

EGYPT



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Statement

by

H.E. Ahmed Aboul Gheit

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Before

The Sixtieth Session of

The United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. President,

Today we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, and today we also start, actively and seriously, our endeavour to revitalize this solid organization, which humanity decided to establish after it witnessed two devastating wars during the first half of the 20th century. There is no doubt that the current session convenes at a time where hope is blended with threats and challenges facing the stability of our international community and the peace and security of all our peoples.

The recent developments on the international scene have proven the increasing need to strengthen the capabilities of the multilateral framework in addressing problems facing our nations and peoples, and achieving the required balance in the four issues that we consider at the core of our interest nowadays, namely: development, international peace and security, human rights, and the institutional reform of the Organization.

Addressing the issue of development at the international level requires strong political will for implementing the commitments we have undertaken, and which we reaffirmed together in the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting, primarily the implementation of the **Developmental Goals of the Millennium Summit**, **the revitalization of the international** partnership for development and the mobilization of financial resources it requires, and the fulfillment of the commitment made by many developed countries to reach the target of 0.7% of their GNI for official development assistance (ODA) by 2015. I seize this opportunity to express Egypt's appreciation to those countries which affirmed the fulfillment of their obligations in this regard.

In realizing our common targets, it is, thus, imperative to take the consensus we reached in the high-level plenary meeting as a platform to launch a greater consensus towards achieving the development priorities of the developing countries, primarily during the upcoming ministerial conference of the WTO in Hong Kong, and in other international fora dealing with issues of importance to the developing world, specially trade, debt relief, investment, industrial modernization and other issues that can bring justice and openness required to our international trading system, and provide the developing countries with the required opportunities to raise the standards of living of its peoples.

Mr. President,

In fulfilling our longstanding commitments to achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa, Egypt wishes to call upon our partners in the developed countries to play a pilot role in supporting the implementation of the NEPAD. This African-owned initiative constitutes an ambitious partnership for development, that can vouch for Africa's integration in the world economy together with the achievement of good governance at the national and international levels, and the fostering of the contribution of the civil society and private sector in achieving our developmental goals.

Parallel to achieving economic security for all, it is indispensable that we strive to achieve international peace and security, through practically and realistically addressing the challenges and the threats facing the international community.

Mr. President,

Since terrorism is the most dangerous menace of this era, Egypt has contributed actively in reaching consensus in the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting on condemning terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, as it poses a serious threat to international peace and security.

Contrary to what some might envisage, the recent terrorist attacks which stroke many countries –including Egypt- made it now clear that terrorism is a danger that does not distinguish between peoples or cultures or religions, it is rather a threat to human civilization without any distinction. These attacks also affirmed that combating this phenomenon shall not only concentrate on enhancing the measures to combating terrorism and the means of their better implementation, but rather through effectively addressing the underlying causes of this phenomenon.

Accordingly, Egypt presented an initiative to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly to formulate and adopt a comprehensive action plan that includes the necessary legal and practical procedures to deal effectively with terrorism until it is completely eradicated, without affecting the ability of people under occupation to acquire their independence consistent with international law.

It is in conformity with this position that Egypt pledges to exert extensive efforts towards the conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. This convention - together with all the twelve other international anti-terrorism conventions - to which we added this year the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear terrorism, could form the most comprehensive legal framework to tackle this phenomenon. I wish to seize this opportunity to announce that Egypt has signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear terrorism during this session .

Mr. President,

The issues of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another major challenge requiring concerted international action in the period to come, specially as the high-level plenary meeting could not reach agreement on the methodology of addressing those issues in a manner consistent with its utmost importance and urgency for the safety and security of the human race.

Our common endeavour should be based on restoring the balance between nuclear disarmament, non proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as they represent the three pillars that can lead to progress in achieving our common objectives. The point of departure of our endeavours can only be the consensus reached in 1995 which constitute an integral part of the package that allowed for the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Concerted International efforts – in particular by the

Nuclear Weapon States - to achieve universality of the NPT, are imperative, otherwise, we risk that the Non-Proliferation Treaty loses its credibility and relevance.

To this end, we require a strong and determined political will to reactivate the United Nations disarmament machinery; reinforcing the mutual and balanced implementation of commitments and obligations set forth in existing treaties, and achieving their universality prior to any attempts at imposing further obligations on states that adhere to these treaties and fully respect their commitments under which; and a determination to establish a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East, in support of efforts to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

Mr. President,

The establishment of the Human Rights Council must be a landmark **in** the promotion and respect for human freedom. Its mandate, composition and procedures must also be formulated in a democratic manner and based on the principle of equitable geographic distribution which would also take into consideration the cultural and civilization specificities of each region. The Human Rights Council must also assist and encourage countries to improve the situation of human rights and the respect for the rule of law on its territories. **In** order to succeed in such endeavour, we must strengthen the human rights machinery and address issues pertaining to human rights and the rule of law in a manner which will **enable** us to avoid the existing shortcomings in this respect, in particular politicization, selectivity and double standards, as well as to promote coexistence and dialogue among civilizations instead of the division and differences characterizing our current handling of these issues.

In order to encourage this endeavour, the Egyptian National Council on Human Rights was established. The Council enjoys the type of institutional independence necessary to enable it to carry out its tasks with due impartiality and objectivity, as well as the capacity to promote the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right for political participation and contribution in the formulation, prioritization and implementation of national policies .

We must also launch our coordinated multilateral efforts in promoting human rights and in addressing its violations through enhancing the capacity of states to provide protection for its populations against genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. In doing so, we must not capitalize on exceptional situations as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of states. We must draw the line between the inability and the unwillingness of the state to protect its populations against such crimes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and relevant provisions of international law.

Mr. President,

Our common efforts to ensure larger freedom for our peoples are closely linked to our resolve and ability to settle a number of contemporary political issues, most notable among which in our region is the Palestinian Question. As we welcome the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and few settlements in the northern part of the West Bank, we also call upon the Israeli Government to continue the withdrawal of its

troops from all the Palestinian territories, and to implement all of its commitments in this respect in accordance with the "Road Map" which should lead us to reach our common goal: the establishment of two independent states, Palestine and Israel, coexisting in peace and security.

However, and until we reach that goal, Israel must stop settlement activities in the West Bank, stop building the separating wall, improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and launch final status negotiations towards the comprehensive settlement. Israel must also withdraw from the remaining Arab Territories occupied in 1967, in Syria and Lebanon.

Furthermore, we can not address the respect of human rights unless we address the human rights situation in Iraq, particularly the right to life for each Iraqi citizen. In this context, and despite the formation of the Interim Government and the formulation Of the new constitution, national reconciliation among all corners of the brotherly Iraqi people is still needed. We urgently require increasing awareness of the fact that violence and killing of innocent people will not lead to achieving the aspired security and stability for Iraq. In addition, I assure you that despite the human loss we suffered in Iraq, Egypt did not, and will never, yield to the pressure of terrorism, and will continue with its serious and sincere efforts aimed at enabling the Iraqi people to safeguard their future and reach their independence and sovereignty over their territories.

On the other hand, Egypt will continue its support for the important steps taken by Sudan towards peace and stability, within the framework of maintaining its sovereignty and unity, through: the support for the implementation of the Nairobi peace agreement in southern Sudan, and the Cairo agreement complimenting it, the active participation in the peace negotiations on Darfur, under the auspices of the African Union, and the contribution of troops to the United Nations Mission in southern Sudan and observers to the African Mission in Darfur.

Mr. President,

It is in this same vein that Egypt maintains issues pertaining to the security and stability of Africa at the core of its regional and international policies. Thus, Egypt exerted, and will continue to exert increasing efforts in the resolution of contemporary African political problems. It has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to all peacekeeping operations in Africa and to support all of Africa's ongoing efforts towards and integrated approach to development, covering all the political, economic and social dimensions. Egypt's commitment to Africa is based on unwavering conviction of our common fate and the necessity of our continued cooperation. In this context, the African Union has a central role to play and must receive all required support from the United Nations.

It is also based on the particular importance that Africa attaches to the link between security and development in addressing the situations in countries emerging from conflict that Egypt supported the establishment of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. The activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, however, must reflect the balance among the various mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations. We call for a leading role for both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council, together with the Security Council, in the work of the Commission. The Commission must neither become an organ to impose trusteeship on states, nor an instrument to bypass the will and the national priorities of such states. The reacebuilding Commission must always remain an effective advisory body focusing on mobilizing assistance to the countries under consideration in post-conflict situations, in order to enable them to reach their national aspirations for sustainable peace and stability.

Mr. president,

The United Nations will not be able to carry out all of these increasing and challenging tasks unless we embark on an effective institutional reform that takes into consideration the balance between its principal organs, **that ensures the** implementation of the tasks which the Organization must undertake and that enhances its credibility and eliminates the causes of criticism it has been facing.

It is undoubtedly evident that among the most important pillars of the institutional reform is the revitalization of the General Assembly and the strengthening of its vital role as the chief deliberative, policy making and implementation monitoring body of the United Nations. The General Assembly should cooperate with the Secretary-General within a transparent framework that provides him the necessary authorities to carry out his tasks effectively, while ensuring his commitment to the implementation of such tasks as mandated by the principal organs of the Organization.

We are looking forward to the proposals which the Secretary-General is expected to present, together with his proposals on the improvement of auditing and oversight, taking duly into account the intergovernmental nature of the existing budgetary and management committees. We also look forward to undertaking, through the General Assembly and other relevant organs, a one-time review of the mandates older than five years, while emphasizing, the need to avoid a mere regulatory approach to this issue, and the imperative of taking its political implications into consideration. We must never neglect the international political balance, nor must we affect the ongoing efforts to resolve contemporary problems.

In this same context, the reform and expansion of the Security Council assumes increasing importance, particularly in light of the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, so as to ensure that the Security Council is more representative of the general membership of the Organization and more transparent in addressing the issues under its consideration. In this respect, I wish to stress the commitment of Egypt to the common African position on this issue, as stated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, aimed at fulfilling the legitimate aspiration of our continent for permanent and balanced representation in an expanded Security Council and at remedying the existing imbalance in the representation of Africa in particular, and the developing countries in general.

Mr. President,

The outcome document which we adopted at the summit-level during the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations serves as a solid evidence to the vitality of our Organization. We look forward to our collective work ahead in order to foster the capacity of the United Nations to fulfill our common objectives, based on a firm political will to carry out the implementation of the agreed commitments in that document. We must expand the scope of such agreement in order to encompass all aspects of international relations. It is the only path available before us to reach our peoples' aspirations for peace, security and stability.