



### **GCC Summit issues Closing Statement**

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Following is the full unofficial translation of the closing statement as issued by the 26th Summit of the GCC leaders.

The Closing Statement of the Twenty Sixth Session of the GCC Supreme Council Abu Dhabi - The United Arab Emirates 16-17 Dhul Qa'edah 1426 AH / 18-19

December 2005 AD "KING FAHD SUMMIT."

In response to the gracious invitation by H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council held its Twenty Sixth Session in Abu Dhabi City, UAE, on Sunday and Monday 16-17 Dhul Qa'edah 1426 AH corresponding to 18-19 December 2005 AD under the Chairmanship of H.H Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Head of the on-going Session of the Supreme Council, and was attended by their Majesties and Highnesses: His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Kingdom of Bahrain Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Kingdom of Saudi Arabia His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed Sultan of Oman His Highness Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani Emir of the State of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah Prime Minister, 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 stated that, in celebration of the blessed establishment of the GCC 25 years ago from Abu Dhabi City, under the patronage of late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi embraces this gathering with great pride during Sheikh Khalifa's rule. And that through the venues of this lofty structure, the GCC countries have made tremendous strides towards development and prosperity.

The Supreme Council, expressing its authentic appreciation of what had been accomplished by the GCC Founding Leaders, stated that those pioneers would always be remembered with reverence and respect for what they had provided their nations with and for their concern for the safety and security of GCC countries and peoples. And also for their services to the issues of both the Arab and Islamic worlds as well as the safety of the region and the world at large.

The Supreme Council expressed deep sorrow for the demise of former Custodian of the Two

Holy Mosques, late King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, who had done much in support of the GCC and the aspirations of its peoples, and for his role in serving Arab and Islamic causes and the international community.

The Supreme Council welcomed the current Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud who is a living example for the continuation of a legacy of development and prosperity for the people of Saudi Arabia and the GCC countries, as well as for a joint action in cooperation with GCC leaders to support and accomplish the objectives of the GCC.

The Supreme Council welcoming Saudi Arabia's joining of the World Trade Organization, affirmed that the move would be instrumental in supporting the GCC march forward and an important element in creating a stable global economy.

The Supreme Council lauded the outcome of the 3rd Extra-Ordinary Islamic Summit of the Islamic Conference Organization which convened in Mecca dated 5-6 Dhul Qa'eda 1426 AH, as well as both the Mecca Declaration and Mecca's Closing Statement issued at the end of the Summit, which embodied values expressive of the welfare and progress of the Islamic member states in the ICO.

The Supreme Council praised efforts exerted by Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Khalifa Al Thani, during its chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

It also expressed its satisfaction with outcome of the 2nd South Summit which convened in Doha in June, 2005.

The Supreme Council explored accomplishments of the member states in the context of development and modernization, as well as in the political, economic, educational and social aspects.

It referred to "Manama Declaration" which was issued at "Zayed's Summit" which was convened in 2004 in the Kingdom of Bahrain and affirmed the necessity of a continued comprehensive development and modernization so as to be on par with the rest of the world, provided that the condition emanated from a nationalistic perspective and based on the region's history and heritage in a way that preserved and enhanced security, stability and prosperity for the GCC countries and peoples.

The Supreme council reviewed the accomplishment reached through joint work in all aspects since the previous session, and made a comprehensive evaluation of the regional and global international political ,security issues in the light of alarming incidents being witnessed by the region and the world.

The Supreme Council observing GCC leaders' concern for consolidating joint efforts among GCC countries, has reviewed recommendations and follow-up reports submitted by the Council of Ministers. To that effect, it made the following:

Standard Trade Policy:

The GCC Supreme Council reviewed progress on the economic sphere in view of reports submitted by the relevant committees and the General Secretariat.

In this respect, the council endorsed a document on standard trade policy, aimed at unifying foreign trade policies for the GCC countries as to enable them deal with the outside world as a single economic bloc. Another document on inter-GCC trade was also adopted by the council. The document outlines policies needed to facilitate easy movement of GCC citizens as well as easing the flow of services and commodities, while at the same time taking into consideration environmental and consumer protection.

The council further reviewed progress on GCC Custom Union and its positive impact in increasing inter-GCC trade exchange. A proposal to exempt certain commodities from custom duties was endorsed. The provisional dateline for achieving the Custom Union was extended by the council to 2007.

On the common GCC market, the council reviewed the progress made during the year 2005, particularly in the area of buying and trading shares. A proposal by the economic and financial cooperation committee to extend the scope of economic activities for GCC nationals to include ownership of recruitment offices, car rent and cultural activities was adopted by the council. The concerned economic committee was empowered by the Supreme Council to adopt necessary measures to make the common the GCC market a tangible reality by the end of 2007.

On the timetable for implementing the GCC Monetary Union, the council reviewed the reports submitted by the General Secretariat.

The council approved the monetary and financial criteria agreed between the Economic and Financial Committee and the Central Banks and Financial Institutions Committee. These criteria seek to achieve monetary and economic integration.

The council further touched on a number of economic reports that were submitted by the General Secretariat and issued instructions accordingly. These reports include studies on common GCC water network, railways network, and standard GCC identity card (Smart Card). The extent to which each country has gone in implementing the smart card project was reviewed.

Avian Influenza:

On bird flu, the Supreme Council reviewed reports on standard precautionary measures adopted by the GCC countries to ward off the menace of avian influenza. The reports reviewed by the council included the outcome of the joint emergency meetings of the GCC Agriculture and Health Ministers. In view of these reports, the council issued directives to the concerned ministerial committees to redouble efforts so as to keep the disease at bay.

GCC and Yemen:

On GCC cooperation with the Republic of Yemen, the Council reviewed a report by the Secretary General on measures adopted to bolster cooperation between Yemen and the GCC countries. These measures include earlier directives by the Supreme Council to fund development projects in Yemen and also to hold a conference to explore investment opportunities in Yemen.

On GCC economic relations with international groupings, the council reviewed economic developments during the year 2005, including framework agreements for economic cooperation and GCC-EU free trade negotiations. The council welcomed the progress made so far in the talks between the two sides and further expressed its hope that these talks would ultimately culminate in an FTA deal.

The council further expressed its satisfaction over the progress made in GCC talks with China and Turkey to establish free trade zones.

On human health and environmental issues, the council discussed a number of environmental issues, including hazards caused to human health as a result of exposure to ultra-violet rays. In line with international efforts to protect the Ozone layer, the Council adopted a guiding regime

to control the use of ozone-depleting substances.

The GCC regime is consistent with the Vienna convention and the Montreal Protocol on the control of Ozone depleting materials.

Education:

On the area of education, the council reviewed the Secretary General's report on this issue and referred it to the ministerial council for implementation. The council hailed the efforts being exerted by the ministers of education to implement the Supreme Council resolutions. The council further directed the Ministers of Higher Education in the GCC countries to speedily implement joint higher education projects.

As part of its endeavours to achieve social tranquillity for GCC citizens in the public and private sectors, the council expressed satisfaction over the measures adopted by member states to implement the social insurance scheme that was proposed during the Manama Summit of 2004.

The council expressed satisfaction over the measures adopted by member states to improve the level of childcare and family welfare. In this respect, the council particularly hailed the efforts being adopted to enable women take a proactive role in the development process in the GCC countries.

With respect to the youth and sports sector, the council lauded the efforts being exerted by the GCC Ministers of Youth and Sports as well as by the Olympic Committee presidents to support the youth sector and promote sports in GCC countries.

On the area of legal cooperation, the council adopted the Riyadh Document on standard penal code in the GCC countries. The amended version of the code has been adopted as the guiding code in GCC countries for the next four years. The council further extended the duration of existing legal documents to remain as the guiding astute for four more years.

These include the Kuwait Document on Common GCC Civil Law, Doha Document on Penal Code, Abu Dhabi Document on Juvenile Code, Manama Document on Advocacy Code, Muscat Document on Evidence Code. Manama Document on Civil Procedures was also extended for the same duration.

Military:

In the area of military cooperation, the council reviewed the outcome of the fourth meeting of the Joint Defence Council which was held in Bahrain on 26 September 2005. The council endorsed the resolutions of the defence council and further hailed the progress made in this respect.

It also reviewed a letter from King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia on upgrading the Dir Al Jazira forces.

King Abdullah's proposal was endorsed and referred to the defence council for further study and subsequent recommendations that should be presented to the next summit.

Iraq:

The Supreme Council welcomed the holding of parliamentary elections in Iraq on 15 December 2005, in which all ethnic spectra and affiliations of Iraqi people were involved. The Council is looking forward the results of these elections would open up a new page in the modern history of Iraq in a manner that safeguards territorial integrity and stability of Iraq, helps it run its own affairs, ensures its come-back as an active member of the Arab and international family and lives in peace with its neighbours.

The Council urged the Iraqi people to press a head with dialogue so as to reach a comprehensive national reconciliation that constitutes the main safety valve for the unity, stability and sovereignty of Iraq. The Council also affirmed that its member states will continue to honour their commitments in regard to the reconstruction of Iraq.

In the context of the keenness of the GCC leaders to help Iraqi people achieve their aspiration for security and stability, the Supreme Council condemned the terrorist acts against civilians, humanitarian and religious organisations. It also condemned attacks, destructions and threats against Iraqi infrastructures.

The Council denounced the deliberate, systematic mass killings of Iraqis, Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees, peoples of other nationalities and unearthed mass graves -which were committed by the former Iraqi regime - in a flagrant violation of human rights, Islamic and Arab principles, ethics and values.

The Supreme Council appreciated the existing fruitful cooperation between Kuwait and Republic of Iraq to ease sufferings underwent by the two countries due to the inhumane

practices perpetrated by the former Iraqi regime against the brotherly people of Kuwait and Iraq. The Council expressed its hope the UN would pursue its efforts to settle the outstanding issues such as the return of Kuwaiti assets and national archives- seized by former Iraqi regime during its occupation of Kuwait - lift the cover off the fate of the Kuwaiti detainees and prisoners of other countries.

Palestine:

Having reviewed the course of events on the Palestinian front and developments in the Middle East peace process, the Supreme Council hailed the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank as ' a step in the right direction, but hoped it would be followed by complete pull out from all the occupied Palestinian territories in order to enable the brotherly Palestinian people establish their independent state on its national soil with the holy city of Jerusalem as its capital.

In this context, the Supreme Council reiterated the adherence of its member states to the Arab Peace Initiative approved by the 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut which based on international legitimacy resolutions. It emphasised the integration of this initiative with the Road Map for peace in the Middle East.

The Council reiterated that the comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East will only be achieved through the setting up of the independent Palestinian state with all its basic characteristics and Jerusalem as its capital. The Council stressed the importance of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967, and from the Sheba'a farms in South of Lebanon.

The Supreme Council demanded Israel to cease its repressive practices against the unarmed Palestinian people including halt of (assassinations, building of settlements, construction of the separation wall and demolition of what has been built so far) and evacuation of settlements. It also demanded Israel to prevent right-wing Jewish groups from issuing threats to storm the Aqsa holy Mosque. The Council underlined that such threats would lead to nowhere but provoke Muslims' sentiments and desecrate sanctity of their holy shrines - a matter which undermines the peace process.

The Council demanded Israel to join the Nuclear non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and place all its nuclear facilities to international inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It appealed to the international community to pressure Israel to fall on line. The

Council reaffirmed its call for making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

Lebanon:

Reviewing the latest developments in Lebanon, the Supreme Council denounced and condemned the killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al Hariri, who dedicated his efforts to serve security, stability and development of Lebanon. The Council decried the repeated killings of Lebanese leaders and personalities and voiced its sincere desire to back political, economic stability and security in Lebanon. The GCC leaders urged the Lebanese to patch up the rift in order to safeguard unity of their country and bring about security, stability and prosperity. The Council condemned frequent Israeli threats, violations and aggressions against the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon.

Syria:

Turning to Syria, the GCC leaders expressed satisfaction at Syria's decision to welcome UN Security Council resolution No (1644) on the international investigation panel. They also underlined their firm keenness of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and security of both Syria and Lebanon.

Sudan:

Examining the situation in Sudan, the Supreme Council welcomed the final peace agreement reached in Nairobi last January and the formation of the new Sudanese government. It appreciated efforts being exerted by the Sudanese government to solve the crisis in Darfur. It expressed its hope that security and peace would prevail Sudan at large for the interest and welfare of the brotherly Sudanese people.

In the end, the Supreme Council expressed gratitude to His Majesty Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, and his government for the sincere efforts exerted while presiding over the twenty fifth session of the Supreme Council and for major achievements that pushed the GCC cooperation to wider avenues and led the people of the region to more progress and prosperity.

The Supreme Council also voiced gratitude to H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman of the on-going session of the Council, his government and people for the hospitality accorded to his brethren leaders of the GCC and for the attention, care and sagacious running of the meeting, something that has greater effect on the



major results and resolutions concluded.

The G C leaders voiced confidence that the UAE as chairman of the current session will give impetus to the GCC's drive for restoration of security, stability and prosperity under the present local, regional and international circumstances.

The Supreme Council is looking forward to meeting during its 27th Session, scheduled in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in Dhul Qa'edah 1427AH corresponding to December 2006, in response to a gracious invitation by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

Issued in Abu Dhabi on Monday 17 Dhul Qa'edah 1426 AH corresponding to 19 December 2005.