, during his Chairmanship of the 18th session of the Supreme Council and the wisdom and authority manifested by His Highness in managing and following up the blessed process.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 20th session, Allah Willing, in the month of December 1999 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in response to the gracious invitation by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia.**

**Issued in Abu Dhabi  
20 Shaa'ban 1419 AH  
9 December 1998 AD**

**The Abu Dhabi Declaration**  
**Issued at the Nineteenth Session of the Supreme Council**  
**Abu Dhabi - The State of the UAE**  
**20 Shaa'ban 1419AH / 9 December 1998 AD**

**With guidance from our true religion and our tolerant Shariah (Islamic Law), and based on the goals and objectives of the Charter of the League of Arab States and the Founding Charter of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC);**

**Having faith in the common destiny of the Arab nation and in the unbreakable linkages between the Arab peoples;**

**Having faith also in the fact that the path for realizing a better future for the Arab nation lies in strong adherence to the goals and principles which have been enunciated by the Charters and resolutions of the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations (UN) so as to avoid the negative aspects of the past that have led to the state of division and rift; and**

**Recognizing that the preservation of the Arab characteristics and the protection of the vital interests of the Arab nation and the meeting of future challenges cannot be achieved except by effective Arab solidarity built on the Arab legality and Islamic belief; and**

**Convinced of the strong correlation between the national interests of individual Arab States and Arab Nationalism; and the objective link between the national security of the individual Arab countries and the collective security of the Arab nation; and**

**With a view to strengthening the values and principles of the collective Arab action based on the sincerity of intentions, commitment to legality, national sovereignty, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs, non-recourse to force or threatening to use it and instilling mutual interdependence between the Arab countries; and**

**Deducing lessons which are being put forward with a natural force by the political and economic changes at the international level and the ongoing transformations in the international relations; and**

**Recognizing the importance of preparing the ground for collective Arab action in order to meet the challenges emerging from the effects of international changes for the Arab countries together with the elimination of the negative aspects of the past;**

**The Supreme Council of the GCC States, therefore, in its session held in Abu Dhabi, the State of the UAE, discussed the current Arab situation with spirit of great responsibility and with the sincere desire to realize a better future. declares its determination to:**

**First: To work towards strengthening the inter- Arab relations in accordance with the firmly established Arab, Islamic and international values, principles and charters with which the Arab nation could rebuild Arab solidarity.**

**Second: To exert continuous efforts to rebuild the inter- Arab relations on the sound bases of security, tranquility and confidence.**

**Third: To work towards building effective Arab solidarity on firm grounds based on commitment to the values and principles collective Arab action.**

**Fourth: To develop the collective Arab action in order to realize the aspirations of the Arab countries for development, construction, security and stability, and to prepare the Arab region to meet the demands of the political, economic and international changes, and to secure the ingredients of material, moral and spiritual advancement in the life of the peoples of the Arab nations.**

**Issued at Abu Dhabi  
20 Shaa'ban 1419 AH  
9 December 1998 AD**

**The Closing Statement of  
the Twentieth Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Riyadh  
19-21 Shaa'ban 1420 AH /27- 29 November 1999 AD**

In response to the gracious invitation by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al- Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) held its 20th session in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 19th to 21st Shaa'ban 1420 AH, corresponding to 27-29 November 1999 A.D., under the Chairmanship of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia in the presence of Their Majesties and Highnesses:

**His Highness Sheikh Maktoom bin Rashed Al - Maktoom  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the State of the  
United Arab Emirates (UAE), Ruler of Dubai**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa bin Salman Al – Khalifa,  
Emir of the State of Bahrain**

**His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed,  
Sultan of Oman**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al – Thani  
Emir of the State of Qatar**

**His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al – Ahmad Al – Jaber Al- Sabah  
Emir of the State of Kuwait**

H.E. Sheikh Jameel bin Ibrahim Al-Hejailan, Secretary – General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) also participated in the meeting.

The Supreme Council examined the results of two decades of collective process in economic, social, information, military and security fields, and expressed their satisfaction at the achievements made during that period by this beneficial process. The Council affirmed its desire and sincere will to consolidate the march of the collective process of the GCC towards progress, and to keep pace with the regional and international changes so that the higher aspirations and goals of this process may be realized. The Council conducted a comprehensive assessment of the developments taking place with regard to economic, political and security issues at all levels – Arab, regional and international. It stressed upon the importance of continuing to work for reinforcing security, stability and development of the GCC states and its peoples.

**The Process of Joint Cooperation:**

- **Economic Affairs:**

The Supreme Council examined the course of the collective economic process, and looked into the steps taken to launch the Customs Union of the GCC states, and the stages that have been completed towards reaching an agreement on uniform customs tariff. The Council approved the launch of the Customs Union of the GCC states with effect from the 1st of March 2005, so that the Member States may amend their current tariff rates gradually or at one go to the tune of 5.5% on the basic commodities, and 7.5% on the remaining commodities. This nomenclature is in accordance with the classification of commodities, which have been grouped as 'exempt commodities', 'basic commodities' and 'remaining commodities'. The Council entrusted the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation with the task of taking all remaining steps and measures to bring about the launch of the Customs Union.

In an effort to complete the unification of the economic regulations of the GCC states, and to take the necessary steps to launch the Customs Union among them, the Supreme Council enacted the Uniform Customs Regulation (the Law) for the GCC States and approved its implementation as a reference model regulation for a period of one year after which amendments shall be effected in it in light of the feedback received from the Member States on this reference model regulation, thus paving the way for its mandatory implementation by the end of the year 2000 AD.

Reiterating its support to economic cooperation, trade exchange and to making direct investments more attractive, the Supreme Council approved the amendment of the regulation that determined the conditions for acquiring the national origin status (stated in the first paragraph, Article 3 of the Unified Economic Agreement). In order to acquire the status of national origin, it has now become sufficient to fulfill the condition of adding a percentage of the value on the industrial products while the condition of national ownership has been abolished for the projects manufacturing the product.

With a view to firmly establishing the concept of national-ization of economy, the Supreme Council resolved to amend the regulation pertaining to ownership of real estate by the GCC citizens in the member states and assigned the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation to look into the liberalization of ownership of real estate by the GCC citizens in the Member States for residential and investment purposes. In this regard the Council asked the Committee to present its recommendations to Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council lauded the decision of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain for allowing the natural as well as naturalized citizens of the GCC states

the right to own buildings and land along the lines of Bahraini citizens, be it for residential purposes, erecting buildings, practicing any economic activity or for establishing investment projects etc. The Council appreciated this blessed step, which brings goodness and increases the depth of relationships and links, and brings the GCC citizens closer to each other.

The Supreme Council approved the patent regulation for the GCC states in its amended form so that it may conform to the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement (TRIPS agreement), within the framework of the agreements with concluded with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction at the ratification of the contract for establishing the Electricity Grid Commission for the GCC states and its basic bye –laws, declaring it as a joint stock company, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as its headquarters in order to pave the way for the implementation of the first stage of the project.

The Supreme Council assessed the economic situation in the GCC states as part of its keenness to strengthen the productive capacities of the GCC states in a manner that it increases the job opportunities for the citizens. The Council studied the important developments which are being witnessed by the world economic order as well as the pattern of swift liberalization and openness coming to fore in multilateral trade systems, and the increase in the establishment of economic, regional and international blocs. The Council assigned the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation with the task of revising the Common Economic Agreement so that it strengthens the productive structures and leads to the growth of the role of the private sector, and brings about the realization of mutual benefit for the people of the GCC states. The Council also assigned the committee with the task of preparing a long-term strategy for the relationship of the Gulf and its negotiations with all nations, regional blocs and international organizations with the goal of arriving at a stage where the Gulf is represented by a single voice at the regional and national levels.

The Council also studied the situation of the world petroleum markets, and expressed its satisfaction over the developments taking place in the petroleum market, affirming its constant and continuous desire to exert all efforts to ensure the stability of the world petroleum market in a manner that it preserves the interests of all the consumers and at the same time guarantees the continuity of the interests of the producers.

In recognition of the fact that petroleum constitutes the mainstay of the national economy in the GCC states, and that it is considered as

the main source of energy in the world, the Supreme Council resolved to move forward towards crystallizing a unified position as regards petroleum market relations, so as to maintain a balance between demand and supply, and to deal with the emergency situations that might destabilize the market and have a negative effect, equally, on the interests of both the producers and consumers of petroleum.

- **Humanitarian and Environmental Affairs:**

Based on the Council's stress on strengthening and deepening the collective process in the field of education, and in order to meet the demands of its development plans; the Supreme Council directed the Ministers of Education and Training to take all steps and measures to develop the educational curricula in the GCC states.

As part of the concern for the human being and the safety of the environment, the Supreme Council passed directives to evolve effective mechanisms for bringing about coordination between the ministries and the concerned authorities at the national level in each Member State to take appropriate and sound steps in order to get rid of medical wastes, and to deal with radioactive wastes, and to effect coordination between the GCC states in transporting the dangerous wastes away from its borders.

With a view to encouraging the pharmaceutical industry in the GCC states, and to enable each Member State to benefit from the efforts of the other states in terms of registration of pharmaceutical products manufactured in the GCC states, the Supreme Council approved the organizing principles supporting it. It also agreed to accord the health and medical documents and certificates issued in any Member State the same treatment that is accorded to similar documents in that state.

- **The Consultative Commission of the GCC:**

Implementing the Supreme Council's resolution in the previous session with regard to employment of the national work force, and in order to facilitate their mobility from one Member State to another; and with a view to increasing the job opportunities for the GCC citizens and to nationalize jobs in the various sectors, and to achieve coordination among the Member States in this field, the Supreme Council approved the views of the Consultative Commission in this regard. The Council decided to assign the Consultative Commission with the task of undertaking an evaluation of the process of joint action in the field of economy, asking it to present its views in the 21st session of the Supreme Council.

In view of the desire of the Supreme Council to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the Long Term Strategy for Comprehensive Development for the GCC states (2000-2025), which was adopted by the Council in its 18th session with the objective of keeping pace with the rapid economic changes in the world order.

the Supreme Council resolved to assign the Consultative Commission with the task of producing a reference model file to record that which is proposed by the Commission in terms of sub - goals and mechanisms for the programs and procedures to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of this strategy, and to submit periodic reports on it to the Council.

- **Military Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the resolutions submitted by Their Highnesses and Excellencies, the Ministers of Defense of the GCC states, which were made in their 18th meeting held on 17-18 November 1999 AD in the State of the UAE on the issue of developing and following up the affairs of military cooperation with regard to the Dir'a Al Jazeerah Forces (Peninsula Shield), the Security Belt Project, secure communications, defense policy and Air force for the GCC states.

The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction at the steps taken and emphasized upon the importance of continuing to implement all military cooperation programs aimed at building defense capabilities of the GCC states.

- **Security Affairs:**

The Supreme Council ratified the resolutions of the 18th meeting of Their Highnesses and Excellencies, the Ministers of Interior of the GCC states held in Al – Ain, the State of the UAE during the month of November 1999 AD. These resolutions were aimed at enhancing the process of joint action related to aspects concerned with facilitating the mobility of citizens between the GCC states and issuing electronically - readable passports.

The Supreme Council also endorsed the Agreement reached among the Sultanate of Oman, UAE, Qatar and Bahrain on mobility of their citizens from one state to another with the identity card as it is an important step which strengthens the joint cooperation among the GCC states, deepens the proximity among its peoples and represents an advancement in the relationship to a level that realizes the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the GCC.

The Supreme Council emphasized upon the need to complete the procedures related with the protection of the land and sea environment from pollution.

The Supreme Council welcomed the Organization of Islamic Conference's (OIC's) Treaty on combating terrorism, which was concluded at the 26th Islamic Conference held in Burkina Faso.

- **Information Affairs:**

The Supreme Council examined the outcomes of the 10th meeting of the Information Ministers which was held in Al-Ain, the State of the UAE during the month of November 1999 AD, and approved the recommendations submitted before it. recommendations that aim at

supporting the joint action in the field of mass media. The Council emphasized upon the need to monitor the implementation of the resolutions pertaining to the joint process in the field of mass media, and the need for the media to keep pace with the developments in the international media in a manner that the goals and aspirations of the GCC states are realized.

- **Diplomatic and Consular Cooperation:**

The Supreme Council endorsed the diplomatic and consular cooperation agreement signed between the State of Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman on 21st Muharram 1419 AH corresponding to 18th May 1998 AD, and the agreement between the State of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait on 9th Shaa'ban 1420 AH corresponding to 17th November 1999 AD. These agreements enable the missions and consulates of each of the two countries to protect the interests of the other country and its citizens in the event of non - presence of diplomatic or consular representation of the other country in which the former is accredited. This will help in strengthening the process of cooperation, deepening of relationship and in bringing the Member States closer to each other.

- **Political Issues:**

**Implementation by Iraq of the Security Council Resolutions pertaining to its aggression against the State of Kuwait:**

The Supreme Council discussed the progress made by Iraq in the course of implementing the Security Council resolutions pertaining to its aggression on the State of Kuwait. The Council noted that despite the passage of eight years, the Iraqi regime continues to adopt a policy of procrastination with regard to the complete implementation of the international resolutions. It also discussed means to put an end to the humanitarian sufferings of the people of Iraq, holding the Iraqi regime responsible for causing and prolonging this suffering. The Supreme Council expressed its regret at the Iraqi regime's continual rejection of the international initiatives and proposals, in particular the Arab proposals, which were put forward with the objective of evolving an effective mechanism and methodology for the lifting of international economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, thus presenting a way out for Iraq.

In this respect, the Council renewed its demand from the Iraqi Government to respond positively, accurately and faithfully to the Arab and international resolutions and voices that call for implementation of all resolutions of international legality, in particular those aspects of it which call for serious cooperation with the international committees working for the release of the Kuwaiti and other Prisoners of War (POWs) and the detainees, and for the return of Kuwaiti assets. Iraq must also refrain from committing any provocative or aggressive action against the State of Kuwait and the neighboring countries pursuant to the UNSC resolution 949. so

that peace and stability may be established in the region.

The Supreme Council stressed on the need for Iraq to prove its peaceful intentions towards its neighbors in words and deeds. It must confess that its invasion of the State of Kuwait was a violation of the Arab and international charters including the Arab League Charter, the Common Arab Defense Pact, the Economic Cooperation Treaty and the UN Charter.

The Supreme Council called on the United Nations Security Council to take decisions that guarantee the creation of a mechanism organizing the relationship between Iraq and the United Nations so as to ensure the implementation by Iraq of all the relevant UNSC resolutions pertaining to its aggression on the State of Kuwait. It also called on the UN to continue to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

At the same time, the Supreme Council stressed upon the need to preserve Iraq's independence, its territorial integrity and regional safety.

#### **Relations with Iran:**

The Supreme Council examined the steps taken by the Tripartite Committee, which has been entrusted by the Council with task of evolving a mechanism for bringing about direct negotiations between the State of the UAE and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the issue of the three islands. The Council directed the Committee to continue to exert efforts it had begun with the aim of creating conditions conducive to the evolution of a mechanism for conducting direct negotiations between the two countries.

#### **The Middle East Peace Process:**

The Supreme Council studied the developments taking place with regard to the Middle East Peace Process and hailed the Sharm Al-Shaikh Agreement that was concluded on 4th September 1999 AD between the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli Government, as being a positive step in the right direction provided that this is followed by serious steps towards returning to the values and principles adopted by the Madrid Conference, and to the resumption of negotiations that would lead to the restoration of legitimate rights of the Arabs in accordance with the UNSC resolutions 242,338 and 425, as well as the principle of land for peace; and the achievement by the Palestinians of all their legitimate rights; and the establishment of their independent state on their national soil with the Holy Jerusalem as its capital. The Council reiterated its absolute rejection of all attempts from the side of the Israeli Government to change the demographic structure of the Holy Jerusalem, considering it to be a violation of international law and resolutions of international legitimacy.

**The Supreme Council stressed the fact that comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved except by complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including from the occupied Golan Heights belonging to Syrian Arab Republic, to the border line existing on the 4th of June 1967 AD, and from Southern Lebanon and its Western Biqaa area in accordance with the UNSC resolutions 425 and 426 unconditionally.**

**While appreciating the Arab and international efforts that are being exerted to support the Peace Process, and urging the Israeli Government to quickly and faithfully implement the agreements and pledges it has committed to the Arab sides, the Supreme Council appeals the patrons of the Peace Process and the European Union and its member countries to continue to intensify their efforts to bring back the peace process on the right track. In this context, the Council lauded the efforts made by His Excellency President Clinton of the United States of America (USA) in this regard, as well as the resolution passed by the European Union Summit on 25th March 1999 AD affirming the right of the Palestinians to self determination, which includes establishment of an independent state.**

**Elimination of weapons of mass destruction:**

**The Supreme Council renewed its appeal to the international community to work towards freeing the Middle East Region, including the Gulf region, from the presence of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Supreme Council stressed upon the need for Israel to join the Nuclear Non – Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear installations to international inspections system of International Agency for Nuclear Energy (IAEA).**

**Damascus Declaration:**

**The Supreme Council examined the process of cooperation within the framework of the Damascus Declaration and emphasized the importance of working within the framework of the Declaration, and looked forward to the next meeting to be held for the member countries so that the aspirations of the people of those countries may be achieved.**

**The Situation in Chechnya:**

**The Supreme Council has been following the ongoing events taking place in Chechnya and its tragic and painful consequences, which have left thousands of deaths, injuries, and homelessness amongst the Chechan people. The Council called upon the Russian Federation to solve this problem by peaceful means and urged the start of direct negotiations between the two sides in order to prevent bloodshed, strengthen peace, and to protect innocent lives of children, women and the aged. It also called on the Russian**

**Government to facilitate the reaching of the humanitarian aid to the Chechan people.**

**The Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, his Government and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm reception, welcome and generous hospitality and the spirit of fraternity, extolling the excellent arrangement made for hosting this meeting.**

**The Supreme Council also lauded the great role played by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, for his wise management of the meetings which had the greatest impact on arriving at important decisions as part of the effort to realize the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the GCC states.**

**The Supreme Council also lauded the true and sincere efforts exerted by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, President of the state of the UAE, during his Chairmanship of the 18th session of the Supreme Council and the wisdom and authority demonstrated by His Highness in managing and following up this blessed process.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 21st session to be held in Manama – State of Bahrain in November 2000 AD, in response to the gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain.**

**Issued in Riyadh  
21 Shaa'ban 1420 AH  
29 November 1999 AD**

**The Riyadh Declaration  
Issued at the Twentieth session of the  
Supreme Council of the GCC states  
19-21 Shaa'ban 1420AH  
27-29 November 1999 AD**

**The Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), in its 20th session held in Riyadh in the period from 19-21 Shaa'ban 1420AH corresponding 27-29 November 1999 AD;**

**By the guidance from our true religion and the tolerant Islamic Shariah (Islamic Law), and based on the goals and objectives of the Founding Charter of the GCC; and**

**Based on the consciousness on part of the Council as regards the importance of this historic turning point, an analytical review of the developments and the turn of events in the world were undertaken, realizing that history is not created by distant spectators, and that the events are not shaped by the secluded and the meek; and considering the importance of the role that the Member States should play and the responsibility that they must assume as part of the Islamic and Arab nation, which at the same time is also a part of the world at large, it is necessary that they should be capable of keeping pace with the rapid changes, and that they should also be positively responsive to the new demands without losing any of their characteristics derived from Islamic originality and Arab purity;**

**The Supreme Council examined the economic developments taking place in the international arena and arrived at two basic conclusions, the import of which is that the wave of globalization has imposed itself on the world and has left its mark on the era, and that this wave necessitates evolution of strong economic entities capable of dealing with this wave and its attendant developments without exposing the prosperity of the people to economic disturbances. And, beginning from this starting point, the Supreme Council noted that in order to efficiently transact with this gigantic force, it is necessary that the Member States should not just remain spectators of the successive developments taking place on the world economic scene and be content with reactive policies, in fact they should take the initiative of actively contributing to and playing their role in the crystallization and shaping of the direction of their march through a unified Gulf economic entity, transacting, keeping pace and integrating with the Arab economic entity, which is correlated with that which guarantees the protection of the interests of the member states. In this context, the Council emphasized the importance of the need to lay down long - term strategies that are directed towards supporting the moves towards Arab economic integration so as to control the relations among the GCC states, the regional blocs and international organizations; and**

**By convening this session the Supreme Council has reinforced its position as a single entity; it is equipped with the experience of two decades. As such it has become necessary that it should pause to take stock of the record of its achievements and the record of that which must be achieved. It has also become essential to evaluate objectively and precisely the process of cooperation in the field of economy among the Member States so that the Council may leap forward with a new determination, an unwavering spirit and comprehensive vision that can activate the economies of the market, consolidate the productive structures and increase the role of the private sector in the process of development in a manner that it enables its economies to transact with the global changes so that it may lead to the achievement of that which its peoples aspire for and what they deserve in terms of welfare and affluence; and**

**In recognition of the importance of the comprehensive development in raising the level of the peoples and individuals, the Supreme Council has paid due attention to this vital issue, affirming that man should remain the pivot of development, its goal and essence. In this connection, the Supreme Council examined the comprehensive development strategy, which it had previously endorsed in its 18th session held in Abu Dhabi, and assigned the Consultative Council with the task of preparing a reference model file in order to increase the effectiveness with which this strategy is being implemented so that it may serve the Gulf citizen by providing new ideas and proposals that aim at activating the mechanisms and unleashing of capabilities; and**

**Recognizing the fact the petroleum constitutes the mainstay of the national economy in the GCC states and is considered as the main source of energy world over, the Supreme Council resolved to continue to work towards crystallizing a unified position towards the petroleum market with a view to guaranteeing a balance between demand and supply, and dealing with the sudden emergencies which might lead the to the instability of the market, which negatively affects the interests of both the producers and consumers equally;**

**The Supreme Council studied the current situation of the world petroleum market, and expressed its satisfaction at the developments taking place in the petroleum market, reiterating its abiding and keen desire to exert all efforts to guarantee the stability of the world petroleum markets so that it protects the interests of the consumers, and at the same time, guarantees the continuity of the interests of the producers; and**

**The Supreme Council, which is racing against time to build an entity that matches with the aspirations of its people, reiterates that the GCC, in reality, is nothing but an embodiment of Arab fraternity and Islamic solidarity and has not been away even for a moment from its large Arab environment nor has it isolated itself from the larger Islamic Ummah (nation). And, the efforts of the GCC towards unity are nothing but an expression of its faith that the power of the Arabian Gulf is power for the**

**Arabs and that its dignity is also the dignity of the Islamic world. The Supreme Council renews its determination to meet the challenges and to overcome them; its weapon in this endeavor is its deep sense of faith in Allah and its strong confidence in the abilities of its people and the unifying force that binds them together so that the hopes and aspirations for a better future may be realized, a future adorned with sustainable and comprehensive development, and equipped with social justice, and full of bounties and growth.**

**And Allah Knows all intentions and He is the Grantor of All Success**

**Issued in Riyadh  
21 Shaa'ban1420 AH  
29 November 1999 AD**

**The Closing Statement of  
the Twenty First Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
The State of Bahrain - Manama  
4-5 Shawwal 1422 AH /30- 31 December 2000 AD**

In response to the gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al – Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain, the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) held its 21st session in Manama, the State of Bahrain, on Saturday and Sunday, from 4th to 5th Shawwal 1421 AH corresponding to 30th –31st December 2000 AD, under the Chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al – Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain in the presence of Their Majesties and Highnesses:

**His Highness Sheikh Maktoom bin Rashed Al - Maktoom  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the State of United  
Arab Emirates, Ruler of Dubai**

**His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al - Saud,  
Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister and  
Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed,  
Sultan of Oman**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al - Thani  
Emir of the State of Qatar**

**His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al - Ahmad Al - Jaber Al- Sabah  
Emir of the State of Kuwait**

H.E. Sheikh Jameel Ibrahim Al-Hejailan, Secretary – General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) also participated in the meeting.

Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states expressed their happiness on the occasion of the return, after recuperation, of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, President of the State of the UAE, from his journey abroad undertaken for medical treatment, praying to Allah Almighty to grant His Highness abundant health and complete recovery and to assist him by His help and grant him success so that he may continue to lead the State of UAE and contribute towards serving the causes of the Arab and Islamic nation.

The Supreme Council examined the results of the process of collective action in the economic, social, political, military, security, cultural and information fields. The Council expressed its satisfaction at the achievements made. reiterating its desire and sincere will to enhance the

joint process of the Council and propel it towards progress so as to keep pace with the regional and international changes, thus leading to the achievement of the aspirations and the higher goals embodied in the Founding Charter of the Council. It stressed upon the importance of continuation of the process of joint action so as to consolidate security, stability and development of the GCC states and its people.

#### **The Process of Joint Cooperation:**

- **Economic Affairs:**

The Supreme Council discussed the process of joint cooperation among the GCC states in the field of economy, on the basis of the reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council, the Ministerial Committees and the Secretariat - General. The Council directed the competent committees to reach an agreement soon on the principles, byelaws The Council lauded the steps taken by the State of Bahrain to lower the customs tariff in accordance with the directives of their Majesties and Highnesses, the Leaders of the GCC states, and in line with all the steps required to launch the Customs Union. and the necessary procedures for launching the Customs Union within the specified time frame. The Council lauded the steps taken by the State of Bahrain to lower the customs tariff in accordance with the directives of their Majesties and Highnesses, the Leaders of the GCC states, and in line with all the steps required to launch the Customs Union.

The Supreme Council discussed the process of joint cooperation among the GCC states in the field of economy on the basis of the reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council, the Ministerial Committees and the Secretariat-General. The Council directed the competent committees to reach an agreement soon on the principles, byelaws and the necessary procedures for launching the Customs Union within the specified time frame. The Council lauded the steps taken by the State of Bahrain to lower the customs tariff in accordance with the directives of their Majesties and Highnesses, the Leaders of the GCC states, and in line with all the steps required to launch the Customs Union.

Endeavoring to implement Article 22 of the Unified Economic Agreement that provides for bringing about coordination of the financial, monetary and banking policies; and to enhance cooperation among monetary institutions and the central banks, including working towards unifying the currency so that it complements the required economic integration; the Supreme Council approved the common anchor for the GCC currencies as a first step towards achieving the unification of the currency. The Council directed the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation, the Committee of Governors of the Financial Institutions and the Central Banks to make a plan of action. with a

specified time frame to achieve that goal and to present it before the Council in its next session. It also directed the Committee of Governors to reach an agreement on the mechanisms and necessary procedures aimed at facilitating transactions using the currencies of the GCC states in the markets of the Member States.

The Supreme Council resolved to permit the natural and the naturalized citizens of the GCC states to practice all economic activities and professions except for a limited number of professions, which, at this stage, have been reserved for the citizens of the individual states only. It agreed to widen the scope of retail trade for the citizens of the GCC states in other GCC states through the ratification of “amended principles for the practice of retail trade by the GCC states.”

The Supreme Council extended the validity of the Unified Customs Regulation (“the Law”) as a reference model law for another year, on the condition that this regulation is implemented as a mandatory regulation in all GCC states beginning from January 2002 AD. It also ratified the Veterinary Quarantine Regulation and resolved to make its implementation mandatory after it was amended to meet the requirements of the laws and regulations of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Supreme Council approved the “ Long Term Strategy for Negotiations with the other countries, regional blocs and international organizations”, and ratified the “ the Declaration of Common Principles among the GCC states and the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)” which has been signed by the two sides.

The Council studied the situation of the petroleum markets and noted with satisfaction the fruits of the efforts exerted by the GCC states, in cooperation with other countries in the Organization of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) and with countries outside of the OPEC during the current year, to achieve a suitable balance between the interests of the producers and those of the consumers in the market; these efforts were lauded by the Caracas OPEC Summit. The Council declared that the Member States would continue to follow the same policy so that the market remains balanced, and the prices stable, during the agreed time period in the OPEC. In this respect, the Supreme Council directed the Petroleum & Energy Ministers to work towards cutting down production during the next meeting of the OPEC and to take other measures to maintain the balance of the market and to achieve the target price.

The Supreme Council emphasized upon the importance of cooperation between the producers and the consumers, and praised the outcome of the meetings of the seventh International Energy

Forum, which was held recently in Riyadh. The Council welcomed the proposal of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to establish the Secretariat – General for the Forum in Riyadh so that the dialogue between the producers and the consumers may be deepened.

- **Humanitarian & Environmental Affairs:**

The Supreme Council agreed to treat the citizens of the GCC states working as part of the civil services in any Member State, at par with the citizen of the host country during the work period; this is in accordance with the privileges stated in the decision of the Ministers incharge of the central institutions of the civil services in the GCC states.

The Supreme Council stressed upon the need for the concerned authorities in the private and the public sectors to continue with increasing the work opportunities for the citizens, and to inform the Council about the progress made in this direction in its next session. The Council approved the recommendations and mechanisms which were laid down by the Joint Committee for Studying the Demographic Structure and the effects of immigrant workers and emphasized upon the need for the Member States to take necessary steps to implement those recommendations and mechanisms.

The Supreme Council approved the Common Curricula Development Program of the GCC, its procedures and mechanisms, which were submitted before it by the Ministers of Education and Training.

- **The Consultative Commission:**

The Supreme Council took cognizance of the views of the Consultative Commission, and its assessment of the process of joint action in the field of economy among the Member States as well as its proposals to activate the Long Term Strategy for Comprehensive Development in as far as it concerns building the scientific and technological capacities in the GCC states. It decided to refer those views and proposals to the relevant Ministerial Committees in order to develop the joint economic process in its light. The Supreme Council assigned the Commission with the study of the following subjects:

Development of the Education System; Energy and Environment; Water Strategies; Scientific and Technological Research; and to submit its views on these subjects before the Ministerial Council.

- **Legal Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the Riyadh Document on the Unified Penal Code (the Law) in the GCC states as a reference model law for a period of four years. Also, the Council extended the validity of the Muscat Document on the Unified Civil Code (the Law) as a reference model law for a period of another 4 years.

- **Military Affairs:**

The Supreme Council took cognizance of the measures taken and the studies completed, and expressed its satisfaction at the course of military cooperation in as far as it concerns the implementation of the practical steps for consolidating collective defense and military cooperation which culminated into the adoption of the Common Defense Agreement by the Council and the signing by their Majesties and Highnesses on it. The ratification will be done by Member States in accordance with the established procedures in each country.

- **Security Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the resolutions passed in the meeting of Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Interior that was held in Riyadh from 27th to 28th of Rajab 1421 AH corresponding to 24th to 25th October 2000 AD, especially those aspects related with the consolidation of the follow up mechanisms and communication among the interior ministries so as to facilitate the procedures for mobility of citizens and the flow of trade among the GCC states as well as enhancing cooperation in the field of combating drugs abuse.

- **Political issues:**

The Supreme Council discussed the progress made by Iraq in the course of implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions related to the prevailing situation between Kuwait and Iraq arising from the Iraqi occupation of the State of Kuwait.

Based on its keen desire to prepare conducive conditions for enhancing security, peace and stability in the Gulf region, the Supreme Council renewed its call on Iraq to understand the importance of fulfilling its obligations entailed on it by the provisions of the Security Council resolutions related to its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Tripartite Commission so as to arrive at a quick and final solution to the problem of Kuwaiti Prisoners of War (POWs) and detainees as well those of other nations, renewing its demand from Iraq to return all Kuwaiti assets in its custody. The Council also asked Iraq to resume its cooperation with the United Nations and solve all pending issues related to the weapons of mass destruction and the means of monitoring. It called upon Iraq and the Security Council to enter into a comprehensive dialogue in order to implement these obligations in a just and comprehensive manner and on a sound basis; this would lead to the lifting of sanctions.

The Council emphasized upon the need for Iraq to respect the security and independence of the State of Kuwait, its sovereignty and its regional safety, urging Iraq to take all measures that demonstrate its good intentions towards the GCC states so that security and stability may be established in the region.

**The Supreme Council renewed its constant welcome of and readiness to participate in all initiatives that tend to ameliorate the sufferings of the Iraqi people, reiterating its determination to continue with its endeavors aimed at putting an end to that suffering within the framework of the international resolutions.**

**The Supreme Council stressed upon the importance of respecting the independence of Iraq, its territorial integrity and regional safety and non – interference in its internal affairs.**

**The Supreme Council listened to the report presented by the Tripartite Committee, which was entrusted with the task of devising a mechanism to begin direct negotiations in order to solve the problem of Iranian occupation of the three islands belonging to the State of the UAE by peaceful means. The report dwelt upon the Iranian refusal to have any dealings with the Tripartite Committee on the mission assigned to it by the GCC, and its rejection of the peaceful initiatives made by the State of the UAE earlier.**

**After conducting a comprehensive assessment of the developments related to the problem of the Iranian occupation of the three islands, the Supreme Council resolved to assign the Ministerial Council with the task of looking into all peaceful means that lead to the restoration of the legitimate rights of the State of the UAE over the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa which continue to remain under the occupation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Council shall address the issue on the following bases:**

**Backing and supporting the right of the State of the UAE on its three islands, namely, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran and rejecting the Iranian occupation of the three islands belonging to the State of UAE.**

**Reiterating the complete sovereignty of the State of UAE on the three islands on the ground that it is an integral part of the of the State of UAE, preserving its rights on those islands; and non-recognition of any sovereignty other than the sovereignty of the State of UAE on the three islands, its regional waters, continental shelf and the trade zone belonging to the three islands.**

**Rejecting the Iranian claims on the Abu Musa island and the action it has taken and its repercussions, considering those actions as being dangerous for the security and stability in the region and constituting a source of increasing tension. Similarly, absolute rejection by the GCC states of the Iranian occupation of the two islands, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb.**

**Condemning the Iranian encroachment and military exercises.**

which are provocative actions that threaten the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf and constitute a source of serious concern and do not help in confidence building.

Supporting all steps being taken by the State of the UAE in order to regain its sovereignty on its three islands through peaceful means based on the principle of collective security of the GCC states, and asking the Islamic Republic of Iran to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice.

The Supreme Council delved into the gory events taking place in the Palestinian territories due to the savage aggression and repressive measures, and the policy of closure and blockade being pursued by Israel against the brotherly Palestinian people, who are demanding their legitimate rights, including the right to return, and establishment of an independent state with the Holy Jerusalem as its capital. While the expressing its denunciation and condemnation of these aggressions, the Supreme Council demands that protection be provided to the Palestinian people from these aggressions, underscoring its abiding stand on the realization of comprehensive and just peace in the region, a peace based on the international legal resolutions, in particular, the UNSC resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace.

The Supreme Council also affirmed that comprehensive peace cannot be realized except by restoring all the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and by the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, and by the complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the borderline existing on the 4th of June 1967, as well as completing the Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese territories beyond the internationally recognized borders, including withdrawal from the Sheb'aa farms as per the provisions of the UNSC resolutions 425 and 426 and the release of all Lebanese prisoners in the Israeli jails.

The Supreme Council expressed its hope that the efforts which are presently being exerted would lead to a peace settlement that restores the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, confirming its confidence in the Palestinian negotiator and appealing to the international community to exert more efforts to put pressure on Israel, asking it to show commitment to the values and principles laid down by the Madrid Conference. It also hoped that increased efforts of the international community would lead to the achievement of all legitimate rights of the Arabs.

The Supreme Council renewed its appeal to the international community to work towards making the Middle East region, including the Gulf region, free from all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council stressed upon

**the need for Israel to join the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and to subject all its nuclear installations to international inspections under the auspices of International Agency for Nuclear Energy (IAEA).**

**The Supreme Council expressed its support and backing for the resolutions of the 9th session of the Islamic Summit, held in Doha, the State of Qatar from 12th to 13th November 2000 AD. It also expressed its hope that the State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of State of Qatar, during his Chairmanship of the Summit of Islamic Conference, will emerge stronger through its handling of the proceedings with wisdom and conviction, in a manner that serves the interests of the Islamic ummah (nation) and increases its effectiveness as well as presence on the international scene.**

**The Supreme Council also expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude for the efforts made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, and his brother, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during its Chairmanship of the 20th session of the Supreme Council, and for the achievements that pushed forward the march of progress towards further development and prosperity for the peoples of the region.**

**The Supreme Council also expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al- Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain, and to his Government and people for the kind reception, welcome, generous hospitality and the feelings of fraternity with which the leaders of the GCC states were received. The leaders of the GCC states praised the care and attention given by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain and Chairman of the current session to this meeting, and lauded his wise management of the proceedings of the meetings which had the greatest effect on reaching important results and resolutions. They expressed their confidence that the State of Bahrain, under the guidance of His Highness, will contribute plentifully during His Chairmanship of the proceedings of this session in strengthening the process of joint action, taking it to newer horizons in a manner that it achieves the aspirations and hopes of the people of the GCC states.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 22nd session to be held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman in the month of December 2001, Allah willing, in response to the gracious invitation by His Majesty Sultan Oaboos bin Saeed. Sultan of Oman.**

**Issued in Manama  
5th Shawwal 1421AH  
31st December 2000**

**The Manama Declaration on  
Enhancing the Joint Process of the GCC  
5-4 Shawwal 1421 AH  
30-31 December 2000 AD**

**The Supreme Council, recognizing the importance of the warm fraternal relations, strong historic links and a common destiny that binds its countries and peoples together; and**

**Based on the principles set forth in its Founding Charter, which aim at enhancing coordination and cooperation between the Member States in various fields, leading to integration and unity; and**

**Confident of the contributions that will be made by His Highness Sheikh Issa Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain, in terms of consolidating and strengthening the march of progress of the Council during his Chairmanship of the next session, propelling it towards newer horizons, and enabling it to deal positively with the rapid and successive changes which are being imposed by the current wave of globalization at political, economic, social and cultural levels; and**

**Complementing the pronouncements of the Riyadh Declaration issued in the 20th session;**

**The Supreme Council, in its 21st session, held in Manama, the state of Bahrain on Saturday and Sunday from 30th to 31st December 2000 AD, examined the march of progress in the various sectors in context of the goals set forth in its Founding Charter as well as the Common Economic Agreement. It also examined all the issues that are concerned with the GCC states and peoples in light of the developments taking place in the Middle East and the international arena.**

**The Supreme Council, expresses its appreciation of the steps taken by the Member States in consonance with its resolutions, and praises the efforts exerted by the Ministerial Council and the Ministerial Committees working within the framework of the Council in order to build a solid economic, cultural and social base that meets the demands of the next stage, thereby enhancing the process of the collective action;**

**Therefore, the Supreme Council declares the importance of implementing the following:**

**First: Consolidation of the joint process of the of the GCC by bringing about more coordination, cooperation, cohesion and integration through the adoption of the unified strategies in the political, economic, security, military, social media, cultural, and scientific spheres, guided by the unity of purpose and the common destiny.**

**Second: Establishing the principle of common security by consolidating**

coordination and cooperation in the fields of defense and security in order to protect its national security, and to maintain the independence of its states, their sovereignty and territorial integrity under a Common Defense Agreement among the GCC states and abiding by its provisions.

**Third:** Taking steps to bring about a unified Gulf market, which cannot remain uninfluenced by the effects emanating from the world economy, enabling it to deal with the major economic entities by reviewing the reference model laws and regulations and transforming them, after assessment, into collective regulations and legislations in accordance with shared principles and within a specific time frame.

**Fourth:** Giving priority in the next phase of the joint process and cooperation to the economic sectors in line with what is termed as the new economy and one that is based on knowledge and technology. In particular, sectors like information technology, communications and e-commerce should receive priority as it is expected that these sectors will constitute one of the mainstays of economic growth in future. This is a matter that necessitates adoption of policies and steps, which give the GCC states a relative advantage and lead in attracting and adapting these economic and trade activities.

**Fifth:** Giving consideration to accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union by agreeing on the common anchor for pegging the currencies of the GCC states, and coordinating the financial, monetary and economic policies in order to pave the way for arriving at a common currency for the GCC states and the establishment of monetary union among them.

**Sixth:** Giving consideration to accelerating the process of establishing the Customs Union, and unification of the customs tariff, which was agreed upon in the 20th summit in Riyadh. Likewise the launch of the Common Gulf Market should be speeded up.

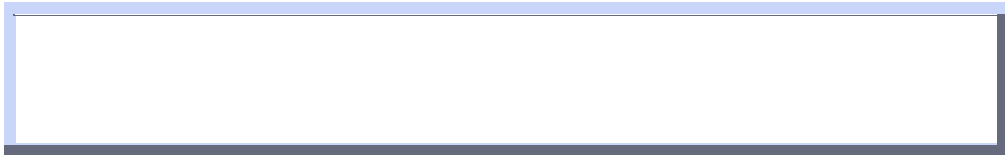
**Seventh:** Effecting coordination among the GCC states in studying the commitments and pledges given by the GCC states to the World Trade Organization as part of the agreements made with it, and laying down an appropriate time schedule to begin implementation of those commitments among the GCC states.

**Eighth:** Studying the possibility of establishing effective mechanisms to deal with the settlement of disputes related with the implementation of the economic agreement among the GCC states and the resolutions passed by the Supreme Council on economic matters, referred to it, while at the same time giving greater role to the Trade Arbitration Center of the GCC states.

**Ninth:** Revising the procedure of reaching at consensus on taking economic decisions especially since the GCC states have made tremendous strides in the joint process.

**Allah is the Grantor of All Success,**

**Issued in Manama  
5 Shawwal 1421 AH  
31 December 2000**



**The Closing Statement of  
the Twenty Second Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
Sultanate of Oman - Muscat  
16 Shawwal 1422 AH / 31 December 2001 AD**

In response to the gracious invitation by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed, Sultan of Oman, the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) held its 22nd session in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman on 15-16 (Sunday and Monday) Shawwal 1422 AH corresponding to 30-31 December 2001 AD, under the Chairmanship of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed, Sultan of Oman in the presence of Their Majesties and Highnesses:

**His Highness Sheikh Maktoom bin Rashed Al - Maktoom  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the State of United  
Arab Emirates, Ruler of Dubai**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al - Khalifa  
Emir of the State of Bahrain**

**His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al - Saud,  
Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister and  
Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**His Highness Sheikh Hamd bin Khalifa Al – Thani  
Emir of the State of Qatar**

**His Excellency Shiekh Sabah Al – Ahmad Al – Jaber Al – Sabah  
Representative of His Highness  
Sheikh Jaber Al – Ahmad Al Jaber Al- Sabah**

H.E. Sheikh Jameel Ibrahim Al-Hejailan, Secretary – General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) also participated in the meeting.

Their Majesties and Royal Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states, expressed their sincere congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of completion of 20 years of his rule, lauding the tremendous achievements made during his rule in all segments of economy, construction and culture; praying to Allah Almighty to grant him abundant health and well – being so that he may increase his contributions towards enhancing security and stability for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its brotherly people, and continue to be a part of the beneficial joint process of the GCC.

Their Majesties and Highnesses also expressed their happiness on the safety

of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait and the disappearance of the fleeting effect of illness; praying to Allah Almighty to grant him enduring health and complete well – being and assist him in continuing with the leadership of the State of Kuwait as well as in supporting the beneficial joint process of the GCC states.

The Supreme Council examined the blessed process of joint action in the economic, social, political, military, cultural and information fields. The Council expressed its satisfaction at the achievements made, underlining its will to push forward the march of the GCC in a manner that the hopes and aspirations of its people are realized in line with the high goals set forth in the Founding Charter of the GCC. The Supreme Council underscored its will to continue to consolidate the security, stability and development of the GCC and its people so that the process of nationalization is boosted in all fields.

#### **The Process of Joint Cooperation:**

- **Economic Affairs:**

The Supreme Council discussed the process of economic cooperation in the GCC. In this connection, the Council studied the reports and recommendations submitted before it by the Ministerial Council, the various Committees and the Secretariat- General.

With a view to bolstering this process and desirous of promoting economic integration to more advanced levels in a manner that a common market, monetary and economic union are actualized. Towards this end, the Supreme Council approved the replacement of the “Unified Economic Agreement” ratified by the Council in November 1981 AD with the “Economic Agreement Among GCC States”. This new agreement comes in line with the developments taking place in the GCC economy and its achievements as well as those that are taking place in the international economic arena.

The Supreme Council studied the measures taken with regard to the launch of the Customs Union and decided to reschedule it’s coming into force to an earlier date, which is, 1st of January 2003 AD. It also decided to lower the uniform customs tariff, fixing it to the tune of 5% on all foreign goods imported from outside of the Customs Union with the exception of exempted goods covered by the resolution made in its 20th session (November 1999AD). It also resolved to grant the industrial establishments exemption from customs taxation (duties) on imported goods, which are used in manufacturing, in accordance with the explicit regulations. The Council directed the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee to complete all requirements for launching the Customs Union on its rescheduled date.

The Supreme Council approved the new Unified Customs

Regulation (the law) for the GCC in its amended form. It also approved its executive byelaws and the explanatory note, resolving to bring this regulation into force from the 1st of January 2002 AD.

In pursuit of establishing the Monetary Union for the GCC states and launching a single currency, the Supreme Council agreed on a time frame for the establishment of the Monetary Union. It directed the Committee of Governors of the monetary institutions and central banks to implement the decision of the Supreme Council with regard to approving the dollar as the common anchor for pegging the currencies of the GCC states before the end of the year 2002 AD. Further, the Council directed the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Committee of Governors to reach an agreement on the performance standards necessary to make the Monetary Union successful by the end of the year 2005, in order to pave the way for the launch of the single currency by a time period not later than 1st of January 2010.

With a view to accomplishing statistical integration among the GCC states and achieving procedural uniformity and funding, the Council resolved to unify the time periods for conducting the General Census with effect from 2010.

The Council approved the agricultural quarantine law (regulation) after amending it in accordance with observations of the Member States and the requirements of the International Institutions in this regard, resolving to make its application mandatory.

The Council took cognizance of that which was submitted before it with regard to the improvement in the condition of the Standardization and Metrology Organization (SMO) so as to make it responsive to the requirements of the Customs Union in terms of unification of standardization and metrology procedures in the Member States and to bring about continuous coordination between metrology organizations established in each Member States. In this connection the Supreme Council decided to establish a new and independent Gulf Standardization and Metrology Organization.

With a view to bolstering economic development in Member States, the Supreme Council directed the Funds for Development in the Member States, to continue to give priority to granting soft loans for development projects to both, the State of Bahrain and Sultanate of Oman.

- **Humanitarian & Environmental Affairs:**

The Supreme Council reviewed what has been implemented from its previous resolutions about providing job opportunities to citizens of the GCC states within the GCC states, and laid stress on execution of the contents of its earlier resolutions made in this context.

The Supreme Council also reviewed the progress made in terms of implementing the Common Educational Curricula Development Plan, and directed the Ministers of Education and Training to execute the plan quickly, and requested all sections of the society and professional bodies to make the plan successful.

The Supreme Council was informed about the establishment of the Committee on "Food Safety". It directed the competent authorities to execute the resolutions and recommendations of this Committee.

In recognition of the dangerous condition of the environment in the Gulf, the Supreme Council called upon the Member States to complete the prerequisites of building facilities for receiving the balance water and waste discharged from ships in the Gulf region.

In order to bolster the legislations and laws for protection of environment and natural resources, the Supreme Council ratified the following:

- The Uniform Medical Waste Management Regulation
- The Uniform Regulation for the Management of Hazardous Chemicals
- Agreement on Preservation of Natural Life and its Natural Inhabitants

- **Legal Affairs:**

The Supreme Council approved the Abu Dhabi Document on the Uniform Regulation (the law) for Juveniles in the GCC states, the Manama Document for Uniform Legal Practice Regulation (the Law), the Manama Document on Uniform Civil Procedures (Pleadings) Regulation (the Law) and the Muscat Document on the Uniform Regulation (the Law) for Evidencing as reference model laws for a period of four years. The Council also extended the validity of the Kuwait document on Uniform Civil Code (the Law), and the Doha document on Penal Code (the Law) as reference model regulations for a period of another four years. All these laws and regulations aim at consolidating cooperation among the GCC states in the field of Law and Justice.

- **Military Affairs:**

The Supreme Council looked into the progress of military cooperation since the last session and expressed its satisfaction at the achievements made in terms of conducting studies and implementing practical steps for enhancing common defence and military cooperation. In this context, the Supreme Council resolved to constitute the Common Defence Council pursuant to Article 8 of the agreement referred to.

- **Security Affairs:**

The Council approved the resolutions of the 20th meeting of their Highnesses and Excellencies the Interior Ministers that was held at Manama in the State of Bahrain on 13-14 Sha'aban corresponding to 29-30 October 2001. particularly those aspects of the resolution

which are related to redoubling the efforts of the GCC states to render the procedures for mobility of the GCC citizens and those for the flow of trade among the Member States easy, and to enhance cooperation in combating drug trafficking. The Supreme Council also resolved to approve the security strategy for the GCC states for combating the phenomena of extremism and terrorism along with strengthening the anti-money laundering laws.

- **The Consultative Commission:**

The Supreme Council considered the views of the Consultative Commission on education, development of the education system, energy, environment, water strategies, and scientific & technological research. The Council resolved to approve it and to refer the joint projects stated as part of those views to the competent Ministerial Committees so that they may devise necessary mechanisms for their implementation. The Council also instructed the Commission to continue with the study on activating the Long Term Comprehensive Development Strategy and put forward its views, giving priority to the study of social issues, especially those that are related with the ways of enhancing youth welfare and media.

- **Political Issues:**

The Council discussed the progress made by Iraq in the course of implementing the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions related to the prevailing situation between the State of Kuwait and Iraq and the consequences of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, recalling and reminding at the same time the resolutions adopted in its previous sessions.

Based on the keen desire of the Supreme Council to prepare the conditions suitable for consolidating and cementing peace and stability in the Gulf region, it renewed, once again, its call on Iraq to realize the importance of honouring its commitments as per the UNSC resolutions with regard to the prevailing standoff between the State of Kuwait and Iraq including:

- Respecting the independence, sovereignty and regional safety of Iraq.
- Resuming its cooperation with the United Nations so as to put an end to the pending issues related to cooperation with the International Red Cross Society and the concerned Tripartite Committee and the International Coordinator for the Affairs of Prisoners and return of assets, Ambassador Yulie Fornitsoff, so as to find a quick solution to the problem of Kuwait POWs and detainees and citizens of other countries, and the return of all Kuwaiti assets seized by Iraq.

The Supreme Council also called upon Iraq to take all steps that demonstrate its peaceful orientation and intentions and asked it to refrain from committing any provocative or aggressive act against the state of Kuwait, as required by the UNSC resolution 949 so that

peace and stability in the region can be achieved.

The Supreme Council called upon both Iraq and the UN Secretary – General to restart dialogue between the two sides so that there is resumption of cooperation along the principles that enable the UNSC to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, and to put an end to the sufferings of the brotherly people of Iraq. The Supreme Council reaffirmed its unwavering stance towards respecting Iraq's sovereignty, its territorial integrity and regional safety as well as non – interference in its internal affairs.

The Supreme Council also discussed the problem of the Iranian occupation of the three islands: the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa which belong to the State of the UAE, recalling and re-emphasizing, in this regard, its resolution made in the 21st session.

After considering the contacts that have been made between the State of the UAE and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Supreme Council reiterated the complete sovereignty of the State of the UAE over the three islands: the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa as well as the regional waters, airspace, the continental shelf and the economic zone of the three islands as they constitute an integral part of the State of the UAE.

Pursuant to the principle of collective security for the GCC states, the Supreme Council expressed its complete support and backing to all steps taken by the State of the UAE within the framework of peaceful means. The Council totally rejects all Iranian claims made and measures taken on the three islands as those claims and measures are false and have no legal bearing and do not in any way diminish the right of the state of the UAE on the three islands.

The Council renewed its call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to accept the referral of the matter to the International Court of Justice.

After conducting a comprehensive assessment, the Supreme Council asked the Ministerial Council to continue to explore all peaceful means that would lead to the restoration of all the legitimate rights of the State of the UAE on the three islands.

The Supreme Council examined the dangerous escalation of situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which is the result of the excesses committed by the Israeli Government through savage repression of the Palestinian people, and its persistence with the policy of closure and confinement, and infiltration into the territories of the Palestinian Authority, and reoccupation of Palestinian towns and the consequences and dangerous

complications that follow such policies. In this context, the Council cautioned against the consequences of remaining silent at this extremely dangerous situation and its bearing on the security and stability of the whole region, holding the Israeli government fully responsible for the sorry situation to which the Peace Process has been brought.

The Council asserted that the ongoing deterioration and the current wave of violence has its roots in the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and violation of the values and principles adopted in the Madrid Conference and the agreements made between the two sides, and the irresponsible Israeli decision to sever contacts with the legitimate Palestinian Government, demonstrating that the Israeli Government is not serious about achieving a just and balanced peace, something that denudes it of its credibility in the peace process.

The Supreme Council affirms its complete support to the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman, His Excellency President Yasser Arafat and calls upon all sections of the Palestinian people to show solidarity with its leadership, supporting and backing its legitimate and elected leadership so that national unity of the Palestinian people is strengthened and all their rights are restored, including the right to determine their own destiny and the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on their national soil with the Holy Jerusalem as its capital.

While renewing its commitment to support the Palestinian people, the Supreme Council affirmed its complete readiness to play an effective role in contributing to the building of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, and urged the world community to work towards achieving peace and security so that this assistance has positive impact on the development in the territories of the Palestinian Authority.

The Supreme Council reiterated that the just, lasting and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved except by: restoring all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; and establishment of the Palestinian state on its national soil with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, and complete Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights to the borderline existing on the 4th of June 1976; and complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territories to the internationally recognized borders, in accordance with UNSC resolutions 425 and 426; and the release of all Lebanese POWs and hostages in the Israeli prisons.

The Supreme Council denounced the policy of escalation being pursued by the Israeli Government and the policy of broadening the scope of violence to the neighbouring countries, which tends to push

**the region into the brink of an abyss and threatens its security and stability. The Council stressed upon the need to differentiate between legitimate struggle against military occupation and terrorism-condemnable in all its forms, irrespective of its justifications.**

**The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation for the efforts made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia and his brother Crown Prince, Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, First Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for advocating the Arab position on the current issues and stressing on the need to agitate the prevailing stagnation in peace process as well as affirming the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State on their national soil with Holy Jerusalem as its capital.**

**The Supreme Council welcomed the statement made by President George W. Bush in the United Nations in which he described his vision of a viable Palestinian State and putting an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in accordance with resolutions 242 and 338. The Council also welcomed the speech made by Secretary of State Colin Powell on the concept of the Palestinian state. This is because the Council is of the view that this extremely important development which strengthens the pillars of security and peace and leads to progress in all countries of the region. In order to actualize these realistic visions, the Supreme Council calls on the United States to devise a mechanism to implement those visions and concepts in line with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.**

**The Supreme Council renewed its demand from the international community to make the Middle East region free from all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council stressed upon Israel's need to join the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear installations to the international inspection system of the International Agency for Nuclear Energy (IAEA).**

**The Supreme Council, while appreciating the role of being played by the brotherly Republic of Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula and the tasks that it is dealing within the framework of security, stability as well as growth in the Peninsula, declares the participation of the brotherly Republic of Yemen in enhancing the process of cooperation and coordination as part of the joint action of the GCC through its membership of the following:**

- The Council of Health Ministers of the GCC states**
- The Education and Training Bureau of the GCC states**

- The Council of Labor & and Social Affairs Ministers of the GCC
- Gulf Cup Football Tournament

Other steps will follow this step in relation to the Republic of Yemen, including participation in the field of economy and other fields of cooperation. The Supreme Council looks forward to the fact that this step will contribute in consolidating cooperation, progress, development and social prosperity, and strengthen the links between the peoples of states of the Arabian Peninsula.

While welcoming the positive developments that have taken place in Afghanistan as exemplified in the formation of the Interim Government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, the Supreme Council affirms its readiness to cooperate with the new Government in order to achieve stability and economic development, which the people of Afghanistan have been yearning to achieve.

The Supreme Council condemned the attacks carried out on the Indian Parliament on the 13th of December 2001, expressing its view that the fight against terrorism should be undertaken within the framework of international law sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council.

The Supreme Council has followed the on going tension between the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and expressed its hope that the two countries would exercise maximum restraint and return to the positive atmosphere that accompanied the contacts that were made between the leaders of the two countries, investing that positive atmosphere to remedy the causes of prevailing tension. While, expressing its concern, the Council calls upon the United Nations Security Council to intervene quickly in order to fulfill its responsibility of maintaining peace and security of this important region of the world and to prevent the continuation in the deterioration of the situation which could lead to adverse consequences.

#### **The Phenomena of Extremism, violence and Terrorism:**

The Supreme Council noted with grave apprehension the increase in the phenomena of extremism, violence and terrorism, which has become a global concern. The Supreme Council condemned the terrorist acts witnessed by the United States of America on September 11, 2001 and reaffirmed once again, its total rejection and strong condemnation of such acts in all their forms, irrespective of their motives or bases, acts that aim at spreading chaos and panic and killing innocent civilians.

In this context, the Supreme Council confirmed its support for the international coalition for eliminating terrorism under the leadership of the United States and reaffirms its total readiness to

cooperate with the international community in combating this destructive phenomenon. It also calls for amalgamation of international efforts to hold a summit-level world conference to lay down international principles and standards to fight terrorism and its causes.

While the Supreme Council calls upon the opinion makers, intellectuals and the learned people in the Islamic world to work towards advocating the principles and values of the true religion of Islam, at the same time it calls upon other peoples and religions to show commitment to realism and prudence, urging them to desist from holding Islam responsible for the actions and activities, which are far removed from the spirit of Islam and its sublime beliefs.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation of the great and sincere efforts exerted by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al- Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain during his Chairmanship of the 21st session of the Supreme Council and the subsequent contacts and consultations held by His Highness to follow up the implementation of the resolutions, through which many achievements were accomplished and it pushed forward the blessed process of collective action towards more progress and prosperity, thereby consolidating security and stability for GCC states and its peoples.

The Council also appreciated the positive role being played by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the 8th round of the Islamic conference, in supporting the collective Islamic action and in backing the Islamic causes.

Similarly, the Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed Al-Moazzam, Sultan of Oman and to his Government and people for the kind reception, welcome, generous hospitality and the spirit of fraternity with which the leaders of the GCC states were received. The leaders of the GCC praised the care and attention given by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed Al-Moazzam, Sultan of Oman and Chairman of the current session to this meeting, and lauded his wise management of the proceedings of the meetings, which had the greatest effect on reaching important outcomes and resolutions. They expressed their confidence that the Sultanate of Oman, under the guidance of His Majesty, will contribute plentifully during its Chairmanship of the proceedings of this session, and will strengthen the process of joint action, taking it to newer horizons, in a manner that the aspirations and hopes of the people of the GCC states are achieved.

The Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation of the

**tremendous and sincere efforts and the active contributions made by His Excellency Sheikh Jameel bin Ibrahim Al- Hejailan, the Secretary General of the GCC, towards taking forward the march of welfare, and making crucial achievements by exerting strenuous efforts, giving valuable time and long experience during his tenure as the Secretary General of Secretariat General of the GCC states.**

**The Supreme Council resolved to appoint His Excellency, the Minister of State in the State of Qatar, Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, as the Secretary-General of the GCC, as the successor to His Excellency Sheikh Jameel Al-Hejailan whose term will expire at the end of March 2002. The Supreme Council wished the new Secretary General success in his endeavors.**

**The Council looks forward to meeting in its 23rd session, Allah Willing, in the State of Qatar in the month of December 2002 AD in response to the gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.**

**Issued In Muscat  
16 Shawwal 1422 AH  
31 December 2002**

**The Closing Statement of  
the Twenty Third Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
The State of Qatar - Doha  
17-18 Shawwal 1423 AH / 22 December 2002 AD**

**In response to the gracious invitation by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, the Supreme Council convened its 23rd session in Doha, the State of Qatar on Saturday and Sunday from 17th to 18th Shawwal 1423 AH corresponding to 21st to 22nd December 2002 AD under the Chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, and was attended by their Majesties and Highnesses:**

**His Highness Sheikh Maktoom bin Rashed Al - Maktoom  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the State of United  
Arab Emirates, Ruler of Dubai**

**His Highness Sheikh Muhammad bin Mubarak Al - Khalifa  
Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister  
of the Kingdom of Bahrain**

**His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al - Faisal  
Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed  
Sultan of Oman**

**His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al - Ahmad Al - Jaber Al -Sabah  
The First Deputy Prime Minister and the  
Foreign Minister of the State of Kuwait**

**His Excellency Abdul Rahman Al-Attiyah, the Secretary General of the Gulf Co-operation Council, also participated in the meeting.**

**The Supreme Council reviewed the achievements made in the course of joint action in all the fields since its last session was convened. The Council also made a comprehensive evaluation of the developments taking place at all levels - regional, Arab and International.**

**As part of its keen desire to bolster and push forward the blessed march towards joint co-operation, the Supreme Council examined the reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council about the implementation mechanisms for the contents of the vision document presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, the First Deputy Prime Minister and the Head of the National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during the Fourth Consultative Meeting of the GCC leaders held with the aim of propelling the joint action to broader and**

urer horizons. Appropriate decisions were made in this regard.

In the field of economic affairs, the Supreme Council discussed the process of joint economic cooperation and perused the reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council, the appropriate Ministerial Committees and the Secretariat - General.

The Supreme Council welcomed the call by his Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the current session of the Council to broaden the avenues of joint co-operation between the GCC states and to optimize the performance of its institutions through constructive dialogue within the GCC, in a way that realizes the hopes and aspirations of the people, and that is to promote cooperation to the level of integration, especially in the vital areas that have a direct bearing on the interests of the citizens and their livelihoods, thus fostering a feeling among citizens that the Council has indeed become a daily and indispensable reality.

To enhance cooperation in the field of economy, the Supreme Council endorsed the establishment of the Customs Union among the GCC States with effect from the 1st of January 2003 AD. It approved the measures agreed upon by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, which has been entrusted with the task of supervising and implementing the Customs Union and with addressing the difficulties and obstacles that might arise from the implementation of the Customs Union, thereby ensuring the achievement of the desired goals, in particular, the facilitation of the flow of movement of goods between the GCC states; increasing the volume of inter-trade; and removal of customs and non - customs barriers that limit trading amongst them. The Council also decided to broaden the list of goods exempted from customs tariff for the GCC States so as to make it consistent and easy to implement by the beginning of the launch of the Customs Union.

The Supreme Council gave directives to meet the prerequisites of the Common Gulf Market as soon as possible, not exceeding the year 2007AD. It underlined the principle of implementing complete equality between the GCC citizens to practice all economic activities, within a fixed time frame. The Supreme Council authorized the Financial and Economic Committee to review the list of professions that can be practiced only by the citizens of the Member States and to cancel whatever is left in that list.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Secretariat- General about the follow up of the time - bound implementation of the Monetary Union. It expressed its satisfaction with the practical steps taken by the Member States to approve the American dollar as the common anchor for the currencies of the GCC states in the current phase and pegging the rate of exchange of their currencies with it.

With the objective of arriving at a homogenous petroleum policy, and

taking common stands on developments in energy - related matters, the Supreme Council approved the document, which contains the petroleum strategy for the GCC states. It also ratified the Regional Emergency Plan for Petroleum Products of the Member States. The plan aims at devising the mechanisms for collective action among Member States and describes the ideal way to handle emergency situations that might face any of the Member States as a result of deficiency in or complete termination of local supplies of petroleum products.

The Supreme Council examined the proposal submitted by the State of Qatar on setting up pipelines to export petroleum from the GCC States to the Sultanate of Oman into the Arab sea.

While asserting the importance of this proposal, the Council decided to assign the Petroleum Cooperation Committee to conduct a study on the economic feasibility of this vital project and to submit the results and recommendations to the Supreme Council in its next session.

In the field of Water Co-operation, the Council directed the Secretary General to choose an international agency with expertise in this field to conduct a study on the economic feasibility of the water grid project between the Member States, and to point out the sources of water in the GCC as well as the ideal technologies for desalination of salty water in a manner that it does not negatively impact the sea environment in the regional waters belonging to Member States.

In order to ensure the activation of the joint action, the Council directed the appropriate Ministerial Committees to adopt principles and policies that guarantee its success and completion within a specific time frame. These principles and policies include increasing the participation of the private sector and various sections of society in accomplishing integration between the GCC states, and activating the role media in raising consciousness about the benefits of joint Gulf action and its requirements.

The Council examined the latest developments pertaining to the economic relations of the GCC states with other countries and international economic blocs, including the ongoing negotiations between the GCC States and the European Union (EU) aimed at reaching an agreement on free trade between the two sides.

In the field of humanitarian and environmental affairs, the Supreme Council examined the efforts made with regard to the Common Plan for the Development of Public Education Curricula, which has been approved earlier in its 20th session. The Council gave directives to accelerate the execution of the programs of the plan and to enrich it with various projects and programs that would ensure the achievement of its goals.

The Council valued the important views highlighted by his Highness the Emir of the State of Oatar and the Chairman of the current session. which

were expressed in his opening speech for the Conference, in particular those views in which his Highness emphasized the role of education in accomplishing the development goals, and those on the importance of building the personality of the Gulf individual so as to enable him/her to contribute in the development of his/her society; and the need to raise the standard of educational institutions and to give these institutions greater independence so as to enable them to unleash their creative energies. His Highness pointed out the need for educational systems to implement modern curricula, and to adopt global standards in evaluating the output of education while, at the same time preserving the Arab and Islamic identity and holding fast to the values of justice, tolerance and co-operation. It was decided to entrust the Secretariat - General with the task of implementing these directives.

In the field of environment, the Supreme Council examined the efforts made to construct facilities to receive wastes discharged from ships and the balance water. The Council stressed the importance of expediting the construction of those facilities as a pre-requisite for joining the International Marbol Agreement.

With regard to the Republic of Yemen's accession to some specialized organizations in the GCC, the Supreme Council examined the steps taken to implement the resolutions made during its 22nd session about strengthening the fraternal co-operation and coordination within the framework of collective action of the GCC as well as the relations with the Republic of Yemen.

In the field of legal affairs, the Supreme Council approved the Muscat document on the Uniform Real Estate Regulation (the law) for GCC, regarding it as a reference model law for a period of four years with the objective of unifying and harmonizing the real estate laws of the GCC states.

In the field of military co-operation, the Supreme Council examined the progress made in military cooperation and coordination in various spheres. The Council expressed its satisfaction with the steps taken and studies conducted, in particular, those related to the conclusion of organizational and the procedural measures for the Common Defense Agreement.

In this connection, the Supreme Council examined the outcome of the 21st meeting of the Defense Ministers and the first meeting of the Common Defense Council in which the byelaws for the Common Defense Council and internal procedures of the Council were adopted and the remaining recommendations related to regulating its procedures verified.

In the field of security co-operation, the Supreme Council studied the progress made in security co-operation and coordination in light of the decisions made in this regard and expressed its satisfaction with the achievements made.

**In connection with prevention of terrorism, the Supreme Council asserted yet again, its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and features, irrespective of its source or justification and place of its occurrence, lauding, at the same time, the constant and clear stand taken by the GCC states in drawing a line between terrorism and the right of the people to legitimate struggle and to resist against occupation. The Council stressed its keenness in strengthening and reinforcing the international efforts to fight the phenomenon of terrorism and to prevent it from occurring and to address the causes and motives behind terrorism within the international legal framework approved by the United Nations.**

**With regard to the working of the Consultative Commission, the Supreme Council approved the views of the Commission pertaining to interaction with international economic and regional blocs and decided to refer them to the appropriate Ministerial Committees in order that they may lay down mechanisms for implementation of those views.**

**Also, the Council decided to assign the Consultative Commission with the study of the following two topics in its next session: a comprehensive assessment of demographic issues and correction of the defect in population structure in order to attain demographic and social consistency; and another assessment on the economic social and familial role of women.**

**Based on the proposal presented by the Sultanate of Oman, the Supreme Council approved that Commission should have a permanent headquarter in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The Council also agreed to form a committee to prepare a report on the progress of its work.**

**The Supreme Council welcomed the agreement on diplomatic and consular co-operation reached between the State of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates signed in the State of Qatar on 25th Rabi Al Awwal 1423 AH corresponding to 3rd June 2002 AD. Similarly, the Council also welcomed the agreement to form the Common Higher Council for cooperation as well as the consular and diplomatic co-operation agreement between the two states, both of which were signed in the State of Kuwait on 7th Rabi Al Thani 1423 AH corresponding to 18th June 2002 AD.**

**Again, the Supreme Council welcomed the conclusion of diplomatic and consular co-operation agreements between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh on 26th Zil Hijja 1422AH corresponding to 10th March 2002 AD and also the consular and diplomatic agreement signed with the United Arab Emirates in Manama on 7th Rabi Al Thani 1423 AH corresponding to 17th June 2002 AD. The Council also welcomed the signing of the executive memorandum for agreement on diplomatic and consular agreement between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait in Manama on 23rd Sha'aban 1423 AH corresponding to 29th October 2002 AD.**

**The Supreme Council welcomed these agreements and expressed its approval as these agreements represent important and blessed steps towards strengthening the joint action among the GCC states, and conform to the higher goals of the Council.**

**In connection with political issues, the Supreme Council discussed the developments taking place in relation to the standoff between the State of Kuwait and Iraq and the latest developments in the course of Iraq's implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.**

**Keenly desirous of creating appropriate conditions to prevent any further suffering of the people of Iraq and to firmly establish security, peace and stability in the Gulf region and the world, the Supreme Council renewed its commitment to the resolutions of the Arab summit regarding Iraq in Beirut. In this context, the Council welcomed the unconditional acceptance by Iraq of UN Security Council resolution no. 1441, which provides for the return of international inspectors to Iraq for resumption of their work related to the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The Council urged Iraq to co-operate positively with the international weapons inspectors. It also urged the weapons inspectors to recognize the great responsibility on their shoulders and to observe neutrality and professional objectivity in discharge of their duty.**

**The Supreme Council reaffirmed its unwavering position on the need to respect Iraq's independence and integrity of its territory and the need to refrain from interfering in its internal affairs.**

**The Supreme Council called upon the international community to enhance their efforts and do all they can to assist both Iraq and the international inspectors in ending the mission as early as possible thereby ensuring the lifting of sanctions from Iraq and ending the hardship of the Iraqi people and helping Iraq's return to the fold of the international community.**

**The Supreme Council reviewed with grave concern the message of the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, which was delivered on the 7th of December 2002 AD. The message contained false claims and slander against the State of Kuwait and its leadership, Government and people, constituting a violation of International and Arab resolutions concerning the need for Iraq to respect the security, independence and sovereignty of the State of Kuwait within its internationally recognized borders. The message incited the Kuwaiti people against their leadership and Government and supported the terrorist activities that took place in Kuwait, acts which were condemned by the whole world. The message confirms Iraq's reneging on its commitment to the UN security Council, GCC and Arab resolutions aimed at eliminating terrorism, cutting off support to terrorism and incitement to perform terrorist acts. The message also contained threat to the State of Kuwait and the GCC states and amounts to interference in their internal affairs.**

**While strongly disapproving and condemning such fabricated lies and slanders which threaten the security and stability of the region, the Supreme Council called upon the Iraqi government to fully comply with all international and Arab resolutions, particularly those related to the release of prisoners and detainees of the State of Kuwait and other countries. The Council also stressed upon the need to return all Kuwaiti assets specially those related to the national archives, official documents and registers. The Supreme Council demands from the Iraqi Government to refrain from such activities, which create tension and cause instability in the region and increase the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq.**

**The Supreme Council discussed the issue of the Iranian occupation of the three islands: the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa belonging to the State of the United Arab Emirates. In this regard, the Council recalls and reaffirms its previous resolutions in this connection.**

**Having reviewed the contacts and exchange of important visits between the State of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Council expressed its hope that these contacts and visits would culminate in to positive and tangible steps, contribute towards strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, promote cooperation between GCC States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and consolidate security and stability in the region.**

**The Supreme Council reiterated its unwavering stand supporting the right of the State of the United Arab Emirates to its sovereignty over the three islands and over regional waters, the air space, the continental shelf and the economic zone belonging to the three islands, as these islands are an integral part of the State of the United Arab Emirates.**

**After a thorough assessment, the Supreme Council reassigned the Ministerial Council with the task of continuing to consider all peaceful means that would lead to the restoration of the right of the State of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands.**

**The Council reviewed with deep concern, the developments taking place in the in the Middle East Peace Process and the dangerous deterioration of situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which is due to continued aggression of the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people and their leadership, constituting a dangerous escalation of situations in the region and exposing the international security and peace to danger.**

**While condemning these savage acts, the Council stresses upon the need to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, and to assist the Palestinian people in exercising their right to determine their own destiny and to establish their independent Palestinian State on their national soil with Holy Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with the provisions of the Arab peace initiative, which is the only way to realize comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Middle East**

and to save the region and the world from a war which might lead to dire consequences and human tragedy.

The Supreme Council renewed its demand from the international community to exert pressure on Israel to halt these activities; and provide international protection to the Palestinians so that they could hold elections and undertake reforms required of them as a prerequisite for resumption of negotiations between the two sides.

The Council renewed its demands from the international community to make the Middle East region, including the Gulf region free from all forms of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons. It stressed upon the need Israel's need to join the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear installations to international inspection system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Supreme Council affirmed its support for the measures being taken by the Interim Government in Afghanistan and its efforts to achieve security and stability in Afghanistan. The Council also expressed the support of the GCC countries for rebuilding and reconstruction Afghanistan.

The Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude for the sincere and true efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed, the Sultan of Oman, during His Majesty's Chairmanship of the 22nd session of the Supreme Council and the achievements made during the session in pushing forward the blessed process of joint action of the GCC towards broader horizons, and towards progress and prosperity for the people of the region.

The Supreme Council appreciated the positive role being played by the State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar and Chairman of the 9th Islamic Summit, which was held to help the cause of Islamic nation and to enhance joint Islamic action at this critical stage in which, the world is passing through rapid international changes.

The Supreme Council also expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, his Government and generous people for the hospitality and the sincere feelings of fraternity with which, the leaders of the Council were received. The leaders of the GCC states lauded the kind care and attention that was given by Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, to this meeting. The Council also lauded the wisdom with which his Highness managed the meeting and which had the greatest effect on reaching important decisions and resolutions. The GCC leaders expressed their confidence that the State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness, will make valuable contributions to the blessed process of co-operation, thus promoting it to newer horizons in tandem with the requirements of the current

**circumstances, thereby realizing the hopes and aspirations of the people of the GCC in the present circumstances during his Highness's Chairmanship of this session.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 24th session, God willing, in the State of Kuwait in December 2003 AD in response to the gracious invitation made by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait.**

**Issued in Doha**

**18 Shawwal 1423 AH**

**22 December 2002 AD**

**The Doha Declaration On The Launch of  
the Customs Union for the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the  
Gulf (GCC)**

**(Issued at the 23rd Session of the Supreme Council)  
21st December 2002**

**Based on the goals and objectives set forth in the founding charter of the Co-operation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and those in the Economic Co-operation Agreement (ECA); and with a view to reinforcing the efforts made and measures taken to advance the cause of joint action in the field of economy; and in consideration of the Supreme Council's keen desire to strengthen the bonds of co-operation among the member states, so that integration is achieved in all fields among them; and with a view to realizing the hopes and aspirations of the GCC citizens; the Supreme Council declares the launch of the Customs Union among GCC States with effect from the first day of January 2003.**

**With the launch of the Union, the GCC States have become a single custom zone. The Customs Union nullifies the existing customs "taxes", trade bylaws and regulatory procedures among individual member states, replacing them with unified customs bylaws and customs tariff to the tune of 5% on the goods from outside of the GCC.**

**The Customs Union has been established on the principle of a single entry point where all customs procedures including the collection of unified customs tariffs will be completed.**

**The Customs Union of the GCC shall be executed in accordance with Unified Customs (laws) and bylaws that will regulate all customs procedures in all GCC States. Similar laws and bylaws will be enacted in all fields related to the Customs Union.**

**Similarly, goods produced in any one of the member states shall be treated at par with the national product and shall not be subjected to any customs procedures during the course of its movement from one member state to another.**

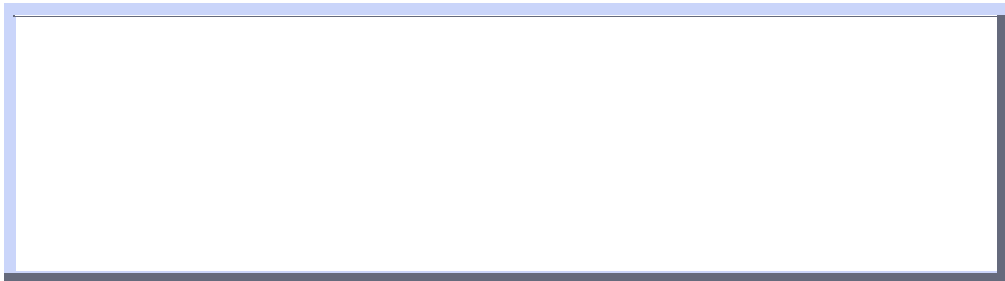
**The launch of the Customs Union shall bring great benefits and profits for the GCC citizens by increasing the choices available to them, improving the quality of goods, lowering the prices due to increase in the market size and the reduction of the production cost. The launch of the Customs Union will increase the volume of inter-trade for the member states and remove the difficulties and restrictions faced by the movement of commodities.**

**The establishment of the Customs Union will help in deriving benefit from the economies of scale, increased competition and high efficiency of production. The Union will also result in optimum utilization of available**

**resources and in widening the scope of mutual investment. The Customs Union will bolster the bargaining position of the Member States and help them in securing better terms and conditions with other countries and economic blocs.**

**With this great achievement the GCC states will have secured an active and influential position amongst the trading blocs, God willing.**

**Issued at Doha on Sunday  
18th Shawwal 1423 AH  
21st December 2002 AD.**



**The Closing Statement of  
the Twenty Fourth Session of the GCC Supreme Council  
Kuwait City - State Of Kuwait  
23 Shawwal 1424 AH / 22 December 2003 AD**

**The Kuwait Declaration Issued at 24th session of the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf**

**The Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), based on the sublime principles, goals and objectives of the GCC Charter and on the common bonds between its peoples; and**

**Conscious of the importance and the dangers of the current situation through which our Gulf and Arab regions are passing, and the rapid political changes taking place and the challenges that the situation poses; and**

**In completion of the statements, declarations, and resolutions issued at the previous meetings of the Supreme Council;**

**The Supreme Council, in its 24th session held in the State of Kuwait on 27-28 Shawwal 1424 AH / 21-22 December 2003, reviewed the collective process of the Council in various spheres, and conducted an in-depth analysis of all the issues concerning the GCC States and its peoples in light of the developments taking place in the Arab and international arenas; and**

**While the Supreme Council expresses its appreciation of the executive steps taken by the Member States in line with the decision of the Supreme Council aimed at strengthening and reinforcing the existing relations between the Member States leading to economic integration among them, the Supreme Council asserts the following:**

**First: Importance of taking necessary decisions and practical steps to start the implementation of the comprehensive development strategy, which was approved during the 18th session in Abu Dhabi, and proceeding with the process of reforming the educational system and making it uniform in the Member States in accordance with the contents of the document presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is at the forefront of strategic projects and programs for the GCC States, and which strengthens its march and achieves the interests and goals of the State and its citizens. There is no doubt that the advanced education which keeps pace with the technical and scientific progress, is the mainstay of equipping the Gulf citizen with scientific and technical qualifications so that the Gulf citizens may participate in the sustainable and comprehensive economic and social development of the Member States.**

**Second: The Supreme Council emphasizes the importance of political stability and security, and considers it the strategic condition for realizing**

sustainable development in all the fields, and for serving the interests of the nations and the peoples. The Council supports all diplomatic and political efforts aimed at achieving security and stability in Iraq, and making available to the brotherly people of Iraq security, stability, and prosperity that they yearn for-thus making an Iraq which is a positive member of the international community and which builds its relations with the neighbouring States on the basis of International Laws and shows commitment to implement international obligations.

**Third:** The Supreme Council expressed its condemnation, denunciation, and rejection of the terrorist activities that target innocent lives, terrorize the peaceful, destroy buildings, and civil institutions. The Council reiterates that the perpetrators of such terrorist acts and sabotage that are in contradiction with the sublime teachings and principles of Islam are in effect, committing immoral and inhuman acts. By these acts, they aim at destroying the society and its political and social pillars, and at achieving their illegitimate ambitions and goals.

In this regard, the Supreme Council expresses its support for all the steps aimed at combating all forms of terrorism, drugs, and the menace of money laundering. The Council affirms the keenness of the GCC States to adopt all means to preserve peace and tranquillity in order to safeguard the lives and properties of the citizens, and to defend their accomplishments, thus embodying the principle of collective security.

**Fourth:** That the transaction of the GCC, on an equal footing, with political blocs and powers in a regionally and internationally effective manner, makes it incumbent upon the GCC that it interacts with the rapid and successive events and developments taking place in the Arab, regional, and international arenas, and take appropriate initiatives to contribute actively to strengthening its role in crystallizing and shaping the train of events through specific and clear Gulf stand.

**Fifth:** That there is an urgent need to activate the operational mechanisms of the GCC and its various committees and commissions in a manner that it raises its performance by quick execution of the Supreme Council's resolutions and recommendations.

Allah is Grantor of all Success.

**Unofficial translation of  
The Closing Statement of  
the Twenty Fifth Session of the GCC Supreme Council(  
Zayed Summit)  
Al-Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain  
9 Dhul-Qa'dah 1425 AH / 21 December 2004 AD**

In response to the gracious invitation of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Supreme Council held its 25<sup>th</sup> session in the city of Al-Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, on Monday and Tuesday, 8-9 Dhul-Qa'dah 1425 AH corresponding to 20-21 December 2004 AD. The session was held under the presidency of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and was attended by Their Highnesses and Excellencies:

*His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan*

**President of the State of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

*His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud*

**Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector**

**General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

*His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed*

**Sultan of the Sultanate of Oman**

*His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani*

**Emir of the State of Qatar**

*His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah*

**Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**

**His Excellency Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) also participated in the meeting.**

**The Supreme Council expressed sincere compliments and wishes to His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, his prudent government and his beloved people on the occasion of the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Day, wishing the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people enduring progress and prosperity.**

**The Supreme Council expressed feelings of deep sorrow and sadness at the demise of His Highness the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates (May Allah encompass him with His abundant Mercy and Pleasure). His Highness departed to the vicinity of his Lord after a life filled with great works and grand achievements, and a journey full of genuine contributions and sincere, persistent, and benign endeavours that were good for the State of the UAE, its progress, well being and the prosperity of its people. The Council presented sincere condolences and consolation to the State of the UAE— leadership, government, and people—and the Arab and the Islamic communities at this momentous loss. The Supreme Council also expressed genuine regard for the role of the deceased in aiding the progress of the GCC, his grand contribution in its inception, his efforts in the service of the cause of the Arab and the Islamic communities and the peace of the region and the world. The Council approved the initiative of His Majesty King Hamad bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain to name the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council of the GCC as the “Zayed Summit”.**

**The Supreme Council welcomed His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates and**

**expressed full confidence that His Highness will reinforce, through his wisdom, the active participation of the State of the UAE in strengthening the blessed process of the GCC.**

**Likewise, the Supreme Council also expressed feelings of deep sorrow and sadness at the demise of the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who passed away to the vicinity of his Lord after a life filled with struggle for the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and for the establishment of an independent State on its national soil. The Council expressed sincere condolences and consolation to the Palestinian people and the Arab and the Islamic communities at this momentous loss. May Allah encompass the deceased with his abundant mercy, and place him in His vast Heavens.**

**The Supreme Council reviewed the accomplishments of the joint process of cooperation since its last session in all fields, undertaking a thorough review of the political and security issues at the regional and international levels in light of the developments and events taking place in the Gulf region and the world.**

**Desirous of reinforcing the joint cooperation process, the Supreme Council reviewed the follow-up reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council and took necessary decisions accordingly in the following manner:**

**With a view to supporting the gulf citizenship and to provide insurance protection to the GCC citizens who work outside their countries in other GCC States, the Council approved that which the competent committees arrived at with regard to extending the insurance umbrella of the retirement and social insurance institutions to cover the GCC citizens working outside their countries in other GCC States as therein lies the social security for them and their families.**

**In this connection, the Supreme Council welcomed the Law issued by**

**His Highness King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, which allows the GCC citizens— natural and naturalized—to engage in economic activities and professions agreed upon within the framework of the Council, considering that supportive of the joint process of cooperation and gulf citizenship.**

**The Supreme Council examined the findings of the preliminary economic feasibility studies on constructing railway network project. The project would interlink the GCC States, facilitate the movement of the citizens, and strengthen the movement and flow of trade between the GCC States. The Council also looked into the joint water grid project and gave directions to complete the remaining necessary studies pertaining to the two projects.**

**The Council studied the report on the status of the implementation of the smart card project for the GCC States. The smart card would be like a national identity card for the GCC citizens. The Council gave directions to complete the project and to evolve appropriate mechanisms for its implementation in the GCC States.**

**With the objective of integrating and unifying economic regulations and policies of the GCC States, the Council approved a number of unified laws in the fields of agriculture and industry, including the Unified Industrial Law for the GCC States. The most important aims of the Unified Industrial Law are to encourage and develop the industrial projects, to raise the contribution of the industrial sector in the GDP, and to expand the bases of economic linkage in the GCC States.**

**With regard to the economic relations of the GCC States with other countries and international blocs, the Supreme Council took cognisance of the developments that took place in this connection in the year 2004, as well as the agreements signed for the establishment of the Free Trade Area(FTA) and the Framework Agreements for Economic Cooperation between the GCC States and other countries and international groupings.**

Based on the importance of dealing with the effects resulting from the increase in the number of foreign workers in the Member States, the Supreme Council perused the Memorandum of the Secretariat-General on this subject and approved the concepts and proposals to deal with the effects of the foreign workers, considering it to be vital subject in light of the economic, social and progress related developments.

Conscience of the importance of protecting environment and natural resources, the Supreme Council approved the Unified Environmental Standards and Measures related to noise, quality of air and wastewater, as they constitute the basic minimum of the legislations that must be adopted while preparing or developing the national standards and measures in the GCC states.

In the field of protecting marine environment from pollution, the Supreme Council affirmed the need to speed-up the establishment of facilities for the reception of balance water and the need to accede to the MARPOL (Marine Pollution) Conventions of 1973 and 1978.

With a view to activating the joint environmental process, the Supreme Council gave directions to expedite the coordination and execution plans to push the joint environmental process towards the desired goals, affirming that the conservation of environment and its natural resources, and the protection of wild life and its development, have become an indispensable need in achieving sustainable development, which aims at improving the quality of life of human life and welfare in the GCC States. The Supreme Council invited the competent quarters to translate the environmental rules, regulations, standards and measures into practicable programs implemented in accordance with development plans, focusing on training the national cadre, and on intensification of awareness programs through the mass-media, educational curricula, and strengthening the cooperation and coordination between various specialized environmental bodies in the GCC States, international and regional institutions and organizations in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

Similarly, the Supreme Council perused the follow-up report on its decision on the comprehensive development of education, and asserted that implementation of the resolutions of the Supreme Council should be given top priority. The Council directed the competent committees on the need to implement the plans and programs contained in the relevant resolutions that have been issued in this regard, and on the need to put into place appropriate mechanisms for their implementation.

Based on the desire of their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States to strengthen legal cooperation, the Supreme Council approved the Kuwait Document on the Unified Law for the Care of the Wealth of the Minors and those who come under this category, as a model law for a period of four years.

The Supreme Council also approved the extension of the validity of the Muscat Document on the Unified Personal Laws as a model Law for a period of another four years in order to give the Member States more time to benefit from it. Likewise, the Supreme Council also decided to extend the validity of the Riyadh Document on the Unified Law for the Penal Procedures of the GCC States as a model law until its review and approval in its final form.

In the field of military cooperation and coordination, the Council perused the outcomes of the third periodic meeting of the Joint Defence Council, and approved those outcomes. The Council also agreed to introduce the decoration granted to the staff of the Dir'a Al-Jazeera (Peninsula Shield) forces which belong to the GCC countries. This shall be done in accordance with specific procedural controls. The Council expressed its satisfaction at the progress made in the various fields of military cooperation, and at the steps that have been taken and the achievements that have been made in this connection.

In view of the importance of strengthening coordination and cooperation in the field of security, the Council reviewed a detailed report on

the measures taken by the Member States, exchange of information between them, as well as the ongoing coordination between various security bodies in implementation of the relevant resolutions, the latest being the decisions of their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Interior in their twenty-third meeting held in October 2004 in the State of Kuwait. The Council expressed satisfaction at the efforts and the achievements that have been made in the field of security cooperation.

The Supreme Council reviewed the dangerous terrorist operations taking place in the world, both at the regional and international levels. In this context, the Supreme Council renewed its condemnation and rejection of all types of terrorism, irrespective of the place of occurrence, sources, motivations and pretexts. It affirmed at the same time the fundamentals of the unequivocal position of the GCC with regard to combating and preventing the phenomenon of terrorism, and on drying-off the sources that finance it with all available means and dealing with its causes and motivations locally, regionally and internationally. The Council emphasized the need to differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate rights of the peoples to struggle against occupation in accordance with the resolutions of international legality.

In this context, the Council expressed its condemnation of the terrorist operation that targeted the US Consulate in the Jeddah Protectorate, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The terrorist attack caused the death of a number of innocents. The Council expressed sorrow and condolences to the families of the victims and lauded the capability of the armed forces of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in dealing effectively with the situation and ending it speedily and resolutely.

The Council renewed its absolute support and solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its endeavours and all the measures it is taking to safeguard its security and stability and in eliminating the perverted group. This perverted group adopts the criminal, terrorist acts as its methodology, which has been rejected by all religious laws, humane

principles, fundamentals and morals. It asserted that the true Islam is based on the foundations of justice, benevolence, toleration. Islam forbids all acts that target the innocents and cause them harm as a result. This is because Islam protects the innocent people and prohibits killing, threatening or torturing them.

In affirmation of the support of the GCC States for the regional and international efforts aimed at combating terrorism, the Supreme Council welcomed the hosting by the Kingdom of Bahrain of the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terror Financing.

With regard to the works of the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council, the Supreme Council studied the views of the Consultative Commission on the role of the private sector in strengthening the links between the people of the GCC , the obstructions that hinder the commercial exchange between the GCC States, and the issues of the youth and the means of their welfare . The Council decided to approve these views and refer them to the competent Ministerial Committees so that they may evolve necessary mechanisms to implement them. The Council agreed that the Commission should continue to study the subject of evaluating the GCC process over the past twenty-three years. Similarly, the Council assigned the Commission to study the phenomenon of terrorism for the next session.

In connection with Media Cooperation, the Supreme Council examined the process of media cooperation between the GCC States and passed directives to adopt the mechanisms proposed by the Ministers of Information in implementation of the recommendations of the Consultative Commission with regard to media related issues which were approved by the Supreme Council in its 22<sup>nd</sup> session held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Concerning the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands—the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa—

which belong to the State of the United Arab Emirates , the Supreme Council affirmed its firm and well-known stands which have been reiterated by all the previous statements that support the right of the State of the United Arab Emirates to sovereignty over her three islands: the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs, and Abu Musa, and over the territorial waters, the airspace, the continental shelf, and the economic zone of the three islands, as they are an integral part of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

Further, the Supreme Council expressed disappointment at the lack of any outcomes as a result of the contacts made with the Islamic Republic of Iran, outcomes that would actively contribute to the resolution of the issue, leading to the security and stability of the region.

The Supreme Council also affirmed the continuation of the act of looking into all peaceful means that would lead to the restoration of UAE's right on the three islands, and that the Islamic Republic of Iran should respond to the efforts of the UAE and the international community in solving the issue by peaceful means or taking recourse to the International Court of Justice.

The Council examined the continued lack of stability and security and the extent of its repercussions on the on the internal situation of brotherly Iraq. The Council expressed its concern, in particular, at that which afflicts the Iraqi people and the Iraqi infrastructure and aggravation of the sufferings of the brotherly people of Iraq. In this connection, the Supreme Council reiterated the fundamentals of its positions which have been expressed in its previous statements, and its rejection of everything that could lead to the partition of Iraq, and the need to preserve the sovereignty of Iraq, its independence and the integrity of its soil, and the need to avoid intervention in its internal affairs, inviting other sides to follow the same principle.

The Supreme Council expressed hope that the American

Administration would work actively with the UN and the international community in all efforts aimed at enabling all sections of the Iraqi people in contributing to the political process represented by the holding of elections which would help the Iraqi people to decide their political and economic future and bring about security and stability so that Iraq becomes an active and positive member in the Gulf, Arab and international environment in accordance with the UN resolution 1546.

As part of the desire of the leaders of the GCC States to realize the aspirations of the Iraqi people, the Supreme Council condemned the explosions and the terrorist activities that target the civilians and humanitarian and religious institutions as well as the kidnapping of innocents and their torture. Furthermore, the Supreme Council expressed its sorrow and condolences to the families of the victims of these crimes and affirmed its solidarity with their countries. The Supreme Council also condemned the genocide of the Iraqis and the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees as well as the subjects of other nations by the previous Iraqi regime as has been discovered from the mass graves, constituting blatant and gross violation of human rights, Islamic and moral principles and Arab values.

The Council reiterated its appeal to UN to cooperate with the interim Iraqi government in exerting the necessary efforts to find a final solution about the restoration of Kuwaiti assets and national archives, which were confiscated by the previous Iraqi regime during its occupation of the State of Kuwait.

The Supreme Council examined the developments taking place in the Palestinian arena and the persistence of the Israeli government in perpetrating aggression against the innocent Palestinian people, thereby challenging the international conventions, instruments and resolutions of international legality and ignoring the Arab and international peace initiatives and placing all the hindrances in the attempts to revive the peace process.

The Supreme Council lauded the wisdom and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the Palestinian leadership in the transfer of authority with all ease. This strengthened the internal security, reinforced the legitimacy and the role of the political institutions, and consolidated the Palestinian unity. The Council emphasized the need for and the importance of harnessing the favourable conditions and the available opportunities in the service of its just cause, in a manner that would enable it to restore its legitimate rights including the establishment of its independent state on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Supreme Council expressed its wishes for the success of the Palestinian leadership in continuing the cooperation and mutual aid in meeting the future challenges.

The Supreme Council also expressed its hope that the H.E. George Bush would, during his second presidential term, give the Middle East issue topmost priority in the US foreign policy, so that it would lead to the fulfilment of commitments and promises for establishing a viable Palestinian State living in security and peace side by side with Israel. The Supreme Council also expressed its hope that the international quartet would continue to exert efforts towards activating the Middle East Peace Process in accordance with the bases and requirements set forth in the roadmap and the Arab initiative, in addition to its efforts aimed at creating favourable atmosphere to facilitate the progress of the Palestinian political process.

The Supreme Council demanded from Israel to withdraw completely from all occupied Arab territories in Palestine as well as from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the line of 4<sup>th</sup> July 1967, as well as from Shaba farms in Southern Lebanon.

The Supreme Council affirmed the support the GCC States to the political and economic stability and security in Lebanon, condemning the Israeli attacks on its sovereignty and independence.

The Supreme Council affirmed its desire to make the Middle East region, including the Gulf region, free from all weapons of mass destruction, and to put pressure on Israel to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear installations to the international system of inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to consider it a fundamental condition in any future security arrangements.

The Supreme Council expressed its appreciation of the enormous efforts being made by the Secretary-General and his active contribution in the progress of the Council and resolved to renew the appointment of the His Excellency Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attayah as Secretary-General of the GCC for a period of another three years beginning from April 1, 2005, wishing His Excellency success in his functions during the next tenure.

As part of the desire of the GCC States and their continuous efforts to complete the ongoing political, economic and social process in their States, the Supreme Council affirmed the position and vision of the GCC States and the Arabian position that was stated by Arab Summit declaration which was held recently in Tunis. The declaration stressed on the need to understand that development and modernization should emanate from within the countries of the region, and that the characteristics and conditions of these countries should be considered from the political, economic, social, cultural and religious perspectives. The gradual harvesting of the fruits of this development and modernization would improve the chances of stability, security and prosperity in the region.

The Supreme Council expressed its immense appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait and his prudent government for the genuine and sincere efforts during the period of presidency of His Highness of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the GCC, expanding the joint action to broader avenues and horizons and taking it towards greater progress and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

**The Supreme Council also expressed its appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the President of the current session of the Supreme Council, his government and generous people for their kind reception and generous hospitality and the sense of fraternity with which his brothers, the leaders of the GCC States were received. The leaders extolled the attention bestowed and the care taken by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the President of the current session, for these meetings and his wise administration which had great impact in arriving at important outcomes and decisions, expressing their confidence that the Kingdom of Bahrain, during its presidency of this session will contribute towards strengthening the benign process of the Council, and expand its horizons in light of the prevailing local, regional and international situation , wherewith the ambitions and aspirations of the people of the GCC States would be realized.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 26<sup>th</sup> session., Allah Willing, in the State of the United Arab Emirates in the month of Dhul-Qa'da 1426AH, corresponding to December 2005 based on the gracious invitation of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates.**

**Issued in Al-Manama**

**Tuesday, 9 Dhul-Qa'dah 1425 AH / 21 December 2004 AD**

**Unofficial translation of  
The Closing Statement of the  
Twenty-sixth Session of the Supreme Council of the  
Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)  
Abu Dhabi – United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
16 – 17 Dhul Qada 1426 AH / 18 – 19 December 2005 AD  
King Fahad Summit**

In response to the gracious invitation of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, President of the UAE, the Supreme Council held its 26<sup>th</sup> session in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on Sunday and Monday 16-17 Dhul Qada 1426 AH corresponding to 18-19 December 2005 AD. The meeting was chaired by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, President of the UAE and the Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council in the presence of their Majesties and Highnesses:

*His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa*

**King of Bahrain**

*Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz A*

**King of Saudi Arabia**

*His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed*

**Sultan of Oman**

*His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani*

**Emir of the State of Qatar**

*His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah*

**Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**

**H.E. Abdur Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, the GCC Secretary-General also participated in the meeting.**

**Commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the blessed launch of the GCC from Abu Dhabi under the auspices of late sagacious leader Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, the UAE capital once again hosted this august meeting with pride and honor in the grand achievements of this great edifice(GCC) during the reign of the worthy successor to the worthy predecessor. On this occasion, the Council expressed sincere gratitude and honor at the contributions of the founding leaders, whose memory shall remain eternally imbued within the conscience of this grand process and its sublime goals; may Allah have mercy on them, and grant them the best of rewards for their selfless contribution to development and construction of their homelands, their dedicated concern for maintaining peace and security of the Member States and their peoples, their efforts in promoting the just causes of the Arab and Islamic nations, and for advancing peace in the region and the world. The leaders of the GCC States asserted their relentless resolve and determination to push forward the blessed march of joint cooperation wherewith to accomplish more successes in various fields with a view to realizing the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the GCC.**

**The Supreme Council also expressed grief and condolence at the sad demise of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud and the great loss his passing away represents for the Arab and Islamic nations. The Council expressed appreciation for the late monarch's glorious achievements and his magnificent contributions towards fostering the advancement of the GCC, thereby actualizing the hopes and aspirations of the Member States and their peoples. It also lauded the role of the departed leader—May Allah Have Mercy on him—in serving the Arab, Islamic and international causes.**

**The Supreme Council welcomed the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia who—May Allah Preserve Him—personifies the uninterrupted reign of Saudi Arabia's course of development, contributions and glory. His Majesty also embodies the sustained support to the progress of the GCC, achievement of its political goals, maintenance of security of the GCC States, and reinforcement of the foundations of the GCC, along with his brothers the leaders of the GCC States, with a view to consolidating stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region.**

The Supreme Council welcomed Saudi Arabia's accession to the World Trade Organization(WTO), affirming that the accession would be beneficial for and supportive to the GCC process, and would act as be an important factor in the stability of the world economy.

The Council lauded the results of the proceedings of the Third Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference(OIC) held in Makkah Al Mukarramah on 5-6 Dhul Qa'adah 1426 AH (7-8 December 2005). It praised the Makkah Declaration and the Final Communiqué which was issued at the end of the summit and contains all that is good for the progress of the Member States of the OIC.

The Supreme Council expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, during its presidency of G-77 and China. It also expressed satisfaction with the results of the Second South Summit held in Doha in June 2005.

The Council reviewed the achievements of the Member States the process of development and modernization, as well as their accomplishments in economic, political, educational, and social fields. The Council recalled and reiterated the pronouncements of the Manama Declaration, issued at the Zayed Summit which was convened last year in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The declaration emphasized the importance of persisting with modernization and comprehensive development in order to keep pace with the age and its basic requirements. This should be done in a gradual manner to harvest the fruits of the process that should emanate from national identity, history and heritage of the region. This is to ensure that the process achieves its goals and contributes towards realizing security, stability, and prosperity for the GCC States and its peoples.

The Supreme Council considered the accomplishments of the joint process in all fields since the last session, and undertook a thorough assessment of the political, security, regional, and international issues in light of the major events and rapid developments taking place in the region and the world.

Based on the keen desire of the leaders of the GCC States to reinforce the joint process of the Council and to push it to greater and more inclusive horizons, the Supreme Council reviewed the follow-up reports submitted by the Ministerial Council, and took the necessary decisions accordingly in the following manner:

The Supreme Council reviewed the GCC process in the field of economy by examining the reports and recommendations presented by the relevant Ministerial Committees and the Secretariat-General.

The Supreme Council adopted the document. *The Unified Commercial*

*Policy of the GCC States.* The document aims at unifying the external trade policy of the GCC States, and dealing with the outside world as a single economic unit. It also calls for adopting a unified internal trade policy that would facilitate the movement of citizens, commodities, services, and means of transport, keeping into consideration environmental and consumer protection.

The Supreme Council also examined the working of customs union and its positive impact such as increased commercial exchange and the facilitation of the cross-movement of commodities between the Member States. Further, the Supreme Council approved the extension of the interim phase of the customs union until the end of the year 2007, and agreed to exempt a number of goods from custom taxes.

The Council looked into the steps to implement the Common Gulf Market, as well as the achievements made during 2005 by the Member States, especially in the field of Stock trading and ownership. The Council approved the agreement(which was undertaken upon authorization from the Supreme Council) of the Finance and Economics Committee on adding the following economic activities to the list of activities that can be practiced by the GCC citizens in all the Member States. The newly permitted economic activities are private recruitment offices, car rentals, and most of the cultural activities.

The Council directed the relevant committees to speedily fulfill all the remaining requirements for launching the Common Gulf Market before the end of the year 2007.

With regard to the implementation of the timeline for instituting the Monetary Union of the GCC , the Supreme Council considered the report of the Secretariat-General on the steps that have been taken in this connection. The Council endorsed the agreement reached on the financial and monetary standards for economic approximation by the Finance and Economics Committee and the Committee of the Governors of the Monetary Agencies and Central Banks. The Council directed the two committees to conclude deliberations on how to calculate those standards and percentages, and to submit it during the next session of the Supreme Council.

The Council perused a number of other economic reports submitted by the Secretariat-General, and issued its directives accordingly. Among reports considered were the report on the consular study on water interconnection between the GCC States, the report on the steps taken to conduct a feasibility study on the construction of a railroad network between the GCC States, and the report detailing the level of progress made in each GCC State in relation to the headway made in the project on the issuance of the identity card for the GCC States with unified information (smart card).

The Council also perused the report presented on the joint precautionary steps and measures taken within the framework of the GCC in relation to

Avian Flu, and the outcome of the emergency meeting of the Ministers of Health and Agriculture the GCC States . The Council issued directives to intensify and coordinate efforts to prevent the spread and proliferation of this disease.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on the progress of cooperation between the GCC States and the Republic of Yemen, and the steps that have been taken within the framework of the GCC with regard to this issue, including the Supreme Council directive on supporting the financing of development projects in Yemen, as well as the inclination to hold a conference to explore the investment opportunities in the Republic of Yemen.

Concerning the economic relations of the GCC States with other countries and international blocs, the Supreme Council examined the developments that have taken place during 2005 in this connection. The Council considered the framework agreements for economic cooperation as well as progress of the negotiations between the GCC States the European Union. The Supreme Council welcomed the progress made in the recent rounds of negotiations between the two sides, and expressed hope for the conclusion of these negotiations and the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the GCC States and the EU in the near future. The Council also expressed satisfaction at the progress made in talks for establishing two Free Trade Areas between the GCC States and People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Turkey.

In the field of Human and Environmental Affairs, the Supreme Council looked into the topics related to the field.

Based on the keen desire of the GCC States to protect the human and environmental health from the dangers of ultra violet rays that may result due depletion of that layer, and in line with the international efforts within the framework of the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol on controlling the ozone depleting substances, the Supreme Council approved the Guiding Law of GCC States to control ozone depleting substances.

In the field of education the Supreme Council examined the report of the Secretary-General on evaluating the level of implementation of resolutions, and referred it to the Education Ministers and the Ministers of Higher Education to implement the proposals therein. The Supreme Council also blessed the efforts of Ministers of Education to implement the Supreme Council resolutions , and directed the Committee of Higher Education Ministers to accelerate the execution of joint programs and projects of higher education as well as the provisions of the document on the Comprehensive Development of Education, and to take into consideration the views and observations of the Member States in this regard.

Within the framework of the endeavors to achieve social tranquility for the citizens of the GCC States working in the private and public sectors . the

**Supreme Council expressed satisfaction at the necessary executive measures, arrangements, and preparations made by the Member States, the working groups, and the relevant Ministerial Committees to implement the Supreme Council decision made in the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manamah-December-2004) to extend the insurance protection coverage to GCC citizens working outside their countries in any other Member State.**

**The Supreme Council expressed satisfaction at the measures taken to raise the level of family and childcare as well as at their efforts to enable the women to participate effectively in the development endeavors.**

**In the field of Youth and Sports, the Supreme Council lauded the efforts being made by their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Youth and Sports, and the Heads of the Olympic Committees, and the Technical Committees, to raise the level of Gulf Sports and to support the youth and sports activities in the GCC States.**

**In the field of Legal Affairs, the Supreme Council approved the Riyadh Document on the Uniform Penal Procedures in the GCC States in its new amended form as a Guiding Law for a period of four years.**

**The Supreme Council also decided to extend the validity period of the Kuwait Document on Uniform Civil Code for the GCC States, the Doha Document on Uniform Penal Law, the Abu Dhabi Document on Juveniles, the Manama Document on Legal Practice, and the Muscat Document on Evidence as Guiding Laws for a period of another four years. The Council decided to continue with effectiveness of the Manama Document on Common Civil Procedures and Defense in the GCC States as Guiding Law until the completion of its revision and approval in its final form.**

**In the Military sphere, the Supreme Council studied the results of the fourth periodic meeting of Joint Defense Council held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 22 Sha'baan 1426 AH corresponding to 26 September 2005, and endorsed the decisions contained therein, and expressed satisfaction at the steps taken in this regard.**

**(The Council also considered the message of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud about strengthening Peninsula Shield Forces. The Council endorsed the proposals and referred them to the Joint Defense Council to study them and to submit the recommendations during the next session of the Supreme Council.)**

**In the field of security cooperation and coordination the Supreme Council looked into the results of the proceedings and resolutions of the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Interior which was held in Manama in November 2005. The Council expressed satisfaction at the progress of the security coordination and cooperation between the GCC States and positive developments aimed at protecting the societies of the GCC States from dangerous security problems such as the proliferation of**

drugs, money laundering, and smuggling of arms and explosives. The Council also expressed satisfaction at the achievements made in ways to prevent infiltration, and the development of secure means of communication to intensify exchange of information between the various organs of the security apparatus in the GCC States.

The Supreme Council endorsed the agreement reached by the Ministers of Interior on the movement of convicts, between GCC States, facing penalties that negate freedom. The Council authorized the Ministers to sign the agreement because of its humanitarian significance.

In view of the rapid security developments and events in the world caused by the terrorist elements, the Supreme Council examined the efforts of the Member States, and the measures and mechanisms adopted by them to combat terrorism at the regional and international levels. The Council expressed satisfaction at those efforts, mechanisms and measures. It reaffirmed the stances and principles of the GCC States on combating terrorism, denouncing it all its forms and shapes, irrespective of its origin, and rejecting the ill-founded justifications put forth in its favor. The Supreme Council reiterated its repeated calls for and its support to all regional and international efforts aimed at combating terrorism by crystallizing and coordinating the stands to define terrorism and pinpoint it, and to differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate rights of the people to struggle against occupation. The legitimate struggle against occupation does not legitimize the blood of innocents.

In this context the Supreme Council welcomed the results of the international counter-terrorism conference which was hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in February 2005 in Riyadh. The Council also welcomed the recommendations of the Conference, foremost among which was the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, to establish an international centre for combating terrorism. There is no doubt that this centre would significantly and effectively contribute to the international efforts to counter terrorism. The Council supports the efforts aimed at forming a working group to study the recommendations to be contained in the proposed declaration related to the centre under the UN supervision.

The Supreme Council reiterated its condemnation of terrorist activities and the consequent murder of the innocents and destruction of property. The Council stressed the need to confront these terrorist activities collectively and internationally.

Concerning the functioning of the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council of the GCC States, the Supreme Council perused the views of the Consultative Commission on the phenomenon of terrorism and decided to approve those views and to refer them to relevant Ministerial Committees so that they may evolve necessary mechanisms to implement those views. With regard to the report of the Commission about the evaluation of the joint

process of the GCC over the past 23 years, the Council decided to refer it to the Member States so that the competent quarters may review the report and express their observations on it with goal of maximizing the opportunities of benefiting from it. After that the Consultative Commission shall revise the report and present it in its final form to the Supreme Council during the next session.

The Supreme Council assigned the Consultative Commission to study the economic nationalization and its role in deepening the process of Gulf nationalization; as well as the study on the importance of economic partnership in supporting the relations with neighboring countries and to present them to the Supreme Council during its next session.

In the political arena, the Supreme Council explored a number of regional, Arab and international issues and clarified the GCC stand on those issues in the following manner:

Pertaining to the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands: the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa, belonging to the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council stated its unwavering and well-known stand—which have been affirmed in all the previous statements—supporting the sovereign right of the United Arab Emirates on her three islands, including the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa as well as the territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf, and the economic zone of the three islands, as they are an integral part of the UAE.

The Supreme Council expressed regret at the lack of any progress in communication with the Islamic Republic of Iran until now or lack of any results that would contribute effectively in solving the problem and strengthen security and stability in the region.

The Supreme Council reaffirmed the need to keep considering all peaceful means that could lead to the restoration of the right of the UAE over her three islands. The Islamic Republic of Iran should respond to the efforts of the UAE and the international community aimed at solving the problem by peaceful means which includes resorting to the International Court of Justice.

With regard to Iraq, the Council welcomed the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections held on 15 December 2005. This was an election in which different groups of the brotherly Iraqi people with different ethnic affiliations participated. The Supreme Council hopes that the results of these elections would lead to the opening of a new page in the history of modern Iraq, ensuring its unity and stability. The Council hoped that Iraq would manage its affairs by itself and make a comeback as an effective player in the Arab and international arena, co-existing peacefully with its neighbors. The Council urged the Iraqi people to continue dialogue in order to arrive at a comprehensive national consensus, which is the main guarantee for Iraq's unity, stability and sovereignty. The Council reiterated the commitment of

the Member States to honor their pledge for the reconstruction of Iraq.

In context of the keen desire of the leaders of the GCC States to see realization of the aspirations of the brotherly Iraqi people for stability, the Supreme Council condemned the explosions and the terrorist activities that target civilians as well as humanitarian and religious institutions. The Council also condemned the threats and attack on the Iraqi infrastructure and its destruction.

Further, the Supreme Council denounced the deliberate mass killings of Iraqis, and the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees as well as subjects of other countries, which were carried out by the former Iraqi regime. This is being continually discovered in form of mass graves, representing blatant and gross violation of human rights as well as Islamic, ethical and Arab principles and values.

The Supreme Council welcomed the ongoing cooperation between Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq with regard to the suffering inflicted on the brotherly Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples as a result of the inhumane practices of former Iraqi regime against both the Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples. The Council expressed hope that the UN would persist with efforts to resolve the rest of the pending issues such as the return of the Kuwaiti assets and its national archives which were seized by the former Iraqi regime during the occupation of the State of Kuwait, as well as establishing the fate of the prisoners of Kuwait and other countries.

The Supreme Council reviewed the development of events in the Palestinian arena and the Middle East peace process. The Council expressed hope that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank would be a step in the right direction on the condition that this would be followed by steps aimed at complete withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian territories, so as to enable the brotherly Palestinian people to establish their independent State on their national soil, with Holy Jerusalem as capital. In this context, the Supreme Council reiterated the commitment of the Member States to the Arab Peace Initiative—based on resolutions of international legality—which was adopted by the Beirut Summit in 2002. The Council emphasized the complementariness between this initiative and the roadmap.

The Supreme Council reiterated that the just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will not be achieved except by the establishment of an independent Palestinian State founded on the essential requirements for it with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. The Council also stressed the need of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the line of 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 as well as from Southern Lebanon's Shebaa farms.

The Supreme Council demanded from Israel to refrain from its atrocious practices against the unarmed Palestinian people; stop assassinations; stop building settlements; evict the existing settlements; and stop the construction

of the separating wall and raze parts of the wall that have already been constructed; and stop the threats that are being made by the extremist Jewish groups to attack the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Council made it clear that these threats would provoke the feelings of the Muslims and infringe upon the sanctity of what they consider Holy, and subvert the peace process.

The Supreme Council further demanded that Israel accede to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and subject all its nuclear installations to the international system of inspection by the International Agency for Atomic Energy. The Council urged the international community to mount pressure on Israel to achieve this end.

The Supreme Council renewed its appeals to make Middle East, including the Gulf region, free from the weapons of mass destruction.

The supreme Council examined the events taking place in Lebanon and condemned and censured the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri, after a criminal attack targeting him and his associates. Rafik Al-Hariri devoted his life to strengthen security, stability, and development in Lebanon. The Supreme Council also condemned the repeated assassinations of symbols and leaders of the Lebanese people, affirming the desire of the GCC States to support the political, security, and economic stability for the Lebanese people. The Supreme Council called on the brothers in Lebanon to mend the cracks so as to preserve the unity and cohesion of Lebanon, and to provide security, stability and welfare to its brotherly people. The Supreme Council condemned the repeated Israeli threats, violations, and attacks on Lebanon's sovereignty and independence.

The Supreme Council expressed satisfaction at the Syrian Arab Republic's welcome of the UNSC resolution 1644 concerning United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC), affirming the attachment of the GCC States to the sovereignty, independence, and the integrity of Syria and Lebanon.

The Supreme Council examined the developments in Sudan, welcoming the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which was concluded in Nairobi in January 2005, as well as the formation of the new Sudanese government. The Council praised the efforts being exerted by the Sudanese government to solve the Darfur problem. The Supreme Council expressed hope that peace would prevail in all parts of Sudan, bringing stability and prosperity to the brotherly people of Sudan.

In the end, the Supreme Council expressed immense appreciation and gratitude for the sincere and true efforts made by the His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eissa Al-Khalifa , King of Bahrain and his prudent government during His Majesty's Chairmanship of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council and the achievements made during the session in pushing forward the blessed process of joint action of the GCC towards broader horizons.

**thus brining progress and prosperity for the people of the region.**

**The Supreme Council also expressed immense appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, President of the UAE and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, his Government and generous people for the hospitality and the sincere feelings of fraternity with which the leaders of the Council were received. The leaders of the GCC states lauded the kind care and attention that was given by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, President of the UAE and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council to this meeting. The Council also lauded the wisdom with which his Highness managed the meeting. This has a great impact on arriving at important decisions and resolutions. The GCC leaders expressed their confidence that the UAE under the leadership of His Highness, will make valuable contributions to the blessed process of co-operation, thus promoting it to newer horizons in light of the requirements of the current circumstances at the local, regional, and international levels, thereby realizing security, stability, and prosperity for the peoples of the GCC States.**

**The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 27th session, God willing, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the month of Dhul Qaada 1427 AH corresponding to December 2006 AD in response to the gracious invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia.**

**Issue at Abu Dhabi**

**17 Dhul Qada 1426 AH**

**19 December 2005 AD**



**THE CLOSING STATEMENT Of the Twenty-Seventh  
Session of the Supreme Council of the Cooperation  
Council for the Arab States of the Gulf(GCC)**

Riyadh-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

18-19 Dhul-Qaa'da 1427 AH/ 9 – 10 December 2006 AD

“Jaber Summit”

In response to the gracious invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Supreme Council convened its 27<sup>th</sup> session in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on Saturday and Sunday, 18-19 Dhul-Qaa'da 1427 AH corresponding to 9-10 December 2006 AD. The meeting was presided over by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council in the presence of their Majesties and Highnesses:

*His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan,*

**President of the State of the United Arab Emirates(UAE)**

*His Majesty King Hamad Bin Eisa Al-Khalifa*

**King of the Kingdom of Bahrain**

*His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed*

**Sultan of Sultanate of Oman**

*His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani*

**Emir of the State of Qatar**

*His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah*

**Emir of the State of Kuwait**

H.E. Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attivah, the GCC Secretary-General also

participated in the meeting.

The Supreme Council expressed grief and condolence on the sad demise of the late His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait (May Allah encompass him with His abundant Mercy and Pleasure). His Highness departed to the vicinity of his Lord after a life filled with monumental works and grand achievements, and a journey full of genuine contributions and sincere, persistent, and benign endeavors that were good for the State of Kuwait, its progress, well-being and the prosperity of its people. The Council presented sincere condolences and consolation to the State of Kuwait—leadership, government, and people—and the Arab and the Islamic communities at this momentous loss. The Supreme Council also expressed genuine regard for the role of the deceased in aiding the progress of the GCC, his outstanding contribution in its inception, his efforts in the service of the Arab and the Islamic causes and the peace of the region and the world.

The Supreme Council welcomed His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who—May Allah Preserve Him—personifies the uninterrupted reign of Kuwait's course of development, contributions, and glory for the people of Kuwait. His Majesty also embodies the sustained support to the progress of the GCC, achievement of its political goals, maintenance of security of the GCC States, and reinforcement of the foundations of the GCC, along with his brothers the leaders of the GCC States, with a view to consolidating stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council reviewed the paper presented by the State of Kuwait on the current regional and global challenges. It praised the proposals, suggestions, and ideas contained in the paper, and directed the Secretariat-General to study the paper, and to present a definitive plan containing specific programs and a timetable for their implementation in the next session of the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council reviewed the achievements made in the course of the combined action in all fields since the convening of the previous summit. The Supreme Council conducted a comprehensive assessment of the regional and international political and security issues in light of the momentous events and speedy developments occurring in the region and the world.

Stemming from the keen desire of the Heads of GCC States to reinforce the cooperation process, and in order to raise this process to a broader and a more inclusive horizon, the Supreme Council examined the recommendations and follow-up reports submitted by the Ministerial Council, and took appropriate decisions accordingly as follows:

The Supreme Council took cognizance of the progress of the GCC States in the in the **Economic Sphere** by perusing the reports submitted before it by

the competent Ministerial Committees and the Secretariat-General.

The Supreme Council examined the functioning of the **Customs Union**, and the measures that have been taken to fulfill its prerequisites. It considered the positive effects of the implementation of the Customs Union on the flow of goods, as well as the big increase posted in the commercial exchange between the Member States. The Supreme Council approved the **Unified Guide on the Control Procedures for Food Imports** through the customs windows from countries outside the GCC Customs Union. This was one of the prerequisites of the Customs Union.

The Supreme Council looked into the measures taken to implement the **Single GCC Market** and the progress made by the Member States on the issue in the year 2006, particularly the progress made in the field of engaging in economic activities, and the implementation of the Supreme Council resolutions related to the Single GCC Market. The Supreme Council endorsed the agreement (which was undertaken upon authorization from the Supreme Council) reached by the Finance and Economics Committee to permit the GCC citizens to engage in the following economic activities in all GCC States: insurance services; follow-up of government departments; and transportation. The Council directed the relevant committees to speedily fulfill all the remaining requirements for launching the Common Gulf Market before the end of the year 2007.

With regard to the implementation of the timetable for starting the **Monetary Union** of the GCC and the release of a common currency, the Supreme Council considered the report of the Secretariat-General on the steps that have been taken in this connection, and entrusted the Finance and Economics Committee, and the Committee of the Governors of the Monetary Agencies and Central Banks with the completion of research on how to calculate the standards for converging the economic performance and the percentages related to it. The Council authorized the Finance Ministers to reach an agreement on it, and directed the relevant committees to intensify efforts to complete the remaining steps and to reach an agreement on the regulations and documentation necessary for the establishment of the Monetary Union and the launch of the single GCC currency in accordance with the timetable referred to.

The Supreme Council approved the GCC Trademark Law (regulation) as a compulsory law. This law shall govern the trademarks that can be registered, the registration procedures, and the period for which the trademarks would be protected, as well as the procedures to cancel trademarks and transfer of ownership.

The Supreme Council perused the report on the smart card project and the status of its progress in all the Member States. The Supreme Council approved the use of the smart card for movement between Member States, and directed the relevant Ministerial Committees to adopt measures

necessary for its implementation.

The Supreme Council followed up the progress made on the detailed feasibility study of the GCC water grid project, and underscored its strategic importance. The Council also followed up the economic feasibility study on the construction of the railways network interlinking the GCC States. The Council directed the competent Ministerial Committees to follow-up these two vital studies, and to submit their recommendations quickly on the two studies to the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council examined the report of the Secretary-General on the cooperation between the **GCC and the Republic of Yemen**, and the results of the joint meetings, which were held between the two sides this year. These meetings resulted in the convening of the Donors' Conference (**Yemen Consultative Group Meeting**) which was sponsored by the GCC and held in London on 15-16 November 2006. The Donors' Conference succeeded in mobilizing most of the resources necessary to finance Yemen's need in the near term. The conference laid the necessary foundation for coordination and consultation for reinforcing the partnership between the Republic of Yemen and the donor community, at the forefront of which are the GCC States.

Concerning the **Relations of the GCC States with Other Countries and International Blocs**, the Ministerial Council looked into the developments that have occurred in this regard in 2006. The Council also looked into the progress of the negotiations aimed at establishing Free Trade Areas between the GCC States and a number of countries and economic groupings. The Council expressed satisfaction at the progress made in these negotiations.

In the field of **Human and Environmental Affairs**, the Supreme Council considered the follow-up report presented by the Secretariat-General on steps taken by the GCC States to implement the Unified GCC Law on extending the insurance coverage to GCC citizens working in GCC Member States other than their own. The Council appreciated the efforts made in this regard.

Emanating from the strong desire of the Supreme Council to protect the environment from pollution; and in order to preserve the natural resources of the of the GCC States, the Council emphasized the importance of accelerating the completion of "amenities to receive ship waste," upon States where the implementation of such projects are still underway. This is in order to declare the Gulf region a special marine region. The Council underscored the importance of accession of GCC Member States that have not yet acceded to the MAR-POL agreement to accede to the agreement in order to protect the marine environment.

Owing to the keen desire of the GCC States to achieve the goals of integrated health care, and in order to procure safe and effective medicine at suitable prices. the Supreme Council agreed to unify the medicine import prices for

the private sector in terms of a single currency in the GCC States.

The Supreme Council also perused the report of the Secretariat-General on the follow-up of measures related to the comprehensive development of education, and the Joint Plan for Developing the Public Education Curricula. The Council approved the financial budgets required for the implementation of certain courses in the GCC Universities.

In the field of **Legal Affairs**, the Supreme Council undertook the following:

1. The Council approved the proposed mechanism for the convening of the periodic meetings of Shoura, Parliamentary, National, and Umma Councils under the GCC umbrella.
2. The Council approved the Manama document on the Unified GCC Law on Civil Procedures (Procedures) in its amended form as a guiding law for a period of four years.
3. It approved the Abu Dhabi document on the Unified Law to Prevent Human Trafficking, as guiding law for a period of four years.
4. The Council extended the enforceability of the Muscat Document on the Unified GCC Law for real estate registration as a guiding law until a review has been undertaken.

In the **Military Sphere**, the Supreme Council examined the results of the fifth periodic meeting of the Joint Defense Council. The Supreme Council endorsed the study submitted by the Joint Defense Council. The study springs from the proposal of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques which called for furthering the advancement of the Dira' Al-Jazeera Forces. It aims to strengthen and develop the force and to increase its combat capability. The Supreme Council entrusted the Secretariat-General with following-up the completion of the studies and the adoption of regulations related to it. The Supreme Council also endorsed the remaining decisions related to the progress of military cooperation in the various fields, foremost of those are concerned with the sustainability and development of military projects and joint periodic exercises.

In the field of **Security Cooperation and Coordination**, the Supreme Council reviewed the course of security coordination and cooperation in light of the resolutions of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of GCC Ministers of Interior, and examined the mechanisms and procedures that were adopted in the meeting with a view to strengthening security coordination and cooperation between the Member States. The Council expressed satisfaction at the measures taken in this field to safeguard the development, stability, and prosperity being enjoyed by the peoples of the GCC States. The Council also expressed satisfaction at the intensification of communication and contacts, stressing

the importance of completing the movement course for the GCC citizens between the Member States.

In the field of **Counter-Terrorism**, the Supreme Council asserted the firm position of the GCC States on this dangerous and devastating epidemic. The GCC States reject terrorism in all its forms and shapes, irrespective of its sources or the causes put forth in its favor. It noted that that terrorism is an international crime, and the act of preventing it and dealing with it entails regional and international coordination and cooperation, which should be guided by the fact that terrorism is phenomenon of intellectual extremism. Terrorism has no religion or identity. The Council affirmed that it is everyone's duty to combat the fountainheads of deviant takfiri thought (charging others with infidelity) intellectually, socially, and culturally. Such thought has distorted Islam and has harmed nations. In this regard, the Supreme Council blessed the decision by the Interior Ministers of GCC States to form a permanent committee to combat terrorism.

Concerning the functioning of the **Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council**, the Supreme Council considered the views of the Consultative Commission on Economic Nationalization and Its Role in Deepening Gulf Nationalization; and the Importance of Economic Partnership in Strengthening the Ties of the GCC States with Neighboring Countries. The Council endorsed these studies, and decided to refer them to the Finance and Economics Committee and to other relevant Ministerial Committees so as to evolve mechanisms, and to propose necessary legislations to activate and implement these studies, and to eliminate the hindrances that impede the execution of the resolutions issued in this respect. Likewise, the Council stressed upon the relevant bodies in the Member States to execute the resolutions passed, and to eradicate constraints that hinder the GCC citizens from benefiting from these decisions. This is in implementation of provisions of Article 3 of the Economic Agreement between the GCC States, which states that the natural citizens and entities of the GCC States should be treated at par with citizens of other Member States without discrimination or differentiation in all economic fields.

Further, the Supreme Council ordered the Commission to persist with evaluating the views that have been implemented, assess the extent to which the resolutions related to the Commission have been implemented by the Member States, and to submit a report on the matter before the Supreme Council. The Council assigned the Consultative Commission to study the strengthening of the proper work environment for the private sector wherewith to ensure that Gulf corporations and investments are treated on equal terms with national investments and corporations in the GCC States. The Commission was directed to submit its outlook on the matter before the Supreme Council during its 28<sup>th</sup> session.

After conducting a thorough assessment of the joint cooperation process in all fields, the Supreme Council expressed satisfaction at the achievements and looked forward to more, appreciating the endeavors of the various

Ministerial Committees. At the same time, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its determination and strong desire to support the blessed GCC march culminating into the attainment of the aspirations of the citizens of the GCC States. The Supreme Council exhorted the Ministerial Committees and other concerned bodies to expedite the execution of the issued resolutions, by adopting necessary legislations and measures. It called for the elimination of the administrative and bureaucratic obstacles so as to actualize the yearning of the peoples of the region for joint projects, comprehensive development, and the deepening of the Gulf nationalization and for translating them into tangible reality. This should be embodied not merely in the feeling of cultural and civilizational affiliations, but also in the exchange of tangible benefits, promotion of shared interests, and day-to-day transactions between the people of the region, wherewith to instill the conviction in every citizen that the GCC is a living reality, and an indispensable necessity.

In this context, the Council welcomed the decision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman to open the border points: Ar-Rub Al-Khali (Empty Quarter) entry point on the Saudi side, and Ramlat Khaliya entry point on the Omani side, with a view to facilitating the movement of people and goods. The opening of the entry points would strengthen contacts, and advance the interests of the two brotherly States.

In the **Political Arena**, the Supreme Council discussed the situations in their totality, deliberating on major political, regional, Arab, and international issues, and expressing the standpoint of the GCC States with respect to those issues as following:

Concerning **Iran**, the Council discussed the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands: the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council stated its unwavering and well-known stand:

- Supporting the right of the State of the UAE to regain sovereignty over her three islands, which are the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa, and over the territorial waters, the airspace, the continental shelf, and the economic zone of the three islands, as they are an integral part of the State of the United Arab Emirates.
- Expressing disappointment that repeated contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran have not yielded any outcomes that would actively contribute to the resolution of the issue, outcomes that could lead to the security and stability of the region.
- Continue looking into all peaceful means that would lead to the restoration of UAE's right on the three islands.
- Urging the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the efforts of the UAE

and the international community in solving the issue by peaceful means or taking recourse to the International Court of Justice.

•**Iranian Nuclear Crisis:** In line with the commitment of the GCC States to their firm principle of respecting the international law, and to resolving conflicts through peaceful means, the GCC States reiterated their call towards peaceful resolution of this crisis. The Council urged Iran to continue with the international dialogue, and to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

•The Supreme Council further demanded that Israel accede to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and subject all its nuclear installations to the international system of inspection by the International Agency for Atomic Energy. The Council urged the international community to mount pressure on Israel to compel Israel to heed to the demands of the international community.

•The Supreme Council renewed its appeals to render the Middle East, including the Gulf region, free from the weapons of mass destruction, while at the same time, recognizing the right of countries of the region to own expertise in the field of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and that should be available to all within the framework of relevant international treaties.

•The Supreme Council ordered the undertaking of a joint GCC study to evolve a joint program in the field of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with international standards and regulations.

### **Iraq**

The Supreme Council expressed anguish at the deterioration of situation in Iraq, which is witnessing bloody events, whose mode and acuteness are growing in intensity. Growing with it are the sufferings of the brotherly Iraqi people. The Council considered the results of the emergency meeting of Ministerial Committee on Iraq, which was held in Cairo on 5/12/2006. The Council clarified the position of the GCC on the situation in Iraq as follows:

•Respecting the unity, sovereignty, and identity of Iraq; rejecting calls for its partition and division; reaffirming the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Iraq by any side aiming to influence the internal situation in Iraq with a view to achieving goals that do not serve the national unity of Iraq, or extending political and cultural influence in Iraq thereby laying the foundation for division and sectarianism leading to the destabilization of the region.

•Considering that national reconciliation is the key to the solution in Iraq, and that effecting reconciliation between the various sectarian and ethnic groups of the Iraqi people constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for achieving stability in Iraq.

- Condemning the terrorist and criminal acts, as well as the acts of sectarian killings and violence, forced displacement, and the loss of thousands of Iraqi lives. The Council expressed grave concern at the lack of security and supported the Iraqi government in thwarting such acts. It demanded the immediate dissolution of armed militias, and an end to illegal armed demonstrations that contribute in aggravating the sharpness of tension in Iraq.

- Welcoming the pronouncements of the Holy Mecca declaration made on 20/10/2006.

- Asserting that Iraq's security and stability cannot be achieved except through cooperation between all its people irrespective of their sectarian, ethnic, or religious affiliations, emphasizing the need for converging their efforts so that Iraqi interests supersede all other considerations, thus preserving the unity of the Iraqi people and integrity of the Iraqi territories.

- Affirming the need to safeguard the prevailing social balance, the interwoven social fabric, kinship ties, and fraternity that unite the various sects and clans in different regions of Iraq.

- Urging the United Nations to carry on with its efforts to resolve matters that remain unresolved, namely the return of national archives of Kuwait, and the establishment of the fate of the missing and the prisoners of Kuwait and other countries.

- Affirming that Iraq must implement all its obligations in accordance with the relevant international documents and resolutions, and it should establish its relations with other countries based on good neighborliness so as to realize security and stability in the region.

The Supreme Council reviewed the **development of events in the Palestinian Territories and the Middle East Peace Process**, and clarified the position of the GCC in this connection in the following manner:

- The Supreme Council reiterated strong condemnation and denunciation of the continued Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people, and the most savage massacres of the Palestinian people by Israel, the latest of those massacres being committed in Beit Hanoun. The victims of the Beit Hanoun massacre were innocent civilians—children, old people, and women.

- The Supreme Council affirmed the solidarity of the GCC States with their Palestinian brothers, calling on the international community to respond quickly to put an end to the repeated Israeli attacks. The Council emphasized the need to convene an international conference to put an end to Israel's acts of tyranny and crime. It also underlined the need to activate the peace process in accordance with the Arab peace initiative, the roadmap, and

resolutions of international legality.

- In this context, the Supreme Council welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution that condemned with overwhelming majority the massacre committed by Israel in Beit Hanoun. The Council also welcomed the resolution of the Human Rights Council related to the rights of the Palestinian people convened on 15<sup>th</sup> November. It demanded Israel to release the taxation dues of the Palestinian authorities and urged the international community to end the sanctions and sufferings imposed on the Palestinian people. It also demanded the release all Palestinian prisoners held in the jails of the Israeli occupiers

- Likewise the Supreme Council, called on the Palestinian leaders towards making further efforts for national reconciliation, and to accelerate the pace of forming the national unity government that gives priority to unifying the Palestinian ranks, thereby enabling the Palestinian people to realize internal peace and security.

- The Supreme Council further reiterated that just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East cannot be realized except by the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, with the Holy Jerusalem as its capital, and by the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 as well from the Sheba'a farms in Southern Lebanon.

- In this connection, the Supreme Council welcomed the ceasefire between the Palestinians and the Israelis, considering it an important step in the right direction, towards dialogue and resumption of the peace process. The Council stressed upon the importance of abiding by this agreement by all parties. It hoped that the agreement would help in putting an end to violence and counter-violence, realizing stability, forming the national unity Palestinian government, and in lifting the oppressive sanctions imposed on the Palestinian people.

- The Council concluded that the absence of a fair solution to the Palestinian issue, and the enormous sufferings that the Palestinian people are subjected to—sufferings that have crossed all bounds—are the real causes of the aggravation of the numerous conflicts in the Middle East. The Council appealed the international community to accord highest priority to finding a just solution to this problem in accordance with the rules of international legality. Temporary solutions or partial settlements are no longer sufficient or acceptable if this region is to enjoy security and stability.

The Supreme Council examined the development of **Unfortunate Events in Lebanon**, and stated the position of the GCC States in this connection as follows:

- The Council strongly condemned the return to the cycle of violence, and political assassinations in Lebanon with the assassination of Lebanon's Minister of Industry Pierre Gemavel. The Council expressed condolences to

the family of deceased, the Lebanese government, and the brotherly people of Lebanon.

- The Council affirmed that continuation of such terrorist acts will deepen the political crisis, aggravate the sharpness of differences between the different Lebanese political factions and forces, and create opportunities for those who harbor ill will against brotherly Lebanon.

- The GCC States would persist in supporting Lebanon politically, and economically, including in reconstruction efforts. It welcomed the Paris 3 Conference, which is to be held in next year to support Lebanon.

- The Council emphasized the need for all Lebanese people to work towards unifying the Lebanese ranks, reinforcing security and stability, showing commitment to constitutional and legal bodies, giving primacy to reconciliation, wisdom and the language of dialogue, in order to overcome the prevailing conditions. If such a situation continues then it will infringe upon Lebanon's stability and national unity, and the independence of its political decision.

- The Council expressed hope that the truth would be revealed, and those who have committed these terrorist acts would be brought to justice. The Council called on all sides to cooperate in this regard.

Concerning Sudan, the Supreme Council reviewed the development of the situation in Sudan and stated the following:

- Expressing regret at the continuation of humanitarian suffering in the Darfur region.

- The Supreme Council urged the government and the Sudanese groups to resort to dialogue, and to give priority to the higher interests of the brotherly Sudan.

- In this context, the Supreme Council called the international community towards expending utmost efforts to extend all possible help and support to Sudan, so that a peaceful solution to the ongoing crisis in Darfur may be found, specially because the Sudanese government has taken a number of positive steps in this direction.

- In this connection, the Supreme Council appreciated the endeavors of the Arab League, the African Union, and the United Nations in their attempts to come out with a solution that would avoid diplomatic and economic confrontation with the international community.

With regard to the Situation in Somalia, the Supreme Council reviewed the ongoing developments, the continuation of conflicts and cycle of clashes between the Somali government and Islamic Courts. The Council called the various sides in Somalia to take recourse to negotiations and dialogue. so the

brothers in Somalia would reach a reconciliatory solution that would end their differences, bringing security and stability, preventing further divisions and sufferings.

The Supreme Council expressed thanks and appreciation to Brigadier Ali Bin Salem Al-Moammari for his efforts during his tenure as the Asst. Secretary-General of Military Affairs at the Secretariat-General in the past six years, which witnessed the establishment of the Joint GCC Defense Council, as well as the evolution of new military cooperation regulations and mechanisms between the Member States.

The Council welcomed the appointment of Brigadier-General Khalifa Bin Humaid Saad Al-Kaabi of the UAE Armed Forces as the new Asst. Secretary-General for the Military-Affairs at the Secretariat-General.

The Supreme Council congratulated H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General designate of the United Nations, wishing His Excellency good luck and success in achieving the higher goals of the Organization, and the aspirations of the peoples of the world for security and stability.

Similarly, the Supreme Council lauded the efforts made by H.E. Kofi Annan during his tenure as the Secretary-General of the UNO, and the tremendous role he played in achieving the higher goals of the international organization, and in actualizing the yearning of the peoples of the world for security, stability, and prosperity.

In the end, the Supreme Council expressed immense appreciation and gratitude for the sincere and genuine efforts made by the His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the UAE and his prudent government during His Highness's Chairmanship of the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council and the achievements made during the session towards pushing forward the blessed process of joint action of the GCC to broader horizons, thus bringing progress and prosperity for the people of the region.

The Supreme Council also expressed immense appreciation and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, his Government and generous people for the hospitality and the sincere feelings of fraternity with which the leaders of the Council were received. The leaders of the GCC states lauded the kind care and attention accorded by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and the wisdom with which his Majesty managed the meeting. This had a great impact on arriving at important decisions and resolutions. The GCC leaders expressed confidence that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, would make valuable contributions to the blessed process of co-operation, thus promoting it to newer horizons in light of the demands of the current circumstances at the

local, regional, and international levels, thereby realizing security, stability, and prosperity for the peoples of the GCC States.

In appreciation of the endeavors of H.E. Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, the Supreme Council decided to extend tenure of His Excellency the Secretary-General for three years with effect from April 2008, wishing His Excellency continued luck and success.

The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting in its 28th session, God willing, in the Sultanate of Oman in the month of Dhul Qaada/ Dhul Hijja 1428 AH corresponding to December 2007 AD in response to the gracious invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed, Sultan of Oman..

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