Address by President
Zine El Abidine Ben Ali President of the Republic of Tunisia

to the UN High-Level Plenary Meeting
Delivered on his behalf by
Mr. Abdelwaheb Abdallah Minister of Foreign Affairs

New York, September 16, 2005

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Your Majesties,
Your Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,
Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General,

it is my distinct honor to convey to you the sincere greetings of His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, and to deliver to you His Excellency's address to this UN High-Level Meeting.

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In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Mr. Chairman,

It is my distinct pleasure to express my deep consideration for the efforts made by all parties to ensure an excellent preparation for this UN High-Level Meeting. I wish also to commend the role played by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in providing optimum conditions for the success of this meeting.

This special meeting, which is part of the process of assessing the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Summit objectives adopted by the UN General Assembly five years ago, assumes today a special significance, as peoples in the world expect it to live up to their aspirations for peace, security, development and prosperity.
Tunisia has contributed to crystallizing these noble

product, spreading education throughout the country, strengthening gender equality, promoting reproductive health, and integrating the principles of sustainable development into national policies.
These results are the fruits of continued national efforts in

the process of comprehensive reform based on the primacy of the law, the anchoring of the mechanisms of good governance, the establishment of close correlation between democracy and the protection and development of human rights in all their dimensions as an integrated and indivisible whole, and the achievement of economic and social development.

Tunisia remains convinced that achieving the Millennium Summit objectives requires joint efforts by the international community – governments and organizations alike – in order to further promote the values of solidarity, and help developing countries, particularly in the African continent, implement their development programs and plans and meet the challenge of modernity and progress.

In this respect, we welcome the steps taken by many developed nations to earmark 0.7% of their GDP until 2015 towards achieving these objectives.

We also hope that similar steps and initiatives be taken for medium-income developing countries, in order to provide them with the necessary means and mechanisms to boost their development efforts and to bolster their economic and social programs.
The phenomena of poverty, destitution, famine and other scourges confronting many regions of the world, particularly in Africa, require far-reaching and urgent treatment of their root causes, through a movement of solidarity involving the various components of the international community.

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In this context, we believe that time has come to urgently provide the financial resources needed in order to enable the World Solidarity Fund to launch the tasks for which this UN mechanism has been established, following its adoption by the UN General Assembly, upon a Tunisian proposal, with a view to eradicating poverty, exclusion and marginalization, in accordance with the Millennium Summit policy guidelines. The call we launched in 1998 for the convening of the World Summit on the Information Society is part of our determination to establish a world knowledge society offering equal opportunities for all to have access to the attributes of scientific and technological progress, which will help narrow the digital and developmental divide between developed nations and developing countries.
Tunisia, which is endeavoring to provide the best possible conditions for the hosting of this important international event in its second phase on November 16-18, 2005, is looking forward to your massive and top-level participation to this Summit through governments, non governmental organizations and private sector, in order to make a success of its proceedings and enable it to achieve the sought-for objectives which are essentially in line with those spelled out in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

The changes occurring on the international scene require that we all work to establish sound grounds for reforming the United Nations system and restructuring its organs, in line with the requirements of the current stage, especially as regards enlarging the Security Council and reinforcing the role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

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It is our hope that our present meeting will result in adopting consensual practical measures that will sustain development programs in the world and strengthen the foundations of collective security, particularly as regards combating terrorism and tackling its root causes, reducing armament and the spread of arms of mass destruction, so as to consecrate the pivotal role that our prestigious organization is called on to play in those vital areas, and to enable the United Nations to continue working for the materialization of the lofty objectives underlying its establishment sixty years ago.
I am confident that the Gabonese and Swedish chairmanship of this important meeting will contribute to achieving the expected objectives and issue recommendations that will consolidate the foundations of security, stability and