



KAZAKHSTAN

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Statement
by H.E. Mr. Marat Tazhin,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the general debates
of the sixty-third session of the
United Nations General Assembly

27 September 2008
New York

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this high office and to express my confidence that under your able stewardship the sixty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations will be fruitful and successful.

When Christopher Columbus reached the shores of America in 1492, he believed he discovered a new route to India. Today we know that many years before Columbus made that voyage, the European explorers had reached St. Lawrence Bay. Evidently prior to the so-called "discovery of America" developed civilizations had already existed there. At the same time, Columbus did in some sense discover America, as it altered radically the comprehension of the world geography.

It is globalization that provides for a new vision to the world in XXI century. While offering new opportunities to the world economy and human development, globalization also triggers a new surge in political and economic competition worldwide.

We can see it clearly now that it is imperative to prevent interests of peoples and countries from being sacrificed for the sake of this competition. Given recent complexities and collisions it is urgent to preserve basic principles of international law, including the one of **the territorial integrity**. It is crucial to avoid double standards in implementation of this principle.

Despite the efforts being undertaken, the world is not becoming a safer place. We still have to admit that there is no international consensus on issues of **disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**. Paradoxically, the role of the nuclear factor as an element of global politics does not decrease but, on the contrary, becomes even more and more important. The world is on the threshold of another round of the arms race at a higher technological level.

As known, history may repeat itself, if we do not properly learn its lessons. Therefore, nuclear disarmament and enhanced non-proliferation regimes should unconditionally become a priority for all.

Kazakhstan, the country that voluntarily relinquished the fourth largest nuclear arsenal, believes that it is absolutely imperative to develop new mechanisms that would allow adapting the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to the new realities. We call on Member States to speedily finalize necessary procedures, so that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could enter into force and its verification mechanism could be strengthened. This is exactly the purpose of an Integrated Field Experiment on On-site Inspections that is being currently conducted in our country at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground.

We wholeheartedly support the initiative regarding the adoption of a treaty on prevention of the arms race in outer space, as well as measures against illicit trafficking of conventional arms, including those that allow effective monitoring of compliance with the UN embargoes and the implementation of the programme of action in the area of small arms.

The crisis of non-proliferation regimes has brought about a real threat of **terrorists getting hold of nuclear weapons**. Kazakhstan actively participates in the Global Initiative to

Combat the Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and, in this regard hosted this year the *Atom-Antiterror* exercises and an international conference on the physical protection of nuclear material.

Combating international terrorism remains a global problem, which requires the unity and determination of the entire international community. Having signed all universal conventions in this field, Kazakhstan operates actively within the frameworks of regional anti-terrorist structures.

We believe that further improvement of the international legal norms on fighting terrorism and speedy adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism will fully serve the interests of all Member States.

Drug trafficking is a financial backbone of terrorism, and only with well-coordinated and effective actions of the international community as a whole such threat could be tackled.

The situation in **Afghanistan** remains a matter of grave concern. From the outset, Kazakhstan provides all necessary support to the international anti-terrorist coalition operating in this country with the approval of the UN Security Council. In our opinion, the way to normalize the situation is to build up the international community efforts for peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. To this end, the Government of my country has adopted a special plan on assistance to Afghanistan.

International peacekeeping operations under the umbrella of the United Nations remain an effective instrument of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as securing global and regional stability. We fully support **peacekeeping activities of the United Nations**, and the efforts that are being undertaken to strengthen its peacekeeping capacity.

Mr. President,

Kazakhstan is committed to timely and effective achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals**. We have already reached a number of targets in several areas, including poverty reduction, access to education and empowerment of women. Now we embark on the *MDG Plus* adapted to our national conditions to set up higher benchmarks and indicators.

As many other countries, Kazakhstan is deeply concerned with the situation in the global food market. We share the view of the majority that an integrated approach is required to overcome the current **food crisis**. It is important that all countries act flexibly and interact closely in order to develop effective mechanisms that ensure food security.

Today the international community faces the challenge of global rise in basic food prices. Kazakhstan, a major producer and exporter of grain crops and flour, fully meets its internal needs and, subject to additional investments in the agrarian sector and introduction of the latest agricultural technologies, is prepared to make a substantial contribution to overcome the food crisis.

As of 1 September 2008, we have lifted the ban on grain exports. This is our contribution to the international community's collective efforts to curb global grain prices.

Because of the critical importance of energy resources, preserving the **global energy balance** has become a more urgent imperative. Kazakhstan fully understands its ever-increasing role and responsibility as a reliable energy supplier.

Kazakhstan will continue to pursue a strategy of diversifying energy export supply routes, which will be selected exclusively on the basis of economic rationale and pragmatism.

Bearing in mind that energy and environmental problems are closely interconnected, I would like to once again draw your attention to the initiatives set forth by President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan from this podium a year ago. They call for adoption of the *Eurasian Pact on Stability of Energy Supplies*, as well as development of the *Global Energy and Environment Strategy* within the UN frameworks.

Mr. President,

Kazakhstan attributes critical importance to the problems associated with **climate change and sustainable development**.

To ensure the convergence of the European and Asian processes of transition to sustainable development and their merging into a single Eurasian process, Kazakhstan put forward an initiative of convening a conference of ministers of environment, economy and social welfare of the Asian and Pacific countries in 2010 and the Pan-European Conference on *Environment for Europe* in 2011.

We would like to express our profound appreciation to the entire international community, the United Nations and its agencies and programmes for the support they rendered to our country in mitigating consequences of environmental disasters in the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk regions. Calling for continued active international cooperation, we request your support to the draft resolutions to be tabled at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly concerning problems of Semipalatinsk region and granting the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea an observer status at the General Assembly.

A growing number of **natural and anthropogenic disasters** makes it necessary to intensify international cooperation as the most effective means of responding to emergencies. Kazakhstan supports cooperation in setting up national and regional platforms, exemplified by the *Central Asian Coordination Centre for Prevention of and Response to Emergencies*.

We strongly believe that the special needs of the **landlocked countries** should be fully taken into account in accordance with the decisions and recommendations based on the *Almaty Programme of Action*. We hope that the forthcoming Midterm Review of this Programme will result in the adoption of specific decisions on assistance to this group of countries.

We also attach great importance to the activities of ESCAP and UNECE in Central Asia. Their active participation in assisting our region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is highly commendable. We are confident that opening of the ESCAP/UNECE sub-regional office in Kazakhstan will further advance the coordination of efforts to achieve the social and economic development goals in Central Asia. In this regard we call on all Member States to support this initiative.

Mr. President,

Escalation of the existing and ethno-territorial conflicts, as well as increased inter-faith tensions indicate that we have reached the critical turning point in our common history. Under these circumstances, Kazakhstan has been consistently and proactively pursuing a policy aimed at ensuring **interethnic and interfaith accord**, as well as preserving political and social stability in our society.

Upon the initiative of the Head of our State, the Kazakh capital Astana, hosted two *Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions* in 2003 and 2006. With its next summit meeting to be convened in 2009, this forum has already proved to be an effective international mechanism of promoting peace and tolerance on a global scale.

Kazakhstan is actively involved in the work of the *Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations* and the *Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace*. Our initiative to declare 2010 an international year of the *Rapprochement of Cultures* has been supported by all Member States as reflected in the 2007 General Assembly Resolution. We appeal to all countries and organizations of the United Nations to prepare relevant plans on attainment of the goals of the International Year, in accordance with the provisions of that Resolution.

Taking further practical steps to promote the dialogue of civilizations, Kazakhstan has proposed to convene the Ministerial Conference entitled *Common World: Progress through Diversity*. Foreign ministers from different regions of the planet were invited to attend the first meeting of the Forum to be held in Astana this October.

As Kazakhstan prepares to assume the Chairmanship duties in the OSCE in 2010 and the OIC Ministerial Conference in 2011, we intend to use this unique opportunity to promote the issues of greater tolerance and furthering measures by Member States against all forms of discrimination as key items in these organizations.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude my remarks with the ancient oriental wisdom: "*Between a man that digs a hole and the man that fills it in, there should always be a third man ready to plant a tree*". In the world of today, the United Nations performs this vital function by fostering dialogue and cooperation among all peoples and states.

Thank you for your attention.