

**EGYPT**



**مصر**

The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
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نيويورك

Statement by  
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Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you upon your election as President of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly. I wish you all success in guiding its work.

Mr. President,

The 63rd Session of the General Assembly takes place against the back drop of various international and regional developments that are closely linked to the peace and security of all humanity. Among those are the global food crisis, the increase in energy prices, global warming and climate change with its negative effects and catastrophic repercussions on the whole world, the global economic slowdown which borders on a world wide recession, a sharp world wide increase of poverty, our diminishing collective ability to achieve the MDGs, the rising rates of infection with AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases, combating terrorism. Egypt believes that all those challenges and others constitute high priorities for us on the international agenda. Their diagnosis and treatment require a concerted international effort. We must all be fully aware that the path of our common salvation from these problems lies in our collective diagnosis and our united stand in confronting them.

We are in need of a new approach, a new vision and a new method in dealing with global problems. Unfortunately, the existing frameworks have proven unable to deal successfully with the challenges under consideration.

Let me give you an example, Egypt believes that the global food and energy crisis requires a serious dialogue between the importers and exporters of energy and food. This was President Mubarak's call in the recent African Summit. The currently available channels to consider and resolve the problems of food and energy are quite divergent. Neither of them can accommodate a genuine and meaningful dialogue between importers and exporters. It was for this reason that President Mubarak was keenly interested to participate effectively in the emergency summit convened by FAO on the question of the rise in prices of foodstuffs. It was also for this reason that President Mubarak has strongly supported the African endeavor to adopt a clear strategy to tackle this phenomenon. This in turn led to the adoption of the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration by the last African Summit containing our integrated African vision to address this matter. Egypt has also supported the strategy put forward by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to deal with this question and has called for taking this strategy as a basis for more effective international action.

Despite Egypt's efforts amongst other member states of the United Nations, it is regrettable that the recent trade negotiations held in Geneva failed to reach an agreement within the Doha Round. Such an agreement should have dealt effectively with the structural problems related to agriculture which hamper our international endeavor to strengthen the agriculture sector and to eliminate the excessive increase in the prices of basic foodstuffs.

In an effort to translate the rising international concern into an integrated plan of action to address this phenomenon, Chile, Indonesia and Egypt proposed that the focus on this question and its repercussions should be a main theme in this session's General

Debate. Allow me thank you for your positive response to our initiative as well as adding the dimension of strengthening the democratic action in the United Nations.

By the same token, the creation of an international collective political will is more urgently required in dealing with climate change. As one of the countries vulnerable to the repercussions of this question, Egypt is acutely aware of its gravity. While reiterating our full support for the Bali Plan of Action and Road Map, we call for focused international attention to be devoted to dealing with the question of the category of low lying coastlines which applies to Egypt. There is a need to establish a list of the states most vulnerable to climate change in order for the UN and the international community to provide them with the necessary support, as a matter of priority, including technological and financial support.

Mr. President,

The two High Level Meetings held during this session on Africa's Development Needs and the Achievement of the MDGs have constituted two major points of departure in the strengthening of the role of the UN in the field of development. Egypt looks forward to a strengthened international collective effort to implement the agreements reached in those meetings as well as other international gatherings and conferences. In this context, we support the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a summit in 2010 to take stock of the implementation of the commitments made and to intensify the international action with a view to enhancing the opportunities of all states to successfully meet the MDGs and their development objectives in general.

Many developing countries, notably Egypt, have made great progress in the formulation and implementation of successful national economic strategies that have introduced major reforms in the legislative, tax and tariff codes, our countries continue to face huge challenges on the international level. Foremost among those challenges is the narrow margin available to strike a balance between national policies and external commitments. There is also the problem that the developing world in general and Africa in particular lack the representation necessary to influence the process of making of international economic decisions. In addition the developing countries continue to suffer the global monetary and economic fluctuations.

As an expression of our belief in the need to enhance international action to deal with these important questions and with the emerging economic challenges, Egypt and Norway act as facilitators of the current negotiations at the UN on the final document of the Review Conference of the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development. The objective is to make use of the review process to reformulate the overall framework of the international development agenda in the next phases in a manner that takes fully into account the agreements reached in all the international meetings and conferences held thus far.

Mr. President,

It is Egypt's conviction that adopting a language implying double standards is an affront to human rights, and despite that everyone is implacable in stating that human rights are an indivisible whole, the reality, which we need to change, is that economic,

social and cultural rights are not, unfortunately, accorded the commensurate attention that civil and political rights are afforded. This negatively affects on the public perception in many of our societies, particularly those which face dire, and occasionally abrasive, economic and living conditions. To those people, it is believed that continuous talk about human rights represents a luxury they cannot afford and neglects their basic requirements for sustenance. Therefore, the promotion of economic and social rights must be seen as a vital reinforcement of the human rights regime that is indispensable for strengthening the implementation and awareness of other components of this regime.

In this regard, I wish to shed light on the question of the use of the freedom of expression to incite to hatred based on religion. I emphasize here – with the utmost respect to the importance of the freedom of expression – that we reject any depiction of the repeated affronts to religions and sanctities as a legitimate exercise of the freedom of expression, for there are many glaring slogans in the name of which crimes have been committed against thousands and millions of people through offending them and their beliefs and faiths. Egypt calls upon all to consider this matter sagely and objectively with a view to reaching the desired balance that protects the freedom of expression of some, and respects the rights and sentiments of others. Egypt will continue to pursue that balance with the aim of reaching a consensus on the content of the United Nations resolutions issued in this regard.

It is here that I wish to relay to this distinguished assembly that we are disconcerted by the unconstructive state of cultural tension that the world is witnessing, which causes severe digressions of both opinions and actions that inflame public emotions and increases the temperament and severity of the polarization between the followers of different cultures and creeds, which must not be ignored.

Many of the prudent of the world are actively working to combat this serious phenomenon, but the matter requires further action by the creators of public opinion in all societies to promote moderation and to dissociate them from opinions and policies that only nourish tension and violence.

Mr. President,

The international approach to dealing with disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is marred with defects, duality and regression that is disconcerting us.

Egypt has always shown great interest in these matters which is best embodied in Egypt's invitation to rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. Our interest in this matter is based on our unwavering belief that security and military balance, especially in conflict areas, contributes to laying the solid foundations of peace between countries and peoples.

However, achieving peace and security in any region requires, among other things, the establishment of just and parallel international and regional mechanisms in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It is notable that, unfortunately, prominent members of the international community are unduly permissive with the issue of Israel's nuclear capabilities and the extent to which it constantly threatens the security of the Middle East. This occurs simultaneously with the attempts of some to enhance the obligations encompassed in international mechanisms without paying attention to the

issue of achieving universality for the NPT and subjecting all nuclear facilities in the Middle East to the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA.

Egypt will, nonetheless, persist in its endeavors, through existing mechanisms and forums, and in coordination with friendly States that understand the reality and danger of the situation, in order to change it, and to warn of the threats posed by failing to achieve universality for the NPT in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

In my speech, I have given precedence to the international over the regional. This in no way diminishes from the significance of crises, problems and hardships at the regional level, as much as it reaffirms the importance Egypt confers to the international state of affairs and international problems in general.

At the regional level, as you know, Egypt is persistently involved in painstaking efforts to maintain a window of hope that would allow the Palestinians to achieve their legitimate ambitions for an independent State on the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Although the current situation, thanks to the efforts of the United States, might suggest to some that there is hope for a real settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians in the near future. However, through our diligent monitoring of the situation, we realize that achieving a just and lasting settlement for the conflict, one that provides an opportunity for the termination of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the dawn of a Palestinian State, is an issue that requires genuine political will on the part of Israeli, such as to allow the settlement to proceed along with the withdrawal from the land, and the restoration of Palestinian rights.

However, I must admit that we are quite skeptical about the strength of that will and the conviction of Israeli decision-makers. It is from here that the uncertainty and the setbacks transpire, as well as the hesitation in settling issues. This is what leads to the widely-condemned and politically loaded settlement activity, which clearly indicates the regression and laxity of the Israeli side's will for peace. It is also the reason behind the prolongation of the conflict with its consequences that the whole world knows only too well. But, in Egypt we will not lose hope, and we will continue to work with everyone in order to achieve the objectives of justice, stability and security for our region and all its parties.

As for the Arab Mashreq, Iraq witnessed numerous developments – both positive and negative – throughout the previous year. In light of its Arab responsibilities, Egypt will continue to work relentlessly to help the Iraqis achieve their objectives which are predicated on security, stability and development, and will persist in interacting with them on different levels to provide them with the necessary support to confront the threats to their unity and security, and the obstacles to their development. Iraq is an important and pivotal country in the Arab system, and Egypt will endeavor with dedication and in cooperation with everyone in order for Iraq to restore its standing in the Arab world and regionally in the shortest possible time.

In Lebanon, the situation is finally witnessing long-awaited stability, which remains, however, vulnerable. We have endeavored to guarantee this stability and we will continue our efforts to support and consolidate it. Lebanon is a true testing-ground for the



ability of different factions to coexist in peace and tolerance, and Egypt welcomed the resumption of the National Dialogue under the auspices of President Michel Soliman, encouraging everyone to assist the Lebanese State and to promote its stature and its institutions so it can preserve its unity, sovereignty and independence.

The situation in the Sudan also remains disconcerting in light of the ongoing developments it is witnessing, in which we have observed numerous foreign hands interfering with Sudan's security and stability as if their objective is to drive it towards partition. In this context, I would like to affirm that Egypt is working genuinely with all loyal Sudanese parties, at the forefront of which is the Sudanese government, in order to settle existing problems. Allow me to refer here, in particular, to the situation in Darfur which remains difficult, and the significant Egyptian participation in the United Nations peacekeeping force there, as well as our participation in all dialogue forums that aim to settle the crisis, and our demand for an international meeting to address the crisis and to agree on a roadmap to end it. Stability in the Sudan requires the abstention of outside parties from interfering in its affairs, equally as much as it requires the support of the development process in it. Egypt will continue its diligent efforts to achieve the interest of our brothers in the Sudan as well as its unity and stability.

Regional security in our region should be construed widely, and the security of the Arab Gulf - which is currently in the spotlight - is one of Egypt's principal concerns, not only for Egypt's close relations with the GCC countries, but also for what Egypt represents in terms of strategic depth for its Arab brothers. Therefore, we are following closely all developments in the region, in particular the discourse about "new arrangements". We would like to affirm that Egypt is working in coordination with Members of the GCC with a view to protecting Arab national security and to guarantee that any such arrangements – if they come into existence – represent a true guarantee to the security of all parties.

Mr. President,

There is a lot of work ahead of us in this Session, which will require open minds and outstretched hands in order to meet the demands and aspirations of our peoples for freedom, justice, dignity, security and peace. Egypt will work throughout this session on advancing the components of our vision of the international and regional state of affairs that I have just elucidated.

The responsibility lies on all of us, and we all bear the consequences and the results, and we pledge to work with dedication and sincerity for a successful Session.

Thank You