



# THE GAMBIA

*Check Against Delivery*

## STATEMENT

BY

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**OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

63<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**NEW YORK**  
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***Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen***

Allow me Mr. President to congratulate you on your election as President of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of this Assembly. My delegation has no doubt that under your able and wise guidance the deliberations of this 63<sup>rd</sup> Session will be smooth and fruitful. Let me also express my sincere thanks to your predecessor H.E. Mr. Srgjam Kerim for his exemplary leadership during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of this august Assembly. My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon for managing the affairs of our organization very well.

***Mr. President,***

The legitimacy of multilateralism, that lies at the core of the United Nations system, is being increasingly questioned. Yes, with the launching of the former Secretary-General's report, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All", a lot of reforms have taken place and are still taking place. However, the question is, "Is it enough?" One of the unassailable conclusions reached in that report is: "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council". We have established a new Human Rights Council, a Peacebuilding Commission and have undertaken far reaching management reforms. Yet the reform of the Security Council is still being unnecessarily stalled for no justifiable reason. This constitutes a source of frustration for the Citizens of this world who are frustrated at the lack of reform of the Security Council and for this reason are increasingly questioning the legitimacy of its decisions. The world is watching with dismay at this unsatisfactory status quo. Mr. Chairman the aspiration of the African people and governments for adequate representation on the council cannot be ignored because they are legitimate and justified. The suggestion that reforming the Council's working methods alone could constitute sufficient reform is not accurate.

My delegation has taken note of the High Level panel's Report and the Secretary general's comment on the UN System-wide coherence as well as the Concept paper on Institutional Options to strengthen UN's work on Gender Parity and the empowerment of Women. My delegation aligns itself with the position of the Group of 77 and China on this work in progress.

***Mr. President,***

Our world is also going through a period of crises evident from the food crisis, the energy crisis, the collapse of financial markets and the collapse of trade talks. There is no country on earth which is not affected by the magnitude of these crises.

Too many repetitive high-level meetings; too many false promises and unfulfilled commitments continue to characterize our efforts at addressing the global development

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crisis. We, in the developing world have had too many prescriptions from the international community and we have fastidiously followed them. The irony, however, remains that our partners are not fulfilling their side of the bargain in the way they should. It is our hope that the upcoming meeting on Financing for Development to be held in Doha this November, will result in the reversal of this trend.

We are asked to eliminate subsidies while they continue to give huge subsidies to their farmers. We are opening our markets while they continue to introduce subtle measures including tariff and non-tariff barriers to deny us effective market access. They commit to doubling overseas development assistance but turn around and withhold the little that trickles in. When it trickles, it becomes a media event. This is no way to end poverty. This is no way to end the food crisis. This is no way to end the energy crisis. This is no way to address climate change and it is no way for achieving the MDGs.

***Mr. President,***

Allow me to share some thoughts with you on the global food crisis. When the food crisis struck earlier this year, there was no economy which was spared. The food crisis was predictable because the international community over the last decade has neglected agriculture in the developing countries. In most developing countries, agricultural research and training institutions collapsed largely through underfunding. Research and development was outsourced to multinational corporations. Most of us in the developing world saw the collapse of our agriculture markets through competition from the heavily subsidized farmers from the developed world. World trade talks keep on failing to the detriment of poor farmers in rural Africa and elsewhere in the developing world.

***Mr. President,***

Our response to the food crisis followed the usual pattern of convening conferences and meetings and adopting blueprints that merely heal the symptoms. We need more than that. How many times did we meet in Rome and elsewhere just to adopt the same commitments that we have already adopted over the years. Our farmers need agricultural inputs like machinery and fertilizers. Our farmers need training in modern methods of agriculture. Our farmers need more research and training institutions. Our farmers need fair trade and market access for their produce. They have been producing their own food for centuries. All they need now is to enhance their production capacities. They are still waiting for the "Green Revolution" in agriculture that Africa was promised at numerous international fora.

We all know what is at stake here. Let us honour our commitments in order not to have a repeat of the dramatic events of food shortage. Let us restore the role of agriculture as a catalyst for development in our discourse at the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions. Let us make the Food and Agriculture Organization work for the poor. Let us make business, academia and scientific institutions play their catalytic roles by generating new ideas and technologies for improved agricultural practices. Let us make markets work for all.

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***Mr. President,***

As we address the food crisis, we cannot underestimate the impact of skyrocketing energy costs on the incomes and livelihoods of our populations. Our economies are under enormous stress and our gains in economic growth and development are at risk of being completely eroded. We appreciate the efforts that a number of energy producing countries are making to ease the impact of the crisis on net importing countries. My delegation, however, believes that sustained efforts should continue to be made towards stabilizing the oil market. Beyond tackling the economic crisis that is impacting the world, we should also pay attention to the question of conflict resolution in various hot spots.

***Mr. President,***

One of the cornerstones of The Gambia's foreign policy is the pursuit of peace and security. As a peace loving people, it is our constant desire to contribute towards the search for lasting peace wherever there is conflict. It is for these reasons that The Gambia actively participates in peace missions and also promotes good neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation throughout Africa and beyond. I must register my satisfaction at the peace dividends that are today being reaped across Africa, thanks to the commitment of African leaders to finding solutions to African conflicts. We are witnessing the resurgence of hope in Sierra Leone and Liberia after many years of consolidation of peace and security. It is my delegation's fervent hope that the international community will not relent in extending to them all the financial, technical and material support they require to turn around their societies for the better.

***Mr. President,***

My delegation fully shares the agony of the Somali Government and people over the breakdown of law and order and the internal conflict that continues to plague that country. In this regard, I wish to salute the effort that the Government and People of Ethiopia and the neighbouring countries, as well as the African Union are making in trying to bring peace and security to Somalia. The Security Council must do more by genuinely and substantially supporting African efforts at achieving lasting peace in Somalia.

***Mr. President,***

It is the strong desire of my delegation to see a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Darfur. As a troop contributing country to UNAMID, we humbly call on all the parties to iron out their differences at the negotiating table. Regarding the threat to indict President Bashir of Sudan, The Gambia wishes to register its full support for the position taken on this matter by the African Union, the Arab League and the Non-aligned Movement.

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***Mr. President,***

People of the Middle East are tired of living in a theatre of conflict. The Palestinian conflict has lingered for too long and the condition of the ordinary Palestinian continues to deteriorate even after numerous accords and promises. General Assembly resolutions, Security Council Resolutions and even the recent International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the situation are not being implemented. The Quartet and the international community seem helpless. We must ask ourselves how do we respond to the despair and lack of action that seem to characterize the peace agenda of the United Nations in this region. When will the two-state solution be achieved? Unless we do something by breaking the logjam in the ongoing negotiations, lasting peace will remain elusive.

***Mr. President,***

Iraq and Afghanistan continue to roil in conflict. The international community must give the governments of these countries space to make decisions that are in the best interest of their peoples. Whatever actions are taken or contemplated to be taken in these countries should be properly coordinated with, and fully authorized by their governments. Military solutions have not worked and will not work in the long run. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to find alternatives that will bring about national reconciliation, peace and development. This must be done with full respect for the sovereignty of the countries. The plight of the civilian populations – be they refugees or internally displaced persons, as well as the long-term development aspirations of both Iraq and Afghanistan must receive more attention than they are currently receiving.

***Mr. President,***

Allow me to also address some neglected issues of international justice. My delegation has always addressed the question of Taiwan in this august Assembly from the point of view of justice, fairness and equality. Taiwan is a stable and prosperous democracy that is willing and able to take part in the work that this organization does. How can one justify the exclusion of Taiwan from actively participating in the activities of the United Nations agencies? The safeguarding of the welfare of the 23 million Taiwanese through their participation should be accepted under the principle of universality. For example, with the world's 10<sup>th</sup> largest shipping capacity, Taiwan cannot have access to the International Maritime Organization. This adversely affects the progress of its shipping industry. Furthermore, being the world's 18<sup>th</sup> largest economy and 20<sup>th</sup> largest outboard investor, Taiwan possesses significant economic strength and continues to share its development experiences with many developing countries through technical and humanitarian assistance. Taiwan is supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Therefore I think we should all agree let Taiwan participate in the activities of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. This is a modest request which my delegation fervently hopes would merit your objective consideration.

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***Mr. President,***

The perpetuation of the unjust extraterritorial economic embargo against Cuba has never made sense, does not make any sense today and has no place in our community of nations. Its sole object is to inflict unnecessary harm and suffering on a resolute people. The General Assembly's persistent call for its abolition only met with indifference. At their hour of need, when hurricane Ike and Gustav inflicted massive damage on the country, Cuba's humanitarian call for the lifting of the embargo to enable them to purchase necessary humanitarian supplies met with nothing but a cold response. There is no room for such an action in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The embargo must end.

***Mr. President,***

I would like to address a number of social issues that are very high on the global agenda. In Africa, we are committed to combating the scourges of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases. African governments have over the years committed substantial resources towards fighting these diseases. Yet our healthcare delivery systems remain under serious stress because of the flight of trained professionals to the more advanced countries. This is considered as positive migration, but we are being devastated by it. I think some serious dialogue needs to begin between our countries and those beneficiary countries on how to get fair compensation for such huge losses.

***Mr. President,***

The other side of migration is what some call illegal migration, especially from Africa to Europe. It is a question that is tied to the question of youth unemployment in our societies and to the broader question of development. Over the years, we have tried to address the migration conundrum at various fora but we need to come up with solutions that empower the youth through job creation, skills and vocational training programmes in order to stem the tide. Governments must manage migration humanely. The human rights and welfare of migrants and their families should be upheld by all societies. My delegation would like to appeal to all governments to do more to stamp out the increasing rise of intolerance, xenophobia and racism directed against migrants and their families.

***Mr. President,***

Ours is a world of considerable opportunities and challenges. Let us collectively exploit the opportunities offered by our globalized world to tackle the challenges that face humanity. Together we can do it.

**Thank you for your attention and May Allah the Almighty bless you all!**

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