



STATEMENT

By

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Madame President,
Your Excellency Mr. Secretary-General,
Honourable Delegates,

I have the pleasure to extend my sincerest congratulations upon your election to the Presidency of the Sixty-first Session of the General Assembly, an appointment that reflects the international community's trust in your diplomatic abilities, abilities which will help ensure the success of this important session. I want to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to all the countries that have endorsed the nomination of Shaikha Haya Bint Rashid Al- Khalifa. The election of Shaikha Haya as President of the General Assembly is an honour for the Kingdom of Bahrain, she being the third woman in the history of this International Organization, and the first Arab and Muslim woman, to hold this prominent position.

This election confirms the significant achievements of Arab and Muslim women and the progress they have made in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

I take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his tireless efforts during the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, a Session that will be remembered for its extensive endeavours to reform this Organization.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his devotion to enhancing the United Nations and strengthening its role in upholding peace and security throughout the world, especially in our Arab region during his recent tour of the Middle East.

In addition, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Montenegro on its admission to United Nations as the 192nd Member State, hoping that its joining will enhance peace and stability in the world.

Madame President,

The axis of development in developing countries is the inauguration of political reforms, economic liberalisation and social modernisation. This is what the Kingdom of Bahrain has confirmed in its reform process led, for several years, by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the beloved King of the country, in order to strengthen democracy, human rights, and economic growth. The national gains multiplied and the people's participation in the political, economic and social fields has been enhanced. This has been reflected in the following areas:

- Enhancing democratic practice, through municipal and parliamentary elections, with the participation of both men and women as voters and candidates.
- The establishment of the Institute for Political Development to enhance the democratic practices and the culture of dialogue in the Kingdom.
- Ratification of the Arab Human Rights Convention, passing of the counter-terrorism law and accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

- Election of the Kingdom of Bahrain to membership of the UN Human Rights Council. We are working closely with other members to promote and protect human rights in all areas.
- Enhancement of the role of women in society to assume leadership positions in the Kingdom, including the judiciary. In addition, a programme to empower women, overseen by the Supreme Council of Women, has been initiated.
- Engaging and forging partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations as was evident in the Forum for the Future, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain last November. During the Forum, NGOs worked side-by-side with governments to discuss issues concerning human rights, fighting corruption, the rule of law and the empowerment of women. Indeed, Bahrain takes pride in having the largest number of NGOs relative to its population size, with approximately 300 NGOs registered with the concerned authorities.
- Addressing negative phenomena in the national economy, for example by initiating the national project to provide jobs for the unemployed. Moreover, the Kingdom of Bahrain has confirmed its pioneering economic role in the Gulf region, through drafting laws to attract investment, under the supervision of the Economic Development Board.

- Formation of the High Committee to reform education, to develop and modernise the education system, whose results were adopted in June 2006.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain has continued to attain a high rank in human development, as confirmed by the latest UN Human Development Report issued by the UNDP.

This positive approach towards an integrated development process in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, was further evidenced by the recommendations of the national conference for social policies in the Kingdom of Bahrain, held in the spring of this year under the auspices of the UN, and which aimed to achieve integration between all the elements of the development process.

Madame President,

We, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, still view the phenomenon of terrorism and terrorist acts as the most dangerous challenge threatening international peace and security. There must be greater efforts exerted by the international community, and more coordination on all levels, to confront this scourge.

The Kingdom of Bahrain commends the United Nations' efforts to fight terrorism. The Secretary-General's Report issued last April entitled: "Uniting Against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter Terrorism Strategy" contains many constructive elements that we embrace, as along with other points that need further examination and discussion. It is

important that any counter-terrorism strategy does not infringe on human rights or fundamental freedoms, and comply with international law. One of the positive aspects of this Report is its call to address the issues that are exploited by terrorists, and to study the motives behind terrorism.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has continued its efforts in this field. In fact, it has already signed eleven of the twelve international agreements on terrorism and continues to host the Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) established in November 2004 to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. In addition, Bahrain continuously coordinates efforts with its brotherly neighbours of the GCC pursuant to the GCC Counter-Terrorism Agreement adopted in May 2004.

The implementation of the strategy proposed in the Report of the Secretary-General is just a beginning, as the Report states. What is more important is its full implementation.

Madame President,

The events in the Middle East over recent months, especially in the Gaza strip and the occupied territories in the West Bank, and then during the last few weeks in Lebanon, have driven the entire region to an abyss which could become even more dangerous. We must all work more urgently to address the roots and causes of this struggle, which frustrates hopes for peace and disappoints the aspirations of the peoples of the region for peace and security.

Madame President,

The resolution of this catastrophic situation must not be delayed, and puts special and multiple responsibilities on the international community. As a consequence, the Council of the Arab Foreign Ministers has called upon the Security Council to meet on a Ministerial level which actually was convened yesterday to discuss a comprehensive settlement, that covers all the tracks in accordance with the terms of reference of the peace process, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, which was presented by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and adopted by the Arab Summits. This should be done through a new and developed mechanism, to resume direct negotiations among the parties under the supervision of the Council, within a specified time limit and with international guarantees.

We want to express our deep concern at the bloody events that took place in Lebanon this year, caused by the Israeli military operations. As we are concerned with the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, we support resolution 1701 of 2006 and the adherence of all parties to it. We also confirm the importance of the support of the international community to the seven points set out by His Excellency Mr. Fouad Siniora, Lebanese Prime Minister, to complement the said resolution. We also confirm that the Kingdom of Bahrain stands alongside the brotherly Republic of Lebanon against anything that endangers its security, and in avoiding acts outside the Lebanese state authority that endanger its stability. We also appreciate the efforts of the Arab tripartite committee, the State of Qatar- the Arab member of the Security Council- and the States which supported the Arab position.

Madame President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain realises that Lebanon, today, faces great challenges that need unified international efforts from the UN, the European Union and all international powers. These efforts are not only in peace-keeping but also for rebuilding and reviving the economy with the help of its government and people in order to participate once again, as it has done through the centuries, in the cultural and economic development in the Middle East and the world at large. In this regard, the recent Stockholm Conference is a step in the right direction.

In light of all this, we reiterate that a just and comprehensive peace in Middle East, first and foremost, necessitates that Israel withdraws fully from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 including the Syrian Golan Heights and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories. Furthermore, it also includes the return of Palestinian refugees and the establishment of a Palestinian state on all of occupied Palestinian lands, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Madame President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the positive developments in Iraq recently, including the election of a national assembly and the formation of a permanent Iraqi government. The Kingdom of Bahrain also welcomes the steps the Iraqi government has taken to promote genuine political dialogue and national reconciliation. The Kingdom hopes that these measures will

put an end to violence and the killing of innocent civilians. There is no doubt that the pivotal role that Iraq's neighbouring countries have played in reinforcing their good neighbour policy through cooperation in controlling the borders and non-interference in internal affairs supports the efforts of the Iraqi government in this direction.

Madame President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain, as a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, calls for the peaceful settlement of the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the brotherly United Arab Emirates. This dispute should be settled either through negotiations or referred to the International Court of Justice for its adjudication.

Within the framework of maintaining regional security in the Gulf region, we confirm that establishing friendly relations among its countries should be based on respect for the principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, good neighbourliness, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful settlement of disputes. This creates a positive atmosphere that helps address the issues in a spirit of conciliation, in accordance with international legitimacy, especially on the issue of using nuclear energy for peaceful objectives, in order not to threaten security, economic interests and the environment of the countries of the region. To support this atmosphere, we should work together to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, free from weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, we confirm the

right of states to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and under the Safeguards Regime of the IAEA.

Madame President,

Today, we need all our joint efforts to achieve the collective security system, the aim we all are trying to achieve through multilateral diplomacy, for which the United Nations is the main arena.

We hope, through your Presidency, that our efforts will achieve new steps in reforming the Organization. The Secretary- General maintained in his Report on the Work of the Organization (A/61/1) that no reform of the United Nations will be complete without the reform of the Security Council, which should be more representative of today's geopolitical realities. This will make it more efficient and transparent. Furthermore, the establishment last year of the Peace-Building Committee and the Human Rights Council is highly appreciated.

We concur with the Secretary-General's Report that strengthening the United Nations emanates from reaffirming the General Assembly's central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. This was also reaffirmed by the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

Madame President,

The gap between the developed and developing countries remains wide in economic, human, scientific and technological development, and developing countries are finding it more and more difficult to bridge this gap and mitigate its negative impact. They need to promote good governance, uphold human rights, expand the scope of democratic participation, enhance transparency and empower women to address this. But they cannot achieve this alone. The developed world must continue its commitment to offer support by cancelling debts and supplying developing countries with knowledge and up-to-date technology and expertise to achieve sustainable development.

Madame President,

The Millennium Development Goals are the key road map to achieving sustainable development. We confirm that achieving these aims cannot be done except through an international strategic partnership between developed and developing countries, along with the international organizations, in particular, the UN, as well as civil society and the private sector, due to their vital role nationally and internationally.

Madame President,

We would not be misrepresenting truth if we stated that the international changes and the great progress that the international community is witnessing have brought the human civilization to wider horizons in which

there is no room for excluding or marginalising others. Rather, the space is open for dialogue and positive diversity. This is because we, as nations, proceed from one international civilization which is rich with a multitude of religions and cultures, and through which we explore everything that can bring about peace and stability for the whole world.

In conclusion, Madame President, we hope that the Session, under your Presidency, will be an extension to the atmosphere of reform that the UN is experiencing at this stage of its history. We confirm the need to unify efforts to achieve this reform and development. The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to achieving this aim, and will support efforts to strengthen the UN and its international position.

Thank you.