



كلمة

معالي الشيخ خالد بن أحمد بن محمد آل خليفة
وزير الخارجية

أمام الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة في دورتها الثالثة و الستون
نيويورك

STATEMENT

By

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General Assembly

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Mr. President,

May I, at the outset, convey my heartfelt congratulations upon your election as President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly, and assure you of the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its delegation to working closely with you towards achieving our shared objectives. I have no doubt that your experience and abilities will play a crucial role in ensuring the success of this Session.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim, for his leadership of the previous Session of the General Assembly, and to express our continued and deep appreciation to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary-General, for his ongoing, unflinching dedication and initiative in addressing the many challenges facing the United Nations and the world.

Mr. President,

These General Assembly meetings provide a valuable opportunity for all of us in the international community to reflect together on the challenges and issues facing us all – to form a more comprehensive view of the issues, to understand how we have arrived here, be it through success or failure, and to work together to develop shared visions of the future, and the tools necessary to achieve these aims.

Mr. President,

Today, the international community faces many challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, notably the issues of energy, the environment, natural disasters, food shortages, education, and the financial crisis which has shaken the world. These challenges make achieving the MDGs difficult for many states, to a degree that affects their economic development. We therefore need an urgent and effective response from the international community to deal with these pressing issues and to achieve the goals. Yet, as we review our progress to date, the global effort to achieve these goals has been uneven, at best, to the extent that we are today on the verge of a development emergency.

Mr. President

The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the opportunities provided by the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, held on 25 September 2008, and the High-Level Meeting on Africa's development needs, held on 22 September 2008, to renew our commitments.

In addressing this important issue, we must not lose sight of the impact of disasters, both natural and man-made, in holding back progress towards achieving the MDGs. It is thus imperative that states integrate disaster risk reduction into their development plans.

We simply cannot afford to ignore or delay these critical development issues. Nor can we dismiss them as "soft issues", for the reality is that if action is not taken soon, they will become real threats to global security and prosperity. The Kingdom of Bahrain therefore fully supports the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, and plans to host the launch of this report in May 2009.

Mr. President,

As we all know, issues of climate change are of the utmost importance. As the world prepares to meet, to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol by the end of 2009, global demand for energy is rising fast, as the population increases and some developing countries undergo dramatic economic growth. The International Energy Agency predicts that the world's energy needs could increase by 50 per cent by 2030. We therefore look forward to our meeting in Poland later this year, ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009. We are hopeful, that all sides will realize the urgency of the climate change issue, and will commit themselves to addressing the overriding interests of the future of our planet, and of future generations. My hope is that a comprehensive and effective agreement can be concluded and implemented.

Mr. President,

The use of peaceful nuclear energy has become a preferred option for many countries, and the Kingdom of Bahrain hence shares this interest with the international community. Therefore, future agreements on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be made within a strengthened non-proliferation regime, with improved safeguards and an expanded verification mechanism, in order to ensure that our peoples are not put at risk. Indeed, a highlight of the 28th Supreme Council of the GCC, last December, was the acknowledgment of the right of countries of the region to seek nuclear expertise, and to possess nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Given their universal effects and implications, energy and its various sources are in need of a holistic, global approach. Yet, they are dealt with in a fragmented, piecemeal manner. This unsatisfactory situation leads us to suggest the establishment of a truly global energy organization. This would bring a joint international perspective to determining the role and usage of hydrocarbon energy, nuclear power, and new and renewable energy sources, and will introduce innovative solutions to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Such a body could provide accurate assessments of global energy demand and supply, and bring under one roof energy data. It will also provide the objective advice that may be required on an optimal energy mix that is both, safe and environmentally sound.

Mr. President,

Having dealt with energy and climate change, it is incumbent on us to discuss the food security crisis, which, as a result of high food prices, has increased the number of hungry people in the world, by about 50 million in 2007. We believe that the solution to this crisis lies in working together to implement solutions, such as reducing bio-fuel production, changing eating habits, and investing in sustainable agricultural methods.

The shock which has recently affected the international financial system has almost resulted in a global economic catastrophe. This shock has revealed the weaknesses of the current financial system and its propensity for rapid

and widespread dislocations. Our historic responsibility makes it incumbent on us to establish transparent new regulations based on the interests of all Member States in the United Nations, and to prepare a framework which can prevent any future financial crises.

The fact is that multilateral cooperation is fundamental to addressing these challenges, as no country alone can solve such issues and crises, nor isolate itself from their consequences. As the Secretary General stated in his opening speech, and I quote:

"Nations can no longer protect their interests, or advance the well-being of their people, without the partnership of the rest."

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain, therefore supports moves to reform, renew and reinvigorate our international organization and its organs, to be more responsive to the needs of a new world. We agree with the views of the Secretary-General stated in his annual report that we need a stronger, more effective and more modern organization. We are looking to reform the structure of our international organization, to enable it to be responsive to all the various challenges faced by the international community, and to increase its capacities to deal with such issues.

We must exert our utmost efforts, to address weaknesses such as the threats to the international security system from a whole range of sources, including extremists, terrorists, drug traffickers, money launderers or intellectual property pirates. We need to develop collective security arrangements that will unite and bring together our security efforts, while guaranteeing respect of the existing borders between states and non-encroachment on their sovereignty. On the issue of terrorism, we consider terrorism to have many faces – be it in the form of the heinous crime which struck Islamabad a few days ago, be it or in the form of agitation and instigation from a distance, or be it in other forms. We should be clear in confronting terrorism in a comprehensive manner, so as to defeat it, both in the field and ideologically. We believe that if there is a battle against terrorism, it should be a comprehensive battle by all to rid us of this evil.

Mr. President,

The Middle East faces many acute issues in desperate need of settlement. Most pressing among these are the need for a just, comprehensive and durable peace settlement for the Palestinian question, based on ensuring security for all the peoples of the Middle East region, including Israel. This settlement will be within the framework of international legitimacy and the appropriate terms of reference, where the choice will be that of a just peace, as called for in the Arab Peace Initiative. In this respect, there is a need for a peaceful settlement on the Syrian track, including a withdrawal from the occupied Arab Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territories. It also requires a halt to Israeli incursions into Lebanon, a Lebanon whose stability must be supported. It is also important to have a solution to the issue of the United Arab Emirates' islands, through either direct negotiation or through referral of the issue to the International Court of Justice. This would be a significant step in strengthening the trust between the GCC countries and Iran. The Gulf region, which is an integral part of the world economy, has witnessed destructive wars during the past three decades. It will not be able to bear a new war, due to its severe consequences on the world economy. The Kingdom of Bahrain therefore reiterates its call for a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear file to avoid the scourge of war, and to enhance world peace and stability. Moreover, there is an urgent need for the Middle East, including the Gulf region, to be free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, while safeguarding the rights of countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in accordance with the safeguards agreements of the IAEA.

Mr. President,

In order for the Middle East to live in a stable and lasting peace, it is incumbent on us to review and re-evaluate our regional outlook, and the possibility of developing new regional frameworks to overcome our long-standing challenges.

It is now the time, for example, to consider the possibility of establishing an organization that would include all states in the Middle East, without exception, to discuss long-standing issues openly and frankly, in the hope of reaching a stable and durable understanding between all parties. As Arabs, we accept peace as a strategic option, committed to legitimacy, and to

concluding past conflicts and hostility, opening instead a new chapter for an historic rapprochement between the peoples of the region towards a better future, dominated by understanding, stability, and prosperity.

Mr. President,

The development of the Kingdom of Bahrain has been characterized in recent years by dialogue and understanding, a process which was inaugurated by our leader, His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, in His Majesty's extensive reform program, which seeks to strengthen democracy, political reform, and the promotion and protection of human rights. As we join the United Nations and the international community in its commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which laid down the principles and values of freedom and human justice in the current era, Bahrain's election to the United Nations Human Rights Council and the adoption of our first Universal Periodic Review report in June, in Geneva, are clear international recognition of Bahrain's efforts in this field.

We will continue to move forward in these and other fields, for example with the establishment of Bahrain's national human rights institution, and continued developments in the political, economic and regulatory fields. The Kingdom of Bahrain, will not hesitate to take up its role in helping brotherly and friendly states and in promoting its success stories which have helped provide a better life to its people. From this standpoint, His Highness, Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain has sponsored an Award, in co-operation with the UN-HABITAT, called the Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa Habitat Award which honors distinguished research that contributes to alleviating poverty and safeguarding the environment, and recognizes states' efforts in achieving desired economic development. His Highness is expected to present the Award this year during the fourth session of the World Urban Forum to be held in Nanjing, Peoples Republic of China.

Mr. President,

A key pillar of Bahrain's development has been, and continues to be, its investment in modern education – practical, relevant and high-quality

education that imbues critical thinking and creativity – education that encourages innovation and the acceptance of the other. In this respect, I want to underline the fact that Bahrain has been able to achieve the Millennium Development Goal in education significantly before the 2015 deadline, through enabling children to have free, high-quality education, and by providing basic education for all as a fundamental human right.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain (Land of Immortality), is proud to be the host of various civilizations, where the concepts of tolerance and co-existence between all segments of society are central, where mosques stand side by side with churches and temples of various denominations, where its people enjoy freedom and religious tolerance irrespective of religion or race, and where fraternal values, moderation and rejection of violence and terrorism are embedded in our culture to reflect a promising era in the history of humanity.

Thus the Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to participating fully with the international community towards achieving universal peace, stability, prosperity, and to confronting current and future challenges for the benefit of all our peoples and future generations.

And this is a task which we, as the international community, must undertake together, in a spirit of cooperation and good faith, for when future generations come to review our actions and hold us to account, history will not forgive our mistakes and miscalculations.

Thank you.