

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Permanent Mission of the
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
to the United Nations
New York



البعثة الدائمة
لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

Statement by

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of the United Arab Emirates**

Head of Delegation

before

**the general debate of the sixty-second session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

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New York

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to convey, on behalf of the Delegation of the United Arab Emirates, our sincerest congratulations to Your Excellency and to your friendly country on your election as President of the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly.

We look forward to working closely with you as you seek to discharge successfully the mission with which you have been entrusted.

I would also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for her remarkable achievements during her Presidency of the last, 61st, session of the General Assembly, in particular her efforts to stimulate more active debate between cultures. We wish her well in the future..

I should also take this opportunity to express the greetings of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the newly-chosen Secretary General, and to note our appreciation of the initiatives he has taken since he assumed his post to promote the role of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Our world still suffers from a wide range of issues, conflicts and threats, among the most visible of which are the spread of poverty and epidemics worldwide, the degradation of the natural environment, terrorism, organised crime, the spread of extremism and violations of human rights, as well as attempts to obtain nuclear weapons. This should prompt us to make sincere and determined efforts to implement the recommendations and decisions approved by the world's leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the subsequent World Summit High Level Plenary Meeting in 2005.

Mr. President,

Arising from its own interest in and commitment to the principle of good neighbourly relations, as well as its respect for the national sovereignty of other states and its support for the principle of non-interference in the internal and external affairs of other states, the United Arab Emirates would like to draw attention to the fact that, until now, no progress whatsoever has been made on the settlement of the issue of the Iranian occupation in 1971 of the three UAE islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. This lack of progress has been despite all the efforts and constructive peaceful initiatives that my country consistently puts forward, all of which have been endorsed by the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council and by the Council of the League of Arab States, as well as by other peace-loving nations.

We again urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to show its goodwill by working to achieve the solution of this issue by peaceful means, through bilateral and unconditional negotiations with the UAE, to reach a permanent and just settlement that would require the full withdrawal by Iran from the three islands and the return of their continental shelf, territorial seas, air space and economic zones as an inseparable part of the national sovereignty of the UAE. Or that the Islamic Republic of Iran should indicate its agreement that the issue should be referred to the International Court of Justice for legal arbitration.

Mr. President,

Severe conflict has sorely wounded our region, and quick and effective treatment is required. As for Iraq, first we express our support for the efforts being made to promote reconstruction in Iraq and, at the same time, the firm belief that all should abstain from interference in Iraq's internal affairs and should display respect for the national sovereignty of Iraq. This requires that all parties should co-operate to bring to an end the cycle of violence, and to the inciting of feelings, and that they should work to counter calls for partition and division. We call for support for an Iraqi Government that truly works to achieve national reconciliation. We call upon all states to commit themselves to respect for Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and stability, as well as its Arab and Islamic identity and to reject any attempts and political currents that seek to divide and partition Iraq.

The United Arab Emirates is deeply concerned over the growing number of Iraqi refugees seeking asylum in neighboring countries and the resulting tragic humanitarian situation, as well as the consequent breaking up of the country's demographic structure.

Mr. President,

The United Arab Emirates expresses its disappointment at the current situation in the Middle East in general and in the Palestinian Territories in particular, as a result of the continued aggression by Israel and its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands.

We renew our support for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and its affiliated constitutional and legitimate institutions and call on the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to play a more active role, together with the Middle East Quartet, in order to give new momentum to the Middle East peace process. We stress that no solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is possible without Israel's acceptance of the Arab Initiative, which is based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

We also renew our support for Syria's right to regain its full sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights.

As we await the Middle East peace conference this autumn, we look forward to a comprehensive, balanced and fair management of the peace process as well as to putting an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in all spheres, this being based upon the engagement of all concerned parties in serious negotiations founded on the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions as well as on the rules of international; legitimacy in general. This should all be in accordance with a clearly defined timetable on the necessary steps and procedures to reach a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the region.

Mr. President,

We look with satisfaction at the important role being played by the United Nations in the restoration of security and stability in Lebanon. Part of this role is the mandating of the Organization to put pressure on Israel to fulfill its legal obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, including its full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, a cessation of its frequent violations of Lebanon's air space and aggression against Lebanese territory, withdrawal from the Shabaa Farms area and the village of al-Ghajar and the handing over of detailed maps and coordinates of landmines and cluster bombs target in south Lebanon.

We reaffirm our support for the reconstruction efforts and for the stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon as well as for the authority of its constitutional bodies.

In this respect, the United Arab Emirates has undertaken a number of reconstruction projects in Lebanon and has provided humanitarian assistance for its sisterly people. The UAE collaborates closely with the efforts being undertaken by the Lebanese Government and the United Nations to remove mines and ordnance, this work having originally commenced as part of an initiative taken by the United Arab Emirates in 2001, when my Government provided initial funding of US \$ 50 million.

Mr. President,

We welcome the Peace Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sudan on the deployment of a hybrid African Union and United Nations peacekeeping force in the Sudanese region of Darfur. We call upon all regional and international parties to commit themselves to protecting Sudan's national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We also would like to express our satisfaction at the holding of the two rounds of talks between the UN and Morocco as part of attempts to reach a settlement of the Western Sahara issue, and declare our full support for the UN's plans for Somalia, Afghanistan, Kosovo and other areas of crisis.

Mr. President,

Having followed the progress of and challenges to the current international negotiations on comprehensive nuclear disarmament, in particular the preparatory meetings for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, we stress that collective regional and international security requires that there should be a universal, fair and balanced international policy that guarantees the universal compliance of all states with the Global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime and requires states possessing nuclear weapons to live up to their obligations to dismantle their weapons of mass destruction, WMD. This, at the same time, must safeguard the inalienable right of all nations, developing nations in particular, to seek and acquire nuclear power in accordance with the system of safeguards laid down by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In this regard, the United Arab Emirates welcomes the recent agreement between the IAEA and Iran on a fixed time schedule for IAEA inspectors to solve the outstanding issues concerning Iran's nuclear programme. We hope that talks among all concerned parties will eventually lead to a permanent peaceful solution that will spare the region from further tensions and encounters and will help to assure countries in the region that they will not be faced with any threats to security or to their environment.

We reaffirm our belief that Israel should not be excluded from the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons, as its possession of such weapons poses a danger to the whole region.

Mr. President,

The United Arab Emirates works with both regional and international efforts to fight all forms of terrorism, including associated money laundering, in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its affiliated bodies.

We also reaffirm our support for all efforts to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations and inter-faith tolerance. These, we believe, can make a significant contribution to the promotion of global security and peace.

Mr. President,

Based on our belief in the significance of global multi-lateralism and of the UN's vital role, we continue our support for the efforts aimed at the reform of the organization and

to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its major organs, in particular the General Assembly and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as well as the Security Council whose structure of geographical representation needs to be reformed, in particular in terms of the representation of developing countries.

Mr. President,

The United Arab Emirates plays a role in helping to find solutions to a number of regional and international issues, in Asia and Africa, in particular, through its provision of over US \$ 70 billion in loans, grants and assistance for development projects in over 95 countries. This programme seeks to promote a culture of peace and stability to help people to achieve their aspirations for prosperity, as well as to tackle the challenges facing the process of development.

In keeping with that approach, the United Arab Emirates has created a number of humanitarian and development foundations and institutions, including the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Zayed Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, the Khalifa bin Zayed Foundation for Charitable Work and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charity and Humanitarian Establishment. The latter has recently launched the "Dubai Cares" charity campaign, a fundraising drive to provide, in its first stage, primary education for more than a million children across the world, especially in Asia and Africa.

Earlier this year, we launched the United Arab Emirates Government Strategy which is the first binding business process re-engineering programme for governmental performance. It has its core focus on ensuring countrywide sustainable development and a high quality of life for the population, in line with the United Nations' efforts to promote human development.

Since 1971, we have managed to achieve economic, social and cultural development which has helped to provide stability and prosperity for the citizens of the United Arab Emirates and to provide opportunities for employment, investment and trade for millions of people. We have also succeeded in diversifying our sources of national income to a point where oil and gas revenues make up less than one third of our Gross National Product

We have sought to raise our healthcare and education to the best global levels and to develop our human resources and provide them with technological qualifications so that they may rise to the challenges of the modern age. We have sought, as well, to move from the concept of social care to the concept of comprehensive social development.

Concurrently, we launched an interim political reform plan in the first phase of which half of the members of the Federal National Council (the UAE's parliamentary body) were elected through electoral colleges, this being a significant step towards achieving wider popular political participation, giving an impetus to the role of citizens in decision-making as well enabling them to express, with full freedom and transparency, their opinions on issues related to their own lives and on social and economic programmes.

In this context, I should make reference to the significant advances that have been made by the women of the United Arab Emirates, two of whom sit in the Council of Ministers while women hold around a quarter of the seats in the Federal National Council. They are also represented in the judiciary, with others being found in senior leadership positions throughout the decision-making process.

Implementing at a domestic level its approach to regional and international co-operation, the United Arab Emirates has enacted laws to counter terrorist crimes and money laundering and has frozen suspect bank accounts.

It has also enacted laws on issues such as human trafficking and international judicial co-operation in criminal matters, and on the import and export control procedures for a range of commodities.

Science, Knowledge and Education are the foundations for the progress of nations and the cornerstones in the process of building human civilizations. With this in mind and as part of its desire to promote relations with other cultures and civilizations, the United Arab Emirates has launched a number of initiatives including the US \$ 2 million Sheikh Zayed Book Award, designed to recognise, celebrate and motivate outstanding writers and intellectuals for contributions to the Arab culture and humanities.

As part of our efforts to bring the experience of the world's most prestigious universities to the United Arab Emirates, we have recently launched the Sorbonne Abu Dhabi University and have inaugurated the Emirates Foundation to raise our educational, technological, intellectual and research resources to the highest global levels.

Further underlining our belief in the significance of cultural communication among peoples of the world for the preservation of the historic heritage of human civilization, we have decided to construct two world-class satellite museums in the United Arab Emirates, the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Mr. President,

The United Arab Emirates prides itself on being home for people of all religions, cultures and countries from all continents. Indeed, the number of countries exceeds the total

membership of the United Nations. The coexistence in our country of this rich and wide spectrum of races, faiths and cultures should serve as an example of harmony for the modern world.

As part of its compliance with obligations under the international treaties on human rights and labour, the United Arab Emirates has enacted legislation to regulate the hiring, entry, residence and work of expatriate labour on its territory as well as to protect their full rights in accordance with the relevant national and international laws. I affirm here that the concerned authorities in the United Arab Emirates are determined that these laws shall be fully implemented so as to protect workers and provide them with the best working and living conditions.

Mr. President,

Finally, I hope that our deliberations on the urgent international issues on the agenda of the current Sixty-second Session of the United Nations General Assembly will continue in a spirit of solidarity and take constructive and positive steps that will eventually lead to the achievement of our aspirations for peace, development and prosperity for our world in the 21st century.

Thank You