Chairs' Summary

1. The fifth Forum for the future, co-chaired by UAE and Japan, has been convened in Abu Dhabi, 18, 19 October 2008 with broad participation of ministers and representatives of the BMENA, G8 and other partner countries as well as international organizations and the civil society.

2. The participants appreciated the efforts made by the UAE for hosting the Forum including strong contributions made by Japan, in addition to the efforts made by Yemen and Germany in the framework of the previous session of the 2007 Forum.

3. The participants reviewed the progress of G8-BMENA initiative and reaffirmed its objectives of this important dialogue and partnership.

4. The participants expressed concern over the consequences of the international financial crisis, and committed to continue working together to stabilize the financial market and to support global economic growth. Several participants stressed on the negative impacts of this crisis on developing countries and confirmed the importance of Doha’s UN Millennium Conference and Kuwait's Arab Economic and Social Summit Conference.

5. The participants affirmed the importance of coordinated efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace of the Arab Israeli conflict, and supported the full implementation of the Road map and expressed their support for the Arab Peace Initiative as an effective vehicle to deal with the conflict.

6. The participants emphasized the need to solve the Darfur crisis, in all its humanitarian and political aspects, and supported the Arab League’s and the African Union’s initiative, sponsored by the State of Qatar, as it secures Sudan’s sovereignty and unity and achieves justice.

7. The participants expressed their support for the national unity, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as supporting its comprehensive national reconciliation, constitutional political process, and the enhancement of governmental institutions and comprehensive development efforts.

8. The participants stressed the importance of resolving international disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with international law and UN charters, and stressed the importance of mutual respect of national priorities, sovereignty, independence and integral territories of all countries.

9. The participants highlighted the importance of enforcing the momentum of political, economic and social reforms stemmed out of the local environment, that are compatible with cultural, historical and religious
characteristics of the region in conjunction with available capabilities and resources. In addition, the participants agreed that the course and span of reforms do vary from one country to another; and that the lasting progress of political reform in the region is a joint responsibility between governments and the civil society.

10. The participants recognized the progress achieved in educational reform and recognized the important role of educational and vocational-technical training in development. In addition, the participants recognized the measures taken to further joint cooperation between governments and the civil society in development efforts; particularly, in the domains of environment, sustainable energy, human rights issues, food security, humanitarian aid and creating employment opportunities.

11. The participants acknowledged the progress achieved in the area of women's empowerment and enhancing women's participation in all sectors.

12. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to guarantee freedom of expression, human rights, justice, equality, rule of law, respect of diversity, transparency and combating corruption. The participants also reaffirmed their commitment to renouncing terrorism, extremism and violence and for supporting joint regional and international efforts to combat such phenomena in the international environment.

13. The participants emphasized their keenness to support efforts exerted on enhancing and promoting dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures; and disseminating a culture of tolerance, respect of differences, and not offending religious characters and convictions of all nations and peoples.

14. The participants expressed their hopes to achieve peaceful diplomatic solutions on the Iranian nuclear issue; that will deepen mutual trust and enhance regional and international security and stability. The participants also stressed the importance of ensuring a Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf, that is free of all weapons of mass destruction and in compliance with obligations under the non proliferation treaty. The participants recognized that the region's countries have the right to acquire peaceful nuclear technology in the framework of relevant international agreements.

15. The participants reviewed the progress of the Forum for the Future, since it was launched in Sea Island, U.S.A., in 2004, and affirmed the importance of supporting the Forum as a podium for dialogue and mutual cooperation among BMENA, G8, partner governments, international organizations and the civil society. In addition, the participants affirmed their commitment to develop the Forum's mechanisms and to support Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) efforts for the promotion of dialogue and cooperation between governments and the civil society.
16. The participants acknowledged the activities of the "Foundation for the Future" and appreciated the efforts and grants submitted by donors to support the foundation's activities.

17. The participants expressed their appreciation for the constructive work done by all parties to expand cooperation and engagement between governments and the civil society.

18. The participants appreciated the presentation by the DAD and expressed their hope that governments and the civil society further promote cooperation on reforms and sustainable developments in the region.

19. The participants acknowledged the document on “Partnership between G-8 BMENA Governments and The Civil Society” and welcomed the efforts made by the DAD.

20. The participants renewed commitments to continue their dialogue and collaboration, and noted continued progress and cooperation among all partners of Forum for the Future. They look forward to continued cooperation during the coming Italian Presidency of G8 in 2009, and the hosting of the sixth session by by Kingdom of Morocco.

21. The participants expressed their appreciation to the UAE for its generous hospitality and efficient organization of the fifth forum.