

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
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نيويورك

Statement
Of

The Arab Republic of Egypt

Before

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The United Nations General Assembly
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Delivered by

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Mr. President,

It is a great pleasure to see you presiding over the General Assembly (GA) in its fifty-ninth session. I am confident that your wealth of experience and the friendly ties your sisterly country enjoys with all countries of the World will be a major asset for the Assembly in the discharge of its tasks. The success of this session will build upon the accomplishments of the fifty-eighth session under the leadership of your predecessor Mr. Julian Hunte, who made an important contribution to the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly in various fields.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to enhance the status and strengthen the role of our organization in the international arena, in particular in the area of the promotion of the activities related to development on the regional and domestic levels.

At the outset of our fifty-ninth session, we must scrutinize the international environment in which it is being held. We have to take a look at the events witnessed by our world to determine their direction, to decide where we stand on them, and to understand their contribution, whether positive or negative, to the achievement of our shared goal: The Promotion of International Peace and Security.

The Current Reality of International Relations:

Indeed, we need to pause to see where this world is heading, is it and are we ascending towards upholding the values of democracy, justice and the rule of law? Or are we descending to tyranny, the law of the jungle and the imposition of the policies of *fait-accomplit*?

Could it be said that what is taking place in the world today emanates from a real belief in the might of right? Or is it, most regrettably, a consolidation of the right of might? The events witnessed by our world today are a cause of grave concern for all those who believe in the principles upon which the international system, under the auspices of the United Nations, was established.

We are witnessing noble values collapse, and principles, that we thought were unassailable, falling apart. National sovereignty and territorial integrity are no longer sufficient to prevent interference in the

internal affairs of states. Indeed, those very internal affairs have become a pretext for those who wished to impose their policies on the others.

The international situation forces a critical question on us, namely what is it that we want from this world? And what we have done to attain it?

We say:

We want a world free from conflicts and wars. *What have we done to establish such world?*

We want an international community that is governed by legality and the rule of law. Are we *seriously upholding the values of legality and law?*

We wish to see all peoples enjoying democracy. *But what about states? Should they not enjoy democracy in the conduct of their foreign relations as well?*

The relations among states are by nature volatile. They are easy to break, but they repairable. It might be difficult at times to repair them. However, the calculations pertaining to the ever-evolving interests make it eventually possible. But the relations among peoples are different. Their wounds get inflamed quickly, and they heal slowly, or perhaps rarely. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, in our feverish attempt to achieve our own interests, to take special care in order to avoid the flashpoints between peoples and civilizations/cultures because their memories store all their experiences and tribulations. Whatever is stored in the collective memory does not disappear nor fade away with time.

The Lessons of History:

Mr. President,

I come to the General Assembly from a country that grasps fully the meaning of history. Mine is a country that has had the three components of the state, namely the territory, the people and the Government for seven thousand years. The country that witnessed, through the Nile, and on its banks, the march of the world history. It is a country that had experienced and lived through the ascendance, the tyranny, the decline and the fall of empires and powers that ruled the world. They came to our lands as invaders and as they came they went

away leaving behind only what we accepted as enrichment to the fabric of our culture. All the rest of what was left behind were but a line in the sand, and was blown away by the wind of the movement of the ever-dynamic history.

The lessons of history teach us that if a certain people or party finds itself compelled to accept a situation or settlement under certain historical circumstances, it does not mean that such people or party will continue to accept that situation if the circumstances change and the balance of power is altered. The authors of the Versailles accords attempted to convince the world at the beginning of the last century that they laid down the foundation of lasting peace. However, those very accords were the cause for undermining that desired peace.

Why did this happen? In my opinion the collapse of the Versailles regime was the cause of the arrogance of power. Such arrogance eluded some of us to the belief that they were capable of not only writing history but also rewriting it to alter its facts and ignore its lessons. Therefore, we had better seek justice in our policies. If we do not do so out of belief in the inherent value of justice, let it be done on the basis of realizing the benefits of justice in the long term for our children and grandchildren.

The Combat against Terrorism:

Mr. President,

[the relation between lack of justice and what follows "terrorism"]

The events of recent years have proven that no one is immune to the danger of terrorism. The evil hand of terrorism killed and destroyed in all corners of the world under various pretexts and different excuses. Whatever its motives, they are unacceptable. All its arguments are flimsy. The only objective of this criminal conduct, which we condemn in all its forms, is random killing and wanton destruction.

For more than a decade, Egypt has called, and continues to call, for the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the phenomenon of terrorism and to agree on means to combat it through effective and collective international efforts. Proceeding from our belief in the importance and centrality of the role of the United Nations, [whether through the GA or

the [Security Council], in the coordination of international efforts to combat terrorism, we propose that the GA establish an open-ended working group to [consider proposals] to increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of the UN and its ability to achieve the international goals in the area of combating terrorism. This can be accompanied by the convening of regional preparatory meetings to catalog the regional needs and the areas of cooperation on the international level. This in turn could lead us, ultimately, to the adoption of the draft comprehensive framework convention to combat terrorism in a high-level international summit.

The Socio-economic Context:

Mr. President,

We will not be able to eradicate the threat of terrorism without an equitable and just international economic and social system in which we must take into account the needs of the others as much as we strive to achieve our own interests. The last decade witnessed an increased attention to narrowing the social and economic gaps between states. This was embodied in the series of UN conferences and summits, which sought to achieve such aim. Here, we wish to stress two points that are critical to optimize the benefit of those efforts:

First, The need to take into accounts the cultural diversity of societies and their different backgrounds and social and political circumstances. It is important to stress that failing which the documents and programmes of action adopted at UN-sponsored conferences will remain in the realm of abstract and will not be translated into reality.

Second, there is a need to realize that the capacity of developing countries to implement the agreed programmes of actions will remain limited without an effective and sincere international cooperation that is based on the belief in the unity human destiny.

The eradication of poverty and the achievement of development are a shared responsibility of developed and developing countries alike. It is a responsibility that is based on genuine partnership, international solidarity, the principles of the UN Charter, and the Millennium Declaration. It must be supported by a serious attempt to address the causes of the structural imbalance in the international economic and financial systems, by the alleviation of the debt burden and the increase

of foreign direct investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA).

If we are truly serious in our commitment to halve the number of the poor who live on less than a dollar a day by the year 2015, then the obstacles in the way to the access of the developing countries' exports to the world market must be eliminated. Also, we need to promote the acquisition by developing countries, particularly in Africa, which have long been deprived of a fair share of international investments, of direct and indirect international financial flows. There is also an urgent need to arrive at lasting and structural solution to the problem of foreign indebtedness that has drained the developing countries, and has aggravated the socio-economic painful situation in most of Africa.

This leads me to address the 2005 high-level event which will seek to review the implementation of the outcome of the UN summits and conferences. I would like to reiterate that we expect the review process to take careful stock of the goals and objectives of we sought from those conferences, so as to clarify what have been accomplished thus far and what are the obstacles which prevented the realization of them all. We expect that effective steps shall be taken to achieve those goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to ensure the implementation of the specific commitments made by states, in the context of the principle of *shared responsibility* among the developed and developing countries.

I am afraid that the data and indications contained in the relevant UN reports reflect the agonizingly slow progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. This will cast its shadow on the international efforts for development and will affect the balanced international economic growth and stability. We stress the need for urgent positive action to narrow the development gaps among the countries of the world.

The Regional Scenes:

Mr. President,

I would like to seize this opportunity to illustrate to the GA the scenes in our part of the world, namely the Middle East and Africa, and the threats and challenges it faces.

The said regions are still far from achieving security and stability. Its problems are still far from a solution. Those problems maybe so inflamed that they get substantial media coverage, but finding a real solution to such problems and addressing the elements that exacerbate them is not yet, in my opinion, decisively on the international agenda.

The Middle East

The Palestinian/Israeli situation:

The main threat to the Middle East, and perhaps adjacent regions as well, flows from the continued acquisition by some of nuclear weapons. While we all agree on the dangers of those weapons, and the need to halt their proliferation, as a step towards their elimination and ridding humanity of the threats they pose, the international community continues to be selective in addressing the question of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). The international community seeks to impose a firm regime to monitor the imports of all the member states of the non-proliferation regime, among them are all the Arab states. The same international community, however, turns a blind eye at the continued stockpiling of nuclear capabilities by one party in the region .

I invite all of us to ask with me, or to answer if we will, if it is acceptable for the dangers of the nuclear proliferation to continue to prevail in the Middle East. I leave it to all of you to decide whether the international approach in addressing this question is fair or is it one of double standards? Whether such an approach is capable of addressing those dangers and threats? Whether we are in urgent need for a radical change to the current approach?

The continued application of double standards will lead not only to the aggravation of the risks of nuclear proliferation and to the weakening of the conviction of the seriousness and centrality of the international regime governing this question, but will also lead to the fueling the tense situation in the Middle East. Therefore, and in order to ease that tension and to avert those dangers, President Mubarak launched in 1990 Egypt's initiative to create a Middle East a zone free from WMDs.

Mr. President,

In the year that elapsed between the opening of the last session and this one, the suffering of the Palestinian people continued. The Palestinian people are subjected to acts of aggression and their legitimate rights continue to be violated. The tragedies visited upon the Palestinian citizens have become a permanent item in newscasts and newspapers headlines. Everyday there is a report of the demolition of homes, the destruction of the infrastructure, targeting unarmed civilians, assassinations, collective punishments and the imposition of curfews and closures. There is no end in sight for these policies. All this suffering was met with an inexplicable international silence, barring some timid expressions of dissatisfaction, or at best discomfort at the events unfolding there. These statements entrench rather than change *the fait — accompli*.

Israel is also continuing to build the separation wall on Palestinian lands. The Wall separates the students from their schools, the workers from their factories, and the farmers from their fields. Had Israel's objective from the construction of that wall been truly ensuring its security, it would have rather built it on its own land. But, having constructed it on the lands of others, it has become clear, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the real aim, most regrettably, is to acquire additional Palestinian lands.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared the construction of the Wall illegal. It called for the halting of construction activities and for the removal of the parts already constructed. This advisory opinion was a strong message to the international community in general and to Israel in particular that the flame of justice is alive and well. It may have seemed to flicker but it has not been blown out. The scale of justice still prevails, it might seem to have been upset, but it has not fallen nor has it been tipped.

What our region needs is the construction of bridges that connect, not walls that separate. What our region needs is a path for the hopes of the promising future. What our region needs is serious action and genuine cooperation among all to extricate the peace process from its current impasse and to put it back on track. The way out of this bloodstained dilemma is well known. It was laid down by the International Quartet in the Road Map that enjoys the support of the entire international community. The final destination of that road is also

well known. It was defined by the United States President George Bush in his vision of the establishment of two independent states, Palestine and Israel, which would live side by side in peace and security.

This is the road. These are its landmarks and destination. There is neither time for waiting nor room for foot-dragging. Prompt and effective action is necessary to break the cycle of violence, to restore calm and to resume the process of political negotiations. These negotiations are the only way, and there is no other way, to end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In this regard, Israel intended withdrawal from the Gaza strip could be a step of significant importance. If the withdrawal takes place in a rational and disciplined manner, it could make a beginning to overcome the crisis and to restore the peace process. However, if it takes place with the logic of stubbornness and shortsightedness, then it will lead to further tension and violence.

Proceeding from a sense of Egypt's historical responsibility, we launched a political process with the Israeli and Palestinian parties. The aim of this process is the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip in a manner that will make it a prelude for the restoration of calm, stability and trust in order to allow for the resumption of negotiations and the completion of the process that will lead us to the just and comprehensive peace. In order to achieve this goal a number of elements must be ensured, notably:

- The Israeli withdrawal must take place as an integral and clear part of the Road Map. It must be followed by the implementation of the other steps pertaining to the West Bank as provided for in the Map. This should lead to the resumption of the negotiations for the final status.
- The withdrawal must be full and complete. As long as one single Israeli soldier remains in the Gaza strip, the occupation and subsequently the cause of tension will remain.
- The withdrawal must encompass all crossing points, the seaport and the airport, or else it will be just another means of imposing a blockade on the Palestinian people.
- The completeness of the Israeli withdrawal does not only mean the departure of the occupation forces from the Gaza strip, but also the cessation of the policy of incursions, raids and assassinations.

Mr. President,

The implementation of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip in such a discipline manner will allow Egypt to work with the Palestinian side for the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in all areas, particularly the area of security. Thus, the PA could resume the successful discharge of its responsibilities in the Gaza strip and the West Bank. This will also enable the international community to work with the PA for the rebuilding of the Palestinian economy whose deterioration threatens with grave humanitarian disaster that calls for prompt and decisive action.

On another level, Egypt will seek to help restore calm between the parties. However, this necessitates an assurance of the cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. The Road Map, which places equal obligations on the parties, provides for such an assurance.

Iraq:

Mr. President,

Despite all the efforts and appeals for peace, the bloodshed continues unabated in the Middle East.

We had pinned hopes on the transfer of sovereignty [to the Iraqi people] at the end of June last [and the formation of] to an Iraqi government and National Council. It was hoped that those would constitute the first steps for the restoration, by the brotherly Iraqi people, of their full sovereignty on their national soil, and the ending of the foreign presence in that long-suffering country. However, the events of the recent months have shown, and continue to show everyday, that the Iraqi people are far from stability and independence.

We wonder whose interest do the events in Iraq serve? Who is to benefit from the destruction of that country in its age-old civilization? Will the events taking place in Iraq remain confined to Iraq? Or will their flames transcend its borders causing destruction and desolation in the region, like they did in Iraq?

We call upon all parties to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. The people and the State of Iraq are in dire need of a

breathing space and calm reflection on the best way to bring that country out of the devastating spiral of violence.

We call upon the UN to continue its pivotal role in assisting the people of Iraq in rebuilding their constitutional and legislative institutions as a first step towards the rebuilding of Iraq by the hands of Iraqis.

Sudan:

Mr. President,

As if Iraq, and before it Palestine, were not enough to drain the human and physical resources of the region and to keep it in the talons of tension, the Darfur crisis came to fan the flames not only of the Middle East, but also those of Africa.

Indeed there is an urgent humanitarian problem in Darfur and there is a real humanitarian tragedy that needs an urgent international action to contain it.

But, is it inevitable for that effort to take the shape of interference in the affairs of Sudan and the violation of its sovereignty? Can we not provide humanitarian assistance and relief to the inhabitants of Darfur without encroaching upon Sudan's national sovereignty? Are there enough military forces in the world to be dispatched as invaders to every area that is afflicted by a humanitarian crisis?

The affairs of the Sudan, with its racial composition and religious and cultural heritage, are complex by nature. They are faced by extremely complex and complicated problems. It is our duties to help solve these problems not render them more complex and complicated.

The Sudan has signed with the UN a framework of cooperation, the Joint Communiqué of 4 July 2004, to solve the problem in Darfur and to ensure humanitarian access to the civilians of that region. This augurs well for an early easing of this tragedy. We call upon the international community not to confine itself to criticizing one party or another and not to lay the blame on one set of policies or another. What is more important and useful is serious action for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the needy inhabitants of Darfur. We also need to create the environment necessary for the resumption, and consequently the conclusion, of the peace talks in Naivasha, with a view

to bring an end to the long-standing civil war in Sudan and to usher for a comprehensive peace to, and the preserving of the unity of, the largest country in Africa.

Let us encourage cooperation in the place of confrontation. Let us talk of assistance not sanctions. Let us help Sudan help itself and its people. Let us support the efforts of the African Union (AU) and ensure their success. Let the African Continent establish an important principle that it most sorely needs; namely the development of the regional capacity to deal effectively with crises and disasters, the capacity for the maintenance of regional peace and security.

Peace, Security and Development in Africa

Mr. President,

This brings me to the topic of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding in Africa. Egypt attaches special importance to the provision of the financial and technical support necessary for the building and strengthening of African own capacities in the fields of peacemaking and peacekeeping. The Continent is exerting efforts to develop the mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflicts within the AU. Most notable among these efforts is the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, and the African stand-by forces, to discharge the tasks of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Such efforts reflect the will and determination of Africa to take the initiative in addressing the conflicts on the Continent. The adoption of such mechanisms proves that the AU believes in the concept of "African Ownership" of its own problems. The consolidation of such ownership calls for a genuine, urgent and sustainable support by the international community. We believe that it is incumbent on the UN to play a major role in the provision of that support.

Here, we would like to propose conducting a joint study by the UN and AU to determine the size and scope of the needs of the AU in the fields of prevention and settlement of disputes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and to also determine the nature of the support that the UN can provide in this regard.

I would like to reiterate that there has been a tendency to address the question of conflicts in Africa solely from the prism of the following elements:

- The achievement of ceasefire,
- Monitoring the observance of ceasefire,
- The cantonment of the combatants in their barracks,
- The protection of public facilities,
- The facilitation of the meetings of transitional governments,
- The preparation for national and presidential elections at the end of transitions.

Those elements are truly essential to peacekeeping activities. However, the major challenge in dealing with conflicts in Africa lies in the post-conflict situations. Those situations need an integrated package of reconciliation plans as well as political, administrative, economic and social development programmes. I would like to stress here that progress in the establishment of comprehensive and lasting peace is contingent upon the commitment by the international community to support the African countries emerging from conflicts. This commitment should, primarily, take the shape of the allocation of the financial and technical resources that are necessary to complement the progress made in the political and security fields. Thus, the choice of peace would become more attractive than the choice of violence.

Mr. President,

It is with deep regret that I sum up the situation on the ground in the African Continent by saying that the peoples of our continent find themselves in the face of several challenges and crises. Africa is still hostage to its past, its present is painful, and its future is, at best, ambiguous. This is a bleak African scene that must instill in us a sense of responsibility and duty to alleviate the suffering of Africans in all parts of the Continent.

What Africa really needs has been presented to the world in the framework of the NEPAD strategy. The UN has adopted that strategy, and the G-8 committed political support to it. We stress the need for unabated commitment by the international community at large to the purposes and objectives of NEPAD, and the provision of the much needed technical and financial assistance to its various sectors and programmes.

Reform of the United Nations:

Mr. President,

Having presented an overview of the situation in our region and continent, I wish to conclude by sharing with you our view on the future of the UN; the international organization which we all freely chose to join and support.

Egypt believes that facing the challenges and threats to international peace and security necessitates the enhancement of the performance of the UN so as to enable it to effectively address those challenges and the threats they pose. Therefore, we participated seriously, and will continue to do so, in the exercise on the strengthening and revitalization of the UN organs. It is our hope that such exercise will be comprehensive, balanced, transparent, and will be carried out in full respect for the mandates that established these organs. We need to reaffirm in this context the need to revitalize the role of the GA and ECOSOC and to ensure the respect for, and implementation of, its resolutions through the establishment of an effective follow — up mechanism. [the relationship between the Main Organs] We also emphasize the need to enhance and vitalize the complementarity among the three main organs of the Organization; namely the GA, ECOSOC and SC.

Moving from the wider context of the reform of the organization, I reach the most sensitive and delicate reform issue, namely the reform and expansion of the SC. The sensitivity and delicacy of this issue clearly stem from the increasingly large role the Council has sought to perform in international affairs and its effect on many vital interests and the international balance of power.

I would like to state clearly the position of Egypt. This position is based on our membership in the African Group, and the fact that we have the honour to coordinate the NAM working group on this subject. Egypt hopes that the deliberations on this subject will result equally in a reform of the Council and in an expansion of its membership. The UN, and the international community as a whole, will not gain much if the process would be confined to expanding the membership of the Council without real improvement of its methods of work so as to be more representative of the general membership

of the Organization and to become more capable of maintaining international peace and security, and uphold international legality.

Egypt is fully committed to the Declaration of the 1997 African Summit in Harare. The Declaration affirmed the right of Africa to two permanent seats and three non-permanent seats in an expanded SC. We are also committed to the position of the NAM to increase the membership of the Council to at least 26 member states, and to confine the expansion process to the non-permanent category, should the expansion of both categories of the membership prove difficult.

I had this to state on the question of the number of the membership of a reformed SC. *What about its composition?*

We call for the representation of all cultures and civilizations in the expanded SC on the basis of the current geographical distribution in the UN. It is in our view, that the Council will not be able to effectively discharge its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security unless it is more cognizant of the circumstances prevailing in, and the nature of, all societies and the cultural and historical heritage on which such societies base and formulate their policies.

Here we must reiterate the legitimate right of more than one billion Muslims and more than 300 million Arabs to be represented in the Council on an equal basis with the representatives of other cultures and civilizations.

In this context, I wish to recall the significant contributions made by Egypt on the regional and international levels. I would also like to recall Egypt's central role in the African, Arab and Islamic spheres. Noteworthy also is Egypt's role in the Middle East and among the developing and emerging economies. As a founding member of the UN, Egypt has made well-recognized contributions to the implementation of the purposes of the UN, and to the Organization's peacekeeping operations. In addition, Egypt played a pivotal role in the establishment of the League of Arab States, OAU, AU, NAM, and the OIC. I also wish to recall that Egypt possesses the components of power, in its comprehensive sense, be it economic, military or human. Egypt also enjoys social and political stability. It has one of the largest diplomatic outreach and has developed, over the years, strong ties throughout the different parts of the world.

In the past, Egypt expressed its conviction that it is eminently qualified to assume permanent responsibilities in the framework of an expanded SC, and on the basis endorsed by the Harare Declaration. We reiterate that the above-mentioned considerations are important assets for Egypt's clear eligibility for and appropriate capacity in discharging the responsibilities of membership in the SC, in accordance with Article 23 of the UN Charter. We believe that such membership can take place on the basis of a system of rotation with our African brothers to fill the additional seats, which is to be allocated to our continent/regional group. It can also correspond to any newly established status in the Council in the framework of the geographical distribution in the UN.

There remains a final and decisive point concerning the effectiveness of the Council. Expansion is not an end in itself. It is legitimate to seek expansion. However, the goal, which we all must strive to achieve, is reforming the methods of work in the Council and liberate it from the domination of the minority that sometimes seeks only to further narrow and selfish interests that do not serve the work of the Council or the lofty ideals behind its establishment. Any proposals for expansion must provide for a cessation of the practices the Council has known in the past 15 years since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Thank you, Mr. President.