

**Opening Remarks by
H. E. Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre,
President of the Human Rights Council
At the Opening of the 2012 Social Forum
1st October 2012**

Madam Chairperson, Ambassador Alya

Distinguished panellists,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be with you at this opening session of the 2012 Social Forum.

First, I would like to congratulate my distinguished colleague, Ambassador **Alya** Ahmed Saif, **Al-Thani** on her appointment as the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the 2012 Social Forum of the Human Rights Council. I am confident that under your able stewardship, this meeting will be a success.

The Social Forum provides a unique space for dialogue on the ever-increasing challenges with which we are confronted. Our growing interdependence, and both the positive and negative consequences of globalization, make the constructive engagement of multiple stakeholders an imperative of

governance at all levels. As responsible members of the international community in a diverse and rapidly changing world, we must ask ourselves how to reconcile differences and create consensus, without compromising on the principle reiterated by the **High Commissioner** in her background report to this forum: "**respect for human rights is the ultimate foundation upon which rests the legitimacy of the actions of our Governments, our international institutions, our corporations and business enterprises, our organs of civil society, and ourselves**".

Dialogue among the broadest cross-section of stakeholders, is an essential step towards **democratic governance, social inclusion and participation**.

The **representation in this year's Social Forum** of persons and organizations from all walks of life including women, youth and older persons, migrants, minorities and indigenous peoples, farmers, peasants and grass roots movements provides an opportunity for **meaningful** inputs to help us to translate human rights commitments into concrete actions and to contextualize our understandings of human rights challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Solidarity based on human rights has served to support and mobilize oppressed peoples, in their struggles against racism, apartheid, foreign

occupation, colonial domination, dictatorial regimes and other flagrant violations of human rights. **Recently**, we have seen broad popular movements aiming to achieve social justice and to realize their rights and fundamental freedoms. Not attending the accumulated grievances of people in the face of injustice has, naturally, provoked those on-going movements for political and social transformation.

The theme of this year's Forum, "people-centred development and globalization" reminds us that **development goes hand in hand with respect for all human rights**. Many challenges to human rights like climate change, natural disasters, epidemic diseases, unemployment, migration, displacement, violent conflicts, human trafficking, the sale of arms and the dumping of toxic wastes, **transcend national borders, threaten** the lives and livelihoods of millions and therefore, **undermine** the objectives of social justice, peace and security. **Such problems, often the product of globalization, call for holistic, international solutions.**

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development. The Declaration states that development is a **comprehensive process** aimed at improving "the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful **participation** in development and in the fair distribution" of the resulting benefits. The vision of development embodied in this Declaration is not limited to purely economic aspirations. It represents a **holistic development** paradigm founded, on the enjoyment of all human rights by all

individuals and **furthered in its turn through** the creation of an **enabling** environment for development and respect for human rights, at the national and international levels.

As it has already been mentioned, **an enabling environment for development must be nurtured through the application of the human rights principles** of accountability, equality, non-discrimination, participation, empowerment and transparency. Democracy and the rule of law go hand in hand with a better protection and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all.

The recent debate at the UN General Assembly on the rule of law, as well as the on-going negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals, as mandated in Rio+20, which includes the social dimension, and next year reflection on the post 2015 Development goals, should inspire this Social Forum, in order to come up with relevant recommendations.

The Council looks forward to receiving your report in due course.

Thank you.