

10 May 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,  
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Piano Recital by Abdel Rahman El Bacha on the Occasion of  
the 3<sup>rd</sup> Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on  
“Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace: Obstacles and  
Opportunities”**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of the first day of the thematic debate “Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace”. And, It gives me great pleasure that we have gathered here – in the General Assembly – so that our discourse can be inspired by a different language, one that unites all peoples: the language of music.

Nietzsche said that without music, life would be a mistake.

The importance of music cannot be understated. Music provides comfort, entertainment and can provoke important questions about self and society.

Music has been an expression of creativity and a healing modality since time eternal. Its beauty transcends borders, religions, languages, and ethnicities.

Plato once said that music gave, "soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life".

As I meditate on the effect of music, I am captivated that it can teach us so much about the world, yet is also a means to escape from the world. This duality is one of the many fascinating paradoxes of music.

Friends,

The United Nations recognizes the important role of music. These walls have reverberated - time and time again – with the rhythms, beats, and hymns from many different cultures.

This evening, Abdel Rahman El Bacha will perform pieces by Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, De Falla and Mendelssohn. These distinct pieces are but a mere reflection of the differences that we should all embrace and celebrate.

Abdel Rahman El Bacha's astounding technique and vast repertory has a spiritual and aesthetic dimension that uplifts the soul. It is a source of hope.

Allow me to welcome Abdel Rahman El Bacha, to contribute in his own unique way to the "dialogue among civilizations".

Thank you all again for coming and let us all now enjoy the recital.