Statement by HE Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, the President of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations
At the Iran-Arab World Meeting, Doha

**In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Your Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer, the distinguished CEO of Aljazeera Media Channel
Your Excellency Mr. Yousef bin Alavi, the honorable former minister of foreign affairs of the Oman Sultanate
Your Excellency Mr. Mohammad al-Mokhtar al-Khalil, the distinguished President of Adderasat al-Jazeera Institute**

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**
I am delighted to speak at this august gathering in the first session of the Iran-Arab dialogue. This summit which is hosted by Adderasat al-Jazeera Institute aims to accomplish a common understanding of standing challenges and opportunities in the relations between Iranians and the Arabs in the severely-transformed world of today. I would like to appreciate the warm hospitality of the Adderasat al-Jazeera Institute and the appropriate arrangement for this meeting. In particular, I would like to thank Madam Fatima al-Samadi.

**Distinguished participants**
Islam has always constituted the foundation of relations between Iranians and Arabs; indeed, the history of Islam is full of mutual cooperation and relations between Iran and Arabs. As history testifies, Iran has been the intermediary and gateway of Islam to a significant part of the modern Islamic world, from Central Asia, Asia Minor, and the Caucasus region to the Indian subcontinent and East Asia. The interconnectivity of the two Iranian and Arabian cultures, marked the emergence of a glorious Islamic civilization, a civilization that reached a level of greatness and expansion that was unique in the history of mankind. The foundation of the European civilization, as far as science and technology are concerned, is constructed on the translation of academic books from Arabic and Persian into European languages.

The great Islamic civilization brought pride and honor to Iranians and the Arabs. Although the role played by other Muslims cannot be overlooked in maintaining and developing the Islamic civilization, the emergence and rise of this civilization are the product of the cooperation and engagement of Iranian and Arab scientists, academics, philosophers, business people, and craftsmen, and more importantly politicians. What is significant today is the lesson we should learn from this great civilization and utilize its pattern again at the present time.

The Islamic Republic of Iran primarily views the world of Islam from a civilizational perspective and never considers itself separate from other Muslim nations and especially its Arab-speaking neighbors. Yet, Iran tries to forge cooperation with the countries of the region in line with the development and progress of the West Asia region and the Muslim world at large. This is not a temporary policy but the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran enshrined in its Constitution. Article 11 of the Constitution defines the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran within the framework of unity and coalition among Muslim nations.

One of the main objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its surrounding region is to promote security and deterrence alongside the expansion of the regional economy and promotion of trade and commerce. The strategic policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the principle that security and development are intertwined concepts and are impartible. Such a policy is based on three fundamental principles: first, security is an interdependent issue, directly linked to the security of other countries in the region; second, security is not a commodity that could be purchased or traded, but it is guaranteed through collective cooperation and interaction. And finally, economic relations among the countries of the region are an important factor in ensuring the security of the region.

With this belief, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the security and development of its neighbors necessary for its own security, stability, and development. In fact, from the viewpoint of Iran, the security of the Persian Gulf and all its littoral states is considered Iran’s security and insecurity in different parts of the Persian Gulf is Iran’s insecurity. The opposition of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the presence of foreign forces in the region, specifically the United States and the Zionist regime is precisely aimed at safeguarding the security of the whole region. History has shown that the presence of foreign forces in the region has resulted in continued tension, and even war and conflict.

Regrettably, it should be admitted that there are many crises in the West Asia region and the geography around Iran and the Arabs; and the only solution to ensure regional convergence is to change the way we should handle the regional problems and disputes. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always insisted on the employment of talks to resolve misunderstandings, settle disputes and strengthen commonalities. And for this reason, Iran considers brotherly but frank and honest talks between the countries of the region as the best solution to security problems of West Asia and the Persian Gulf, albeit without the presence and intervention of outsiders. The potential capacity that exists in the regional countries should be exploited for the benefit of the people of the region and this could be possible only through dialog and improvement of political and trade relations. This requires a change in the approach of the elites and policymakers of the regional countries.

Iranian initiatives such as the Hormuz Peace Endeavor and or giving priority to the policy of neighborliness demonstrate the determination, will, and seriousness of the Islamic Republic of Iran in strengthening and consolidating relations with its southern neighbors and members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. And there are signs of such a mutual interest in the countries of the region such as the reconciliatory efforts of Qatar, Oman, and Iraq. We firmly believe that all capacities should be utilized to strengthen bilateral and multilateral regional ties. Without a doubt, the establishment of good neighborliness relations and any mechanism of regional cooperation would increase the role of all the regional countries at the international level.

**Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen**

I would like to continue by highlighting four crucial issues in the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arab world:

1-    The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to Saudi Arabia which is home to the Qibla of Muslims and the two holy shrines, and is an important country in the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia cannot adopt an approach of omission toward each other. As the two major powers of the region, Iran and Saudi Arabia can complement their capacities to ensure peace, stability, and development in the region. Having said that, the two countries have chosen dialogue as the solution to settle their differences and have held so far five rounds of negotiations under the good offices of the Iraqi government.

2-    The crisis in Yemen is one of the major problems in this region. This crisis is not merely a product of internal conflict and dispute in Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stressed that there is no military solution to the crisis in Yemen—a fact which has been exposed to all after seven years of war and destruction. We have made many efforts to stop and prevent the killing of innocent people in Yemen and to find peaceful solutions to this bloody conflict. The establishment of a ceasefire, termination of the blockade, facilitation of Yemeni-Yemeni talks, and formation of a government based on the will of the people of Yemen are Iran’s roadmap to peace and stability in Yemen. Right from the beginning of the war in Yemen, the Islamic Republic of Iran has tried its best to realize these principles.

3-    The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the formation of a strong and popular government in Iraq because the security of Iran and Iraq are interdependent. We consider a safe and strong Iraq in the interest of our security and the security of the whole region and we believe that Iraq’s positive role in regional developments will help the formation of a collective security mechanism in the region. Therefore, we encourage all the political parties of Iraq to reach an agreement to form a government.

4-    And finally the issue of Palestine. Atrocities of the Zionist regime and violation of the rights of the Palestinians are on the rise in the occupied territories; in recent days, the world was witness to the targeted assassination of Aljazeera correspondent Martyr Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces. The Zionist regime has shown once again that they have no limitation in their crimes and murder and even journalists are not immune from their brutality. Unfortunately, while Arab countries are expected to defend the oppressed nation of Palestine against the crimes and atrocities of the Zionist regime, some Arab states have chosen to normalize their relations with the Zionists. The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes that inviting the Zionist regime to the Persian Gulf would not bring stability and security to the region, because the Zionist regime is pursuing no goal, but to escalate tension in the Persian Gulf and bring more divisions among the members of this region. Anyway, the Islamic Republic of Iran would not allow the Quds-occupying regime to nest in this region.

In conclusion, it is necessary for me to appreciate the positive measures taken by the State of Qatar as a good omen to expand political, economic, and cultural relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Qatar is an active player in regional and global endeavors, as we witnessed last week by the visit of His Highness the Emir of Qatar to Tehran. I hope we would witness the immediate positive results of this visit for the two countries and the whole region.

I thank you for your attention.