

TUNISIA

*United Nations General Assembly
60th Session*

*Speech by Mr. Abdelwaheb Abdallah,
Minister of Foreign Affairs*

(New York — September 19, 2005)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

It is my distinct pleasure to express to you and to your friendly country, the Kingdom of Sweden, my most sincere congratulations on your being elected chairman of the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly, wishing you all success in your mission.

I also wish to express to your predecessor Mr. John Ping my deep consideration for his excellent management of the proceedings of the previous session.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my thanks and consideration to His Excellency Mr. Koff Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization, commending his diligent efforts to foster the role of the Organization and to materialize its noble objectives in the service of peace, security and development in the world.

Tunisia, which celebrates, along with the members of the international community, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Organization, reiterates, on this occasion, its constant attachment to the UN Charter and its noble principles, and reaffirms its determination to pursue contributing to promoting its performance, so that it can fulfill its role as best as possible.

Our world today is witnessing rapid and successive developments, marked, most of the time, by the increase of tensions and the widening of the development gap between the North and the South. This requires that we intensify consultation and coordination on the question of reforming the UN Organization and promoting its organs, in accordance with a comprehensive vision based on reinforcing

solidarity, mutual assistance and partnership among peoples, so that our Organization can tackle the current international issues with efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Chairman,

Many issues currently posed on the world scene still constitute a source of concern for the international community, given their impact on security and stability. The Middle-East problem ranks first among these issues.

Proceeding from the commitment of Tunisia and of its President His Excellency President tine El Abidine Ben Ali to peace as a strategic choice, our country has contributed to all efforts and initiatives aimed at reaching a fair, comprehensive and durable settlement to the Palestinian cause. It reiterates its call to all parties, more particularly to the Quartet, to take advantage of the recent positive developments witnessed in the region in order to resume the peace negotiations, which will allow the brotherly Palestinian people to recover its legitimate national rights and establish its independent state on its land, and will provide security, stability and prosperity for all the peoples of the region.

We also consider that achieving fair, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle-east region requires the recovery by sisterly Syria and Lebanon of all their occupied territories.

On the other hand, we hope that sisterly Iraq will manage to bring to completion its political process and to strengthen its constitutional

institutions, in accordance with the aspirations of all the components of its people, and within a context of security, stability and national unity.

Our country welcomes the important steps taken by the Sudanese Government toward national reconciliation, in order to materialize the ambitions of the Sudanese people for the consolidation of the foundations of security and stability in this sisterly country.

Tunisia is indeed sparing no effort, along with the other sisterly Arab countries, to lay the foundations for a new phase of joint Arab action, to promote cooperation in all the political, economic and cultural fields, and to reinforce the process of development and modernization, in line with the orientations and decisions emanating from the Arab Summit our country hosted in May 2004.

We are also keen on consolidating the bonds of fraternity and cooperation with all sisterly Maghreb countries, and on bringing to completion the process of building the Arab Maghreb Union, which will meet the aspirations of the Maghreb peoples for development and complementarity.

Though it has witnessed a number of positive developments, the African continent still suffers the persistence of tensions and conflicts in many regions. This requires that additional efforts be exerted in order to make further steps toward their settlement. Moreover, bringing to completion the establishment of the basic structures of the African Union will enable African countries to move ahead in promoting cooperation and reinforcing the foundations of security and stability in

this continent, which will promote the process of development in African countries and facilitate their integration within the world economy.

At the Euro-Mediterranean level, our country is stepping into a new phase in its relations with the European Union, a phase marked by a determination to further promote, develop and enlarge the scope of partnership with this space, on the basis of cooperation, solidarity, complementarity and mutual respect, and in line with the objectives and principles emanating from the Barcelona Conference, which we are preparing to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the issuing of its Declaration.

Tunisia is also endeavoring to strengthen the ties of friendship, and to enlarge the scope of cooperation, with the countries of the American and Asian continents, in order to establish a solidarity-based partnership that will lay the foundations for a new stage in these relations, which will serve the interests of all parties, bring their peoples closer to one another, and contribute to consolidating the foundations of stability, peace and prosperity in the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The intensification of the phenomena of violence and terrorism, despite the joined efforts exerted to stand against this grave scourge, consolidates our conviction that the most efficient way to deal with this scourge lies essentially in unifying the methods of tackling it, which will strengthen the capacity of the international community to stand against it and eradicate its roots.

In this regard, His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali proposed the convening of an international conference, under the UN auspices, in order to establish an anti-terrorism code of conduct to which all countries will be committed.

Mr. Chairman,

Proceeding from its constant attachment to the principles of solidarity and dialogue among peoples, and its continuous endeavor to reinforce the foundations of stability and development in the world, Tunisia will pursue its active contribution to achieving the objectives spelled out in the Millennium Declaration, and to finding appropriate solutions to the issues currently posed on the international scene.

In this regard, the UN General Assembly's adoption of the Tunisian proposal for the establishment of a World Solidarity Fund requires that the international community's efforts be joined in order to provide the necessary financial resources that will allow this UN mechanism to launch its activities, so that the Fund can achieve the noble objectives for which it has been established, and reduce the phenomena of poverty and famine, especially in some regions of Africa.

In this context, Tunisia calls for reinforcing the movement of solidarity in the world, whose virtues have recently been manifested through the alleviation of the enormous damage caused by the Tsunami calamity and the Katrina hurricane.

While preparing to host the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in response to a Tunisian proposal dating

back to 1998, Tunisia is looking forward to a top-level international participation, by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in this important global event, in order to provide to it best chances of success. This will help establish a solidarity-based digital culture that allows developing countries to benefit from the vast prospects offered by the information and communication technologies, and to make best use of them in their development plans.

*On the other hand, Tunisia wishes to express its thanks and consideration to all member countries and to international and regional organizations that have contributed to the success of its initiative calling for proclaiming **2005 the international year for sports and physical education in the service of peace, security and development in the world.***

Mr. Chairman,

*Tunisia will pursue its effective contribution to anchoring the culture of dialogue and the values of **tolerance and civilizational communication among all the world's countries and peoples, away from fanaticism and seclusion.** It again underlines the importance of these values in disseminating security, peace and stability in the world, which allows humanity to devote its efforts to comprehensive and sustainable development with optimism and confidence in a better future.*

Thank you for your attention.