

**MESSAGE OF HRH PRINCE EL HASSAN BIN TALAL  
ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION**

9 December 2002

Distinguished Members of the Foundation;  
Dear friends:

It would have been a great pleasure to be with you in person today. But, unfortunately, my overextended commitments precluded this. Instead, I have gratefully accepted the invitation of our dear host, Professor Mircea Malitza, to address your Jubilee Meeting and I thank you for the Honorary Diploma. I would like to congratulate all of you on this happy occasion: the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Black Sea University Foundation. Time and again, this Foundation has distinguished itself through its courses, seminars, centres and research projects.

In the Black Sea region, with all that it potentially has to offer, disparities still exist in the distribution of vital natural resources. The challenges for the region are economic, cultural, political and security-related. Archil Gegeshidze, Georgian Political Advisor, states that the Black Sea area is a region only in a geographical context. In the political and economic sense the area has never been a unified whole. During times of bipolar world order, the boundary line between two geo-strategic zones bisected the Black Sea area and prevented it from becoming a political or economic entity. In the post-bipolar era, the necessary pre-conditions have still not been created for rallying more closely the neighbouring nations in the area. Like my own expanded region – which I call the ‘Arc of Crisis’, spreading from Morocco through North Africa and the Arabian Sea up through Pakistan, India, and to Kazakhstan; home to 70% of our planet’s oils and 40% of known natural gas reserves – tensions remain, and as competition for resources gets fiercer, they will increase. The Black Sea University Foundation realises these facts and have come to complement the efforts of organisations such as the Black Sea Cooperation Organisation towards greater regional cooperation on the basis of mutual stakes and common vulnerabilities. And while the ‘Arc of Crisis’ lacks a regional conflict

prevention, or better yet an ‘avoidance’ centre, the Black Sea University Foundation has come to emphasise the theory and practice of conflict prevention and peaceful resolution in all its activities.

The manifold challenges to the Black Sea region have also been a main concern of the 2002 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome held last October in Bilkent University, Ankara. This was seen as essential in the bridge-building role of the Club of Rome in its global quest for an ethic of human solidarity.

Extraterritoriality is key concept in building bridges between various factions of humanity in an increasingly tense globe. We live at a time when, for some people, survival – never mind development – is very much the issue. For others, it is the *arrival at* development that is the urgent goal; never mind its sustainability. Today, the sustainability of life on Planet Earth is in question.

Founding President of the Black Sea University Foundation, and dear friend, Professor Mircea Malitza, used the [term](#) ‘culture of sustainability’ to emphasise the ‘group of values that plead in its favour’; solidarity of all mankind for global issues of survival; concern for public interest; cohesion and social interaction; equity and common effort for common goals. But we must determine, agree upon, and make clear to one another, what we should sustain and how we could achieve sustainability. Several research initiatives, such as the World Values Survey, are currently at work to assess what people value. Once we have arrived at common or universal values, we would need an efficient mechanism to facilitate universal respect to these human values, alongside the set of international humanitarian norms. In its contribution to the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* entitled ‘No Limits to Knowledge, but Limits to Poverty: Towards a Sustainable Knowledge Society’, the Club of Rome added a fourth pillar to sustainability – that of culture – to the social, ecological and economical dimensions. It is in universal human values and in global sustainability that an alternative ought to be found to the feared hegemonic and homogenic globalisation process.

In my Foreword to this Report, I stressed that many initiatives have been taken during the last thirty years, but are by far not enough to change

course. In the meantime, mankind faces another limit: the limit of time. Today, the challenges of sustainable development are all the more pressing and all the more complex. We should grasp the opportunity for a fundamental change in the implementation of a global culture of cooperation to create the condition for a worldwide sustainable dialogue within and among societies.

Not too far from the Black Sea, in Istanbul, Professor Ihsan Doğramacı and I recently established a long-held dream of mine and of the late Yehudi Menuhin in discussions we held during a visit to the Balkans – a Parliament of Cultures, where two themes can be pursued vigorously: education and media. This will be a most suitable venue and mechanism for an increasingly intense and profound international dialogue at a cultural level rather than only in an economic or political context, within the confines of what Professor Malitza has rightly described as one universal Civilisation (with a capital ‘C’). I would like to point out that ‘the importance of recognising the culture of the other’ should not be understood as ‘a-culturalisation’ (negating one’s own culture). I think this is extremely important in terms of the universalisation of values. Equally important is my other recent initiative entitled Partners in Humanity which again focuses on the importance of education and media through close collaboration between American NGOs and their counterparts in the Muslim world. I hope to highlight cultural sustainability and other related arguments in an upcoming paper to be presented at the opening of a symposium in Kloster Banz, Germany, on ‘The Sustainability Axiom in the Light of the World Cultures’, February of the coming year.

I was happy to note that you are starting a virtual university. This resonates very much with my ideas and ideals of a more interactive world of a knowledge society, and of e-learning and open universities. I wish you good luck in your coming endeavours and hope to see you all in the very near future.

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.