



TUNISIA

**Statement by His Excellency Abdelwaheb Abdallah
Minister of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia at
the Sixty Second Session of the United Nations
General Assembly**

(New York, 28 September 2007)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary General

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I would like to express to His Excellency Sergyan KERIM and to his friendly country our most sincere congratulations upon his election as President of the Sixty Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under his skillful leadership, our deliberations will be successful.

I would also like to address to our Sister Her Excellency Ms. Haya Al Rached Al-Khalifa our deep thanks and appreciation for the strenuous efforts she undertook during her presidency of the previous General Assembly Session towards the objective of realizing the Millennium Development Goals, and in order to enhance dialogue between all the components of the international community and to revive the Security Council reform process.

I equally wish to state our appreciation for Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his endeavour and determination to reform the Organization and to enhance its role.

Mr. President,

The signs of the new dynamism that the United Nations reform process is witnessing testifies to the existence of a true aspiration to modernizing the organization's work so as to adapt it to the new international realities and to bring it in line with a number of new concepts that have been generated by the deep and speedy transformations that the world has witnessed during recent decades.

In our view, to materialize this aspiration, there is a need to design new frameworks and new mechanisms of action that would reinforce the underpinnings of international peace and security and allow achieving collective solutions to the common

challenges facing the international community. In so doing, we should be inspired by an innovative approach that lays foundation to a global, comprehensive, efficient and solidarity based partnership between different components of the international community, on the basis of constructive dialogue between peoples, cultures civilizations and religions.

Stemming from that conviction, Tunisia launched international initiatives with political, humanitarian and social dimensions. Some of these initiatives were adopted by the United Nations, such as the one calling for the creation of a World Solidarity Fund. We look forward to increased international community efforts aimed at the operationalization of the fund.

Tunisia has been since the early nineties among the very first to draw countries' attention to the dangers of terrorism and the impact of this phenomenon on security and stability in the world. Today, Tunisia would like to renew its call for the holding of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in order to elaborate an international code of conduct for the prevention of terrorism, by which the parties would abide.

Convinced of the important role that dialogue among civilizations plays in preventing the dangers of extremism and hatred, Tunisia has been constantly endeavoring to be the capital of dialogue among civilizations, by hosting several regional and international conferences and seminars. It has also presented initiatives in this field such as the publication of the Carthage Charter in 1995, the Call by His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali relating to Tolerance as well as the Call of Tunis on dialogue among civilizations of 2001, in addition to the creation of the Ben Ali Chair of dialogue among religions and civilizations within the University of Tunis.

Mr. President,

We take note with satisfaction of the recommendation regarding the focus placed on the theme of "Climate Change" during the current session's general debate, in view of

the fact that environmental issues are a core underpinning of sustainable development and one of the major objectives of the Millennium Declaration and its impact on international peace and security.

Tunisia is of the view that climate change is a common challenge that threatens all countries in the world without exception. This prompted Tunisia to host, next November, a ministerial conference to discuss climate change in Africa and the Mediterranean regions, as a contribution to increasing awareness of the importance of this issue and to enhancing dialogue on the subject at the regional level.

The international community should pay more attention to environment and to finding urgent, collective and efficient solutions to environmental issues all over the world, especially in Africa which suffers most from climate change that is threatening the continent's aspiration to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Several international important political problems remain unsolved and continue to be a source of concern to us. Today, Tunisia reaffirms its attachment to the values of peace and justice and to the principles of international legality and its willingness to contribute to the spreading and promotion of the values of tolerance, moderation and mutual respect among nations and peoples. This, in our view, should help foster a constructive dialogue of civilizations and establish an international cooperation and a solidarity based development partnership that help eliminate the causes of tensions and conflicts in the world.

On this occasion, we would like to reaffirm our constant support to the Palestinian people in their struggle for their just cause and we urge the international community, in particular the influential parties and the Quartet, to intensify their efforts aimed at reviving the peace process, on the basis of United Nations resolutions and the relevant Arab and international references, inter alia, the Arab Peace initiative, with a view to finding a just and comprehensive solution that guarantees the recovering by the

Palestinian people of their legitimate rights, including establishing their own independent State.

We welcome the initiatives of certain parties aimed at reviving the peace process. In this context we would like to stress the importance of organizing an international peace conference. Such a conference should yield concrete proposals for achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that ensures the restitution of all occupied Arab territories and guarantees security and stability to the countries and peoples of the region.

We also call for joining regional and international efforts in order to help the Iraqi people restore the deteriorating security, economic and humanitarian situation, through the achievement of a consensual political settlement among all its segments and sensibilities that preserves the unity and sovereignty of Iraq. As far as the situation in Lebanon is concerned, we urge all Lebanese parties to favor dialogue as the sole way to prevent the scourge of dissension among the Lebanese people.

Mr. President,

Since the Change of November 1987, Tunisia, under the leadership of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, has succeeded in making pioneer achievements in different fields. This has been made possible thanks to comprehensive reforms which allowed Tunisia to consolidate the rule of law and institutions as well as public liberties and to disseminate the culture of Human rights, thus enhancing the building of democracy and paving the way for contributions by all components of the civil society to the elaboration of national orientations and choices for the future.

The reform process implemented in Tunisia allowed the achievement of numerous Millennium Development Goals, which translated into better living standards for Tunisians and well being for all categories of the Tunisian society. This reflects the correctness of development choices made by Tunisia, which allowed it to hold an advanced position among developing countries with the highest level of human development score.

Mr. President,

On many occasions, Tunisia has stated its conviction of the necessity of building an international cooperation and partnership based on a comprehensive approach aimed at achieving development for all and laying the foundations to constructive relations between North and South countries. In this context, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali called, from this very podium in 1989, for the adoption of a charter of peace and progress between the countries of the North and the South.

Tunisia is striving for the realization of the noble objectives of a solidarity based South-South development and is working towards enhancing the efficiency of the role of regional and sub-regional economic cooperation in speeding up development efforts and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Countries of the South.

Tunisia has continuously underlined the importance of the contributions by all the components of the international community in supporting development efforts. It has further called for the mobilization of additional financial resources, including available and renewable ones, through mechanisms such as the World Solidarity Fund and others, established and devoted to financing development priority projects in the Countries of the South. To this effect, Tunisia highly appreciates the United Nations Development Programme contribution to the efforts being undertaken at the local level with a view to elaborating a strategic plan of action for South-South cooperation.

The international community needs to undertake increased efforts in order to allow all the peoples of the world especially the least developed, to benefit from the digital revolution and to gain access to Information Society through the follow up of the effective implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the World Summit on Information Society held in Tunis in November 2005; the objective being to contribute to the building of a global, more equitable and solidarity based information society.

Mr. President,

The integration of Tunisia in its regional and international environment is one of the priorities of its foreign policy which endeavours to enhance the political relations of my country with brotherly and friendly nations as well with regional and international organizations. Tunisia is looking forward to the broadening and diversifying of the scope of its cooperation with all its partners in order to bring it to the level of an efficient partnership based on mutual respect and common interest.

Hence, Tunisia is constantly striving, with its brotherly Maghrebian countries to advance the construction of the Maghreb Arab Union (UMA) and to consolidate its structures and institutions in order to reinforce integration among the peoples of the region.

Tunisia has equally sought to enhance the effectiveness of Arab common action and to enhance its interaction with the changes and challenges confronting the region and to further the reform and modernization in this field, in line with the decisions and recommendations of the Tunis Summit (2004) and the Algiers Summit (2005).

On the other hand, Tunisia, being member of the Arab Committees entrusted with the Palestinian, the Lebanese and other issues, is participating effectively in the works of these committees for the benefit of the Arab causes.

As far as Africa is concerned Tunisia has been acting in order to enhance its relations with African countries and to strengthen cooperation frameworks with them. It has made active efforts to contribute efficiently to the process of building the structures and institutions of the African Union and to the consolidation of the underpinnings of peace, security and stability over the continent and opening new promising horizons for development in order to further enhance integration among its peoples.

In view of the strategic importance of its relations with the European Union, Tunisia has been constantly seeking to strengthen these relations and to broaden their

scope so as it covers all fields of cooperation with a view to building a solidarity based partnership with the member countries of the European Union based on mutual respect and common interest.

Tunisia also endeavors to strengthen the Euromediterranean cooperation process. In this context, Tunisia welcomed the initiative launched by President Nicolas Sarkozy of France for establishing a Mediterranean Union. Tunisia has further expressed its readiness to contribute to shaping its content and defining its objectives.

Mr. President,

Since the inception of the United Nations, Tunisia has been expressing constant faith in the noble principles and objectives of the organization. It has always been committed to lending its support to the efforts aimed at creating favorable conditions for elaborating appropriate collective responses to global common challenges and for solving several problems that are a source of concern to the world as well as establishing solidarity based cooperation and partnership between all components of the international community.

Stemming from that position, Tunisia which will assume chairmanship of the next session of the Conference on Disarmament is determined to work, in coordination with member states, for the achievement of tangible progress regarding issues on the agenda. In so doing, Tunisia will seek to enhance constructive and positive dialogue on those issues, in order to achieve the objectives of the Conference and to contribute to the consolidation of peace and security in the world and to the dissemination of a global culture of peace, thus consecrating the noble values and principles for which our organization has been created.

Thank you for your attention.