

Permanent Mission of the
Kingdom of Bahrain to the U.N.
New York



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STATEMENT

By

H. E. Shaikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa,

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs

of the Kingdom of Bahrain

to the

Fifty-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

Friday 24th September 2004

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In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Mr. Chairman,

I have the pleasure, at the outset, to extend my congratulations and best wishes to you and your friendly country of Gabon on the occasion of your election as Chairman of this 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to wish you every success in your work. May I take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, Minister of Foreign Affairs of friendly Saint Lucia, for his outstanding efforts during his Chairmanship of the 58th Session.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express my country's renewed appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the great tasks he shoulders to enhance and strengthen the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the signature of the Charter in 1945 in San Francisco, the United Nations has played an important and vital role in many international political, economic, social and humanitarian issues.

Our world today sees the interlinking of different issues of politics, and regional and international security with other cases of development, environment, culture, human rights, and women's rights.

As a result, international interests have become so close as to be indistinguishable, and the distinction between local and international issues has almost vanished in light of the spread of globalisation. Over half a century since its creation, the people of the world have become more in need of our international organization, the United Nations, but with a new and developed understanding, and a greater day-to-day need so as to go hand-in-hand with the developments of the Twenty-First Century, led by multilateral diplomacy, which looks at both present and inherited problems from a new practical perspective and understanding.

The idea of reforming the United Nations, including collective security, is indeed an ambitious idea. However, we believe that its implementation is not an impossible dream, but has become a necessity to which the international community must respond, through innovative thoughts, practical methods, and a collective determination that will lead to the realisation of democracy in international relations, maintain the spirit of the Charter, and put forward practical solutions to national and regional conflicts and their consequences for the development process in member states.

Mr. Chairman,

The world has seen enormous changes in international relations and the concept of international politics, accompanied by dangers that threaten the security and economies of all countries. Foremost of these is the nature of international terrorism in light of the liberalisation of commerce and the movement of capital,

as well as the movement of ideas and culture among nations, without impediment.

The United Nations in the Twenty-First Century has inherited these issues alongside weighty new problems. It must therefore arm itself with new international political ideas, and developed and flexible means to match these new perspectives and changes, while at the same time reflecting the ambitions of the new century, as outlined by the Millennium Summit of 2000, whose programmes and noble goals we endeavour, year after year, to achieve.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that the new changes in international relations will place further burdens on the United Nations, and increase its effective role in the international arena. Maintaining this role, and indeed increasing and strengthening it, reaffirms the necessity of reforming the United Nations and revitalising its processes and programmes, adapting the experiences of the previous half century to a new world, quite different both to that after the Second World War and to that of the Cold War.

Today, there is a consensus among all countries on the need for prompt and serious initiatives to begin the process of reforming the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, the General Assembly and ECOSOC, to enable the United Nations to be more responsive to the needs and demands of today and tomorrow.

At the present time, the vital role of the Security Council has increased so as to avert new and various threats to international peace and security. Hence, it has become necessary for continued efforts to reform the Council and develop the collective security mechanisms it represents, as explained in the Charter, within the context of the fundamental changes that have taken place in the understanding of international peace and security.

In this regard, we reaffirm our support for the efforts initiated by H.E. the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations and to increase its ability to undertake its responsibilities and duties within the framework of new international developments. We look forward with great interest to the report of the Secretary-General in December 2004 on the results of the meetings of the committee of high-level panels established to discuss the threats, challenges and changes required by the modern world. We hope that these results and recommendations will not only meet the hopes of the peoples of the world, but will also be sufficient to address the threats and problems that beset international relations on all sides.

Mr. Chairman,

As the reform of the United Nations has become a goal of the majority of its members, by the same token, leaders and political thinkers in many areas of the developing world, including the Arab world, have become aware that reforms and development are important issues in their societies in order to address the demands for change and the movement of history, and that these issues must be addressed with clear thought and wisdom, to meet the hopes and aspirations of the new generation for development and democratisation.

As a result of this historic political awareness, the reform and democratisation process has taken great strides forward in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Bahrain has moved rapidly in the building of democracy and the widening of popular participation, since the adoption of the National Action Charter by the people of Bahrain on February 14, 2001, and municipal and parliamentary elections in 2002.

It is clear that the demand for reform and democratisation, which has become an important contemporary element in international policy, has become a demand of both industrialised and developing countries. This year, the President of the G-8 invited His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, to participate in its annual Summit held in Georgia, United States, from 8-10 June, 2004, in recognition of His Majesty's important role in the reform process and the building of democracy in Bahrain.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of terrorism concerns and preoccupies the international community, because of its growth and spread to many different parts of the world, such that no region or country can be spared. In this regard, Bahrain reaffirms its condemnation of terrorism in all its shapes and forms, regardless of its sources or motivation. We reassert that there can be no justification whatsoever for terrorism, and that terrorist acts are not condoned by any religion or belief.

Bahrain has condemned, and continues to condemn, terrorist acts against countries and peoples, by which innocent lives are lost, and reaffirms its

solidarity with the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures it has taken to overcome these criminal actions which contradict the principles and tenets of Islam, the religion of tolerance and benevolence. Bahrain also condemns all terrorist acts around the world, including the events at the school in Beslan, North Ossetia, in Russia.

In examining terrorism and its threats, it is necessary to review its causes in order to limit its destructive danger. Among these causes, we find poverty, ignorance, backwardness, unemployment, a culture of extremism, fundamentalism, ethnic prejudice, feelings of national desperation, and violations of human rights.

To address this terrorist phenomenon, and within the framework of regional cooperation to fight it, Bahrain and the other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council have this year signed the GCC Anti-Terrorism Agreement, an advanced step in overcoming this scourge that must be eradicated.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is increasing its oppressive measures in the Occupied Territories the Palestinian people and pays no respect or consideration to international law and international legality by taking areas of Palestinian land in its construction of the so-called bather, which consolidates the occupation and settlements, and extinguishes hopes for an independent Palestinian state, the legal and inalienable right of the Palestinian people. The international community today must take a courageous stand in the face of these actions, in particular following the advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice delivered on 9 July, 2004,

and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July, 2004, which are a triumph for international legality, and clear condemnation of the building of the barrier, which contradicts the principles of international law. The international community must benefit from this Opinion so as to pressure Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese Sheba'a Farms.

Mr. Chairman,

The Arab countries reaffirm their commitment to the Arab peace initiative agreed at the Beirut Summit in 2002, and reconfirmed by the latest Arab Summit in Tunis in 2004, which calls for a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab land and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the resolutions of international legality, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). We call once again on the Quartet to restart its earlier work to continue the peace process, and demand that the government of Israel fulfil its obligations under the peace plan as set out in the Roadmap.

Mr. Chairman,

The situation in brotherly Iraq remains a continued concern for the countries and peoples of the region, in particular the dangers of violence and insecurity which today threaten Iraq, despite the continued efforts to maintain peace, especially following the establishment of the interim government which took office on 28 June, 2004, and in spite of the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqi authorities, and the convening of the national conference and the creation of the interim national

legislative council. In spite of all these developments, the road to stability is fraught with obstacles and difficulties, foremost of which is the maintenance of a strong and broad national Iraqi consensus and solid international support that will save the people and the country from dire danger and end the violence, killing and acts of terrorism which continue to claim many innocent lives among Iraqis and other nationalities.

The forthcoming stage demands a vital and effective role by the international community, represented by the United Nations, which will bear the heavy burden of supporting the interim Iraqi government to fulfil the tasks required of it under Security Council Resolution 1546 (2004).

Bahrain has expressed its support for efforts to maintain peace and security in Iraq, and to create the conditions for the reconstruction of the country and the maintenance of its unity. His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa has reaffirmed Bahrain's willingness to participate in Arab and international efforts to rebuild Iraq and to maintain peace and security, and Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Chairman,

The security and stability of the Gulf is a very important concern of the Government of Bahrain, which continuously seeks peace and stability in a region which has suffered much in the past three decades. Bahrain, as a member of GCC, calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to make serious efforts to solve the issue of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the brotherly United Arab Emirates, through serious bilateral

negotiations between the two neighbouring countries, through arbitration, or through any other peaceful means for resolving bilateral disputes by mutual consent.

Within its continued following of efforts to achieve peace and understanding, and re-establish stability in important parts in the Arab world, Bahrain has welcomed the Naivasha Agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, and hopes that this important and historic step will put an end to the civil war that has cost considerable financial and human resources. Similarly, Bahrain has welcomed the agreement between Sudan and the United Nations to end the bloodshed in the Darfur region, and accordingly welcomes the steps by the Sudanese government to implement its obligations under the agreement with the Secretary-General signed on 3 July, 2004. Bahrain also expresses its support for the efforts of the African Union, in coordination with the Sudanese government, to solve the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and stresses the importance of respecting Sudan's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Bahrain calls on the Security Council to give the Government of Sudan sufficient time to tackle the problem, and to offer the necessary financial assistance to end this tragedy.

Mr. Chairman,

The issues of economic and social development are the real agenda for societies in developing countries. At the start of the Twenty-First Century, governments in developing countries are trying to raise their standards of living and provide dignified lives for their people through comprehensive development programmes including building basic infrastructure and education systems,

improving healthcare and welfare, reducing unemployment, inflation and budget deficits, modernising industry and agriculture, openness in international markets, globalisation, and liberalising commerce, so as to provide prosperity and higher standards of living.

In order to achieve sustainable development, and alongside national efforts, there must be regional and international efforts through increased regional and semi-regional cooperation in different fields. The countries of the South should increase their mutual cooperation through the exchange of experience in health, education, commerce, investment, information technology and communications.

In this context, and in their mutual interest, it is the responsibility of the economically-developed countries to work to support programmes and policies of developing countries in economic reform and to devise practical and suitable solutions to their foreign debt problems, which drain the budgets and affect negatively development programmes. Developed countries should pave the way for developing countries to reach international markets and build their national capacities.

The developing countries should also take the responsibility of working to achieve internal economic liberalisation and regional economic entities among themselves, and of modernising their societies within the prevailing political, economic and social globalisation.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, more than ever, we need the principles and aims of the United Nations Charter, and we are more than ever convinced of the necessity for a reformed United Nations, modernised and developed for our collective international efforts and responsive to the challenges of the Twenty-First century, which guarantees greater democracy in international relations, equality of rights among the peoples of the world, and equality of sovereignty among states, and which devises solutions to future problems in the context of international participation to address the unprecedented challenges facing humanity in the coming decades.

Mr. Chairman,

Past and present failures should not blind us to our ambitions for a better future, free from the scourge of war, in greater peace and justice, with priority for human rights and individual dignity, increased resources, development of societies, an end to greed, and cooperation between states within a developed international order that promotes legality and the rule of law and which brings about the values of human rights and justice without prejudice or discrimination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.