



**Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad
Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held at the Embassy of
Canada, on the International Francophonie Day
Monday, 20th March 2017**

Dear Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal and Dean of diplomatic corps,
Dear Ambassador of the Canada,
Dear Ambassadors of the Swiss Confederation, France and the Kingdom of Belgium,
Dear Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps and the Ambassadors of the Francophonie,
Dear the Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross,
Our Francophone Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to share with you for the sixth time the celebration of the International Day of the Francophonie because we believe in the importance of multilingualism in the global cultural activity and in the ability of the French language to play an important role in serving the cultural diversity of our world today. I would like to thank Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the French-speaking countries in Kuwait for their continuous efforts to support this annual celebration and for the organization of this beautiful evening in Kuwait.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The celebration of the International Day of the Francophonie is a commitment to cultural diversity in today's world. This diversity is a necessity for global peace. It opens up borders between countries, allows people to get to know each other, improves employment opportunities for people who learn other people's languages, and opens up markets for the promotion of business and industrial products. It is also said that learning a new language stimulates the brain's skills and strengthens the memory.

The celebration of the International Day of the Francophonie always draws attention to the importance of the language in our lives. It is the first tool of expression, and the more the vocabulary is rich the more the language is refined. Yet, not all languages are able to provide their speakers with such a rich vocabulary, which makes them able to express themselves in elegance and beauty. Among three thousand languages in the world, only a hundred are capable of doing so. They are called living languages and are spoken by more than two billion people. Among these hundred languages, the French language figures as a universal language, spoken by more than 220 million people,



according to estimates from the official website of the International Organization of the Francophonie. Yet, the power of the language lies not only in the number of its speakers, but also in its relationship with the knowledge industry and its ability to provide science and arts with the necessary vocabulary and terminology. This is what makes the French language one of the best European languages in terms of being able to provide a rich vocabulary in the fields of human sciences and law. It is this ability that gave birth to literary and artistic movements such as:

I. Surrealism, which is a literary and artistic movement whose most important figures are:

- André Breton
- Robert Desnos.

II. Existentialism in philosophical literature and novels whose most important figures are:

- Gabriel Marcel
- Jean Paul Sartre
- Albert Camus
- Simone de Beauvoir
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

III. The literary movement known as the Nouveau Roman whose most important figures are:

- Alain Robbe-Grillet
- Nathalie Sarraute.

IV. The Theater of the Absurd whose most important figures are:

- Antoine Marie Joseph Paul Artaud known as Antonin Artaud
- Eugène Ionesco
- Arthur Adamov.

We hope that non-western speakers of the Francophonie will succeed in obtaining the Nobel Prize for Literature, as the three English-speaking African writers have done. They are:

1. The Nigerian novelist and poet Wole Soyinka, who won the Nobel Prize in 1986.
2. The South African novelist Nadine Gordimer who got it in 1991.
3. And the writer John Maxwell Coetzee of South Africa who got it in 2003.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The relationship between the Gulf countries and the Francophonie is progressing steadily and rapidly. In 2006, I gave instruction to add RFI Radio (Radio France Internationale), which broadcast in French, to the FM band in



Kuwait. It was launched when the plane of His Highness the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed landed at Orly airport for his official visit to the French Republic in November 2006. The Department of French Language and Culture was opened at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Kuwait, in collaboration with the University of Sorbonne. Discussions are still undergoing to open Paris Sorbonne University in Kuwait. We hope to be able to achieve this by the end of this year. The relationship between GCC and the Francophonie has further developed with the adherence of the first Gulf country to the International Organization of the Francophonie, the State of Qatar. We consider this a positive move, as Qatar is the best representative of the Gulf States in this international forum. The press also circulated news about Saudi Arabia joining soon the Organization as an observer, which shows that the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council is committed to promoting the relations between the Gulf countries and the Francophonie.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the pleasure in Kuwait to reach out to the Francophonie to learn more about it, to exchange ideas and constructive values, and to learn about intellectual and cultural productions. The State of Kuwait has tried to be the center of culture and arts in this part of the world. It opened its doors to all the cultures of the world in order to learn from these cultures. We are pleased to share with you the celebration of this event and to convey to all Francophone countries the feelings of conviviality, especially the ambassadors of Francophone countries in Kuwait, and all citizens of these countries living in Kuwait. We hope that in the years to come, the countries celebrating this occasion will try to bring the festive atmosphere to the Kuwaiti cultural milieu, through a variety of cultural activities. We in Kuwait have our hearts, ears and eyes open to living and creative cultures.