# Mr. Kenneth J Harris

Your excellency, distinguished guests.

I wish to first congratulate you all on the preparation of your national reports. Unfortunately since I don't speak Arabic, I have not been able to read all of them yet, but from the seven that are already translated, it is clear that these reports reflect much thought, work and commitment.

You can also take pride in the establishment of the framework that led to the preparation of these reports. I was able to see in many of the reports that the national committees and expert met frequently and discussed and debated the priorities that should be established and the actions that should be taken for future development of the judicial system. You have now created an organizational structure and produced a planning document that in itself is an important step in devising a roadmap for future development.

I would urge you not to consider this planning framework to be a temporary phenomenon. Change is continual. Therefore planning for change and implementing short, medium and long-term plans is an essential step itself for any judicial system. Also planning uses precisely those processes you have just established: The bringing together of stakeholders into the debate, the setting of priorities. Some of the plans may take years to carry out and must be systematically advanced step-by-step. This requires institutional memory and the ability to have a broad vision of the overall needs of the system in order to adjust to changing circumstances. For all of this a permanent structure is required. You have now developed expertise and perspective through this process and this capability is valuable and should be preserved. Please find ways to maintain the capability to carry out this kind of planning in this way. You will find it a worthwhile investment in the development and modernization of your judicial systems.

In the short term, we are here today and tomorrow to reflect on what has taken place to date, and decide on the course this initiative will take in the coming year.

The national reports reflect the gathering of much useful information, on which basis the chair, the co-chairs, UNDP and the international experts have been able to understand more precisely the areas in which technical assistance would be most helpful to you. However, our information gathering cannot yet be considered complete. First, most national reports have only been translated recently, as a result of which the international team devised the first pilot projects you will review at this meeting on the basis of incomplete information. Moreover, in retrospect, the questionnaire you received was complex, and the time frame for responding and translation was perhaps too short to permit detailed response to all of the questions posed regarding all of the priority areas. In order to ensure that implementation of the pilot projects is carried out in an effective way and is tailored to the different legal frameworks and local conditions in each country taking part, more detailed information will be required. This is to be carried out in phase I of each pilot project. Likewise, in order to move on to other areas beyond these pilot projects, further technical precision will be needed.

I want to speak to you frankly about the next year from the point of view of a donor country. Donor involvement in this initiative goes back almost two years ago, to the inception of the initiative. For obvious reasons, the time between then and now has been spent in preparation. Because of this necessity, obviously no changes in institutions, capabilities or legislation can yet be attributed to this initiative.

From the point of view of donors, significant levels of funding can only be justified – and they must be justified to the national legislatures of donor states that authorize the funding – if there are concrete results achieved within a reasonable period of time. If there are only extremely limited results, funding will normally diminish. We are all aware of this. On the other hand, as a general rule, measurable success, tends to produce continuation or increase in funding.

Therefore, we have reached a critical and sensitive time in the lifespan of this initiative. Donor countries, including the U.S., will wish to see within the next year swift progress towards the objective of realizing at least some initial tangible results from the funding provided.

How does this relate to our working group? You will see later today the six pilot projects prepared. You will have the ability to request to participate in a number of those projects. The projects fall into a number of key areas of interest expressed in your national reports. UNDP and the international experts will have to meet intensively with you in the next months in order to supplement the information provided to date and mold the projects into specific implementation actions that are adapted to local conditions in each participating State. This will be much work for them and much work for you, but it must be done rapidly and thoroughly. The same process must take place with regard to other subject areas in which you have expressed interest if well-planned projects are to be initiated in those areas.

Because these are pilot projects, and the UNDP and international experts are still judging how many projects can be handled efficiently at one time, you are being asked not to request to participate in all of the projects at this stage, but only a part of them. As part of your decision making process, you may wish to consider the viewpoint of funding agencies in donor states. For example, the component of the U.S. State Department that is most directly involved in the work of this group is concerned with funding of initiatives focusing on anti-corruption and enhancing prosecutorial and police capabilities. Two of the pilot projects deal with these issues.

In conclusion, I believe short term tangible success of the nature I have described is important to creating the conditions for long term success as well. Success builds on success. Therefore, I wish to all of us the perseverance and determination to maintain the momentum of the efforts carried out in the past months. I believe by doing so, we have the best chance of achieving the results we all wish for. Thank you.