

**VIDEO STATEMENT
BY PRINCE HASSAN BIN TALAL**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHAMPIONS OF THE EARTH
AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

The true champions of this award for the environment are going to be our children's children. I am the recipient, the humble recipient from West Asia and I thank the Human Development Group in Geneva that started a process entitled "Voices from Asia" including South East Asia, South Asia and now West Asia. Let me shed the light on the absence in this region of a supranational community for water and energy. In Europe after two World Wars, coal and steel were muted as the linchpin of reviving interest in the public good.

Here unfortunately, private interest has surpassed public interest. We are told by Professor Stiglitz that the current war in Iraq has cost over \$2.6 trillion. Compared to that, my friend Paul Volker member of the Trilateral Commission has called for a Regional Development Bank and when we look at the situation today in the two spines of what I would describe as potential development of the Great African Rift Valley extending from Lake Victoria to Anatolia, we are talking about more electricity from Lake Victoria for the eight Nile River Basin countries than possibly that region could absorb at the present time.

We try, that is to say as Chairman of the Arab Forum, to bring these countries together to bring an Afro Asia Afro Arab dialogue together turning from the Red Sea into the Gulf everything is interconnected. We see the energy elipse from the Caspian to Hormuz where the world's oil and gas today represents a corresponding rise in the price of energy and of course greater money available for the purchase of weapons. \$60 billion have been set aside for the purchase of weapons. So my basic question is as a Member of the Nuclear Threat Initiative is why is that that we cannot turn energy into a basic component of livelihood.

It's been a very cold winter with climate change in many parts of this region and people are burning wood, deforestation continues. I would like to add that as far as mass migration is concerned with migrants from Iraq, up to five million of them, with migrants from Palestine, the largest recorded number of refugees all over the world up to 8 million of them, these regions are living a situation where the human environment is being despoiled by sprawling spontaneous urban settlement, slums, poverty and I would like to emphasize the need structurally in this West Asian region for a conference for security and cooperation. In 1980 we proposed the Development Decade, a strategy for development and in the Balkans I noticed that my friend Karl Bilt who is back today as Foreign Minister of Sweden called for a social charter, an energy charter a Conference for Security and Cooperation leveraging that all with 450,000 troops after dating, after that agreement has been arrived at.

Today we need an agreement yesterday on containing the violence in the region, on building a plateau of international commitment to international standards by all who talk about need for regional security structure but they should understand that regional security is not only about fighting the bad guys but also about struggling for a new regional understanding of stability in this orphaned region. Those of us who like to consider ourselves as free and creative political minds recognizes that it is people who are most important to security. It is only through world peace through the revival of human dignity that we can work at mobilizing the silenced, not the silent majority.

Your awareness programmes, your communications strategy as your discussions in Singapore, I hope will be inspirational in this regard and I extend an invitation to you to come to West Asia to see for yourselves and to interact with the people in this region.

Thank you.