

# HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH NAHAYAN MABARAK AL NAHAYAN

Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, United Arab Emirates

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Speakers and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to convey to you the greetings and best wishes of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. With his support and encouragement, we welcome you to Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As a distinguished group of influential political, economic, and business leaders, you honor us with your presence. We know that we will learn from you at this conference, just as we have already learned from your accomplishments and your vision in government, economics, business, and world affairs. Your presence in Abu Dhabi underscores the city's importance in world affairs and the global economy. It clearly reflects the prominent place of the United Arab Emirates among the nations of the world.

Our greatest fortune in Abu Dhabi and the UAE has been that our leaders are people of wisdom and vision. We are deeply indebted to our founding President, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, for his great foresight and leadership. His wise and inspiring vision made the United Arab Emirates a country of progress, prosperity, and stability. Our national leaders have continued to recognize the need for sustainable development and change. And, especially pertinent to your gathering here today, I take special pleasure in welcoming you to a city that is moving swiftly from good to great.

Abu Dhabi has seized its opportunities and become a truly global city, not only a center for finance, business, education, health, energy, technology, and culture but also a nurturing source of innovation and creativity that promises to benefit the whole world. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has carefully fixed the goals toward which Abu Dhabi is moving and has formulated the methods for most effectively reaching those goals. It is with his guidance that Abu Dhabi is moving forward with deliberate strategies to maintain vigorous growth, to create prosperity for all, and to bring together people, government, private and public institutions to create a vibrant and balanced society.

We are proud that this city and this country are showing the world that people from different nations, different ethnicities, different religions, and different cultures can in fact live and work together in peace and harmony. We have shown that there is a valuable dividend associated with tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Countries that value tolerance are generally more peaceful countries that have lower costs of doing business and have higher workforce morale. Those countries are also typically safer, more productive and have more resources dedicated to useful economic activities.



In addition, tolerant societies with open and welcoming attitudes to new ideas develop cultures that are conducive to innovation, creativity, and knowledge development. These societies generally make a more successful transition to the knowledge-based economy and society demanded today. As a result of our tolerance, the United Arab Emirates enjoys unparalleled economic growth, accompanied by social and political stability, while constantly broadening opportunities for our country's citizens and residents.

It is my sincere hope to see a similar description applied to all countries of the world. Yet regional and global conditions continue to challenge this hope. The absence of tolerance persists, sometimes from lack of understanding; at other times from a deliberate intent to misrepresent and mislead. We see how extremism feeds on failure and pessimism and produces intolerance, and how reform and economic prosperity inspire confidence and realistic hopes for a better future.

Distinguished Guests, Friends and Colleagues,

The agenda you have before you contains issues vital to the future, not just for those at this conference, but indeed for the world. I note that you will spend time considering some global wicked problems. By their nature "wicked problems" are tricky and ill-defined, yet some of them, such as climate change, pose existential threats to the world as we know it today. Your presence here signals your resolve to understand the enormous problems we face. You aim to increase and deepen your knowledge. My experience tells me that the acquisition of knowledge demands awareness, understanding, interpretation, evaluation, and theorizing. We acquire knowledge because we seek meaning. Knowledge is a necessary step towards wisdom. And with wisdom, we can negotiate and reinvigorate the global societies that we have become.

I strongly believe that it will be our knowledge and wisdom that allow us to harness the great potential of Expo 2020 Dubai that started today. We are striving to ensure that this world Expo – the first in our region – is not only a spectacular event, but also a powerful unifier, and an effective platform for forging international cooperation and global partnerships. Expo 2020 Dubai will be an opportunity to reinforce our conviction that the challenges facing the world are not limited by national borders. Together, and through our collective knowledge and wisdom, we will promote a culture of tolerance that will unite us in the spirit of the Expo's theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future".

It will also be the knowledge and wisdom displayed here in the World Policy Conference that will help our global communities weather any economic, social, or political turbulence. As you expand, sharpen, and deepen your knowledge of global issues, you are developing the capacity for the wisdom that our world desperately needs.

- Wisdom can be ours. And it will be our wisdom that will help resolve international conflicts and disputes.
- It will also be our wisdom that creates a knowledge economy and knowledge society that accounts for the well-being of all citizens, not just the enrichment of a privileged few.
- It will be our wisdom that improves education so that all can contribute effectively to a knowledge-based economy.



- It will be our wisdom that recognizes the moral imperative for improving the health and safety of all communities worldwide.
- It will be our wisdom that helps us deal effectively with critical environmental “wicked problems” such as climate change, waste management, recycling, potable water, and renewable energy.
- It will be our wisdom that preserves the strengths of our traditional cultures and nurtures our natural moral affinities with other cultures and peoples.
- It will be our wisdom that allows us to accept reasonable risk as we advance scientific research and entrepreneurial innovation.
- It will be our wisdom that enables cooperation, creativity, understanding, and mutual support that help us face the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It will be our wisdom that fosters an optimistic outlook on the future of our world, a future that holds peaceful coexistence and prosperity for all.
- And it will also be the knowledge and wisdom shared in this World Policy Conference that highlights the pivotal role of leadership in building the future. Successful leaders for our age must be innovative, but fair, steady, alert, courageous, knowledgeable, and wise.

Together, and through our collective wisdom, we must reaffirm our conviction that we all live and work in an inter-dependent world. We must all work together to create and preserve a world order that promotes peace, hope, understanding, stability, cooperation, and prosperity for all.

I would like to extend my thanks to the marvelous efforts of Thierry de Montbrial who organized this prestigious conference. The collective wisdom you are developing, and sharing is important to creating a better future for us all.

Let me close by noting that the UAE is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. We are determined in the next fifty years to expand our success in bringing together private and public institutions, nationals and expatriates, regional and international partners to create a vibrant, balanced, and peaceful society which is focused on improving the quality of life for all our people. We are intent on doubling our efforts of focusing on prolonged, inclusive, and sustainable development. We will emphasize the role of community leaders, thinkers, and innovators in shaping our future. We will continue with our commitment to regional and international peace and cooperation. We will always strive to integrate the knowledge and the wisdom we gain to build a better future for all.

My best wishes to you for a successful and productive conference. Thank you.