

**Tunisia's Address to the
65th session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations**

**delivered by H.E Mr. Kamel Morjane
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In the Name of God, the Clement, the Merciful,

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, first of all, to express to you and to the friendly Swiss Confederation my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly, wishing you all success in your noble mission.

We are convinced that your large experience in the political and diplomatic fields will provide best conditions of success for this session and enrich its contents. This will help achieve the objectives and aspirations we all cherish, especially as regards the main issue of the general debate: "Reaffirming the Central Role of the United Nations in Global Governance".

I take this opportunity to renew my congratulations to Dr. Abdessalam Triki and to sisterly Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for his valuable efforts as President of the 64th session of the General Assembly, and for his deep conversance with international affairs, and his wise approach in dealing with crucial, complex and delicate issues, serving the interests of our peoples and nations, and enhancing the role of the General Assembly in international relations.

I also wish to express my great consideration to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, for the commendable efforts he exerts, at the head of the UN Secretariat General, to further enhance the position of our prestigious organization and promote its performance, so that it can meet the many challenges posed on the international scene. In this context, Tunisia reaffirms its support to all the efforts exerted by the Secretary General, and by United Nations in general, to promote peace, stability, security and development in all countries of the world.

On the other hand, Tunisia highly values the important historic step made during the previous session in the process of reforming the United Nations. This step consists in the adoption of Resolution 289/64, which reaffirms the importance we all attach to the development of the UN system and the promotion of complementarity between UN activities and programs, especially those pertaining to women, through establishing a new unified entity to be in charge of all issues related to gender equality and women empowerment.

Under the leadership of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia attaches a crucial importance to these issues. Women, in fact, have a strategic role in our civilizational project, and are considered as a partner in setting all our national choices. Tunisia strongly believes that democracy cannot be built and comprehensive development cannot be achieved without an active involvement of women in public life, and that promoting society to higher levels depends on enhancing the conditions of women in all fields. This conviction stems from our vision of human rights in their comprehensiveness, indissociability and complementarity.

The prestigious status Tunisian women enjoy today is confirmed by the figures and indicators pertaining to human development and to women's involvement in all fields. They now represent 30% of the country's working population. They hold 30% of decision-making and responsibility positions. They represent 33% in the judicial corps (judges and lawyers), and 42% in the medical corps. In higher education, girls account for 60% of the total number of students.

In the legislative branch, women's presence has been reinforced to reach 30% in the Chamber of Deputies and 16% in the Chamber of Advisors.

It is indeed a source of pride for Tunisia to be ranked first internationally in terms of fighting violence against women and guaranteeing their right to free movement and ownership, to be ranked first in the Arab world in terms of offering women opportunities of economic participation, and to be ranked first in Africa in terms of women's per capita income.

The Tunisian presidency of the Arab Women Organization, in the person of Tunisia's First Lady, falls in line with this approach. Mrs. Leila Ben Ali has, in fact, endeavored to spread the culture of gender equality, to further promote the conditions of women in Arab societies, to allow them to enjoy their rights and accomplish their duties, and to preserve their dignity. All this, in fact, constitutes a civilizational and strategic stake and an integral part of the concept of Arab national security and human security in all its dimensions.

As part of the pioneering initiatives and various activities of the Arab women Organization, Tunisia will host, next month, the third AWO Conference on the theme of « The Arab Woman, a partner in sustainable development ».

Mr. President,

Since the Change of November 7, 1987, Tunisia has adopted a comprehensive and balanced development policy based on the indissociability of the economic and social dimensions, a policy that reconciles between the requirements of an economy based on the principles of profitability and efficiency, and an equitable social policy in which there is no room for exclusion and marginalization, guaranteeing decent life for all citizens.

The Electoral Program of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali « *Together We Meet Challenges* » for the 2009-2014 term of office, and the five-year Development Plan for the period 2010-2014, have both materialized these choices, reflecting a determination to further enhance the process of democracy and pluralism, to promote political life in Tunisia towards further modernity and continuous reform, and to launch a new process of development based on the economy of knowledge and intelligence.

As part of this ambitious, future-oriented plan, Tunisia has attached a crucial importance to youth as the pillar of the present and the builder of the future, through regularly organizing national youth consultations so as to explore the concerns, expectations and views of young people. The results of these consultations are taken into consideration in preparing development plans. Furthermore, Tunisia proclaimed 2008 a year of Comprehensive Dialogue with Youth. This event, which witnessed a massive participation on the part of different youth categories, was crowned with the adoption of a Youth Pact signed by all the concerned national organizations and an elite of Tunisian youth.

Keen on consecrating this policy at the international level and on involving the world community in supporting it, our country launched, during the previous session of the General Assembly, an initiative for proclaiming 2010 an International Year of Youth, which would consolidate the position of youth in all societies of the world, youth being in the forefront of the forces of progress embracing noble universal values.

In this context, Tunisia expresses its deep pride vis-à-vis the member States' unanimous support to this initiative which was adopted by the General Assembly in its previous session. Tunisia also takes pride in the fact that the Secretary General has chaired, in person, the launch of the festivities celebrating the International Year of Youth on August 12, 2010, at the headquarters of the United Nations, in the presence of hundreds of representatives of the world's youth. On this occasion, Tunisia calls on all governments, international and regional organizations, and youth institutions, to establish adequate plans of action, programs and activities to celebrate the International Year of Youth in a way that materializes its motto calling for "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", and leads to the adoption of an International Pact to serve as a tie that would bind the world's youth to the common universal values.

I take this opportunity to express Tunisia's consideration for the initiatives of Turkey, Singapore and Mexico to organize important international youth events last August.

I also would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the international community for having unanimously elected Tunisia as vice-president of the World Youth Conference held in Leon, Mexico, under the motto « Youth of Next Millennium ».

Mr. President,

All along its contemporary history, Tunisia has remained committed to the principles and values of peaceful coexistence, good neighborhood, fraternity and mutual support. It has tirelessly endeavored to promote relations of fraternity, friendship and cooperation with all peace-loving countries, and has invariably advocated peace, security and justice in the world.

Since the Change of November 1987, Tunisia has accorded a particular attention to the promotion of the relations of fraternity and cooperation with Arab Maghreb countries, based on its strong belief in the unity of destiny and the inevitability of Maghreb integration. While reaffirming its adherence to the Arab Maghreb Union as an historic gain and an irrevocable strategic choice, Tunisia is committed to pursue efforts, jointly with sisterly Maghreb countries, so as to materialize the aspirations of Maghreb peoples for complementarity, integration and solidarity. This commitment stems from a deep common civilisational, historic and geographic belonging, and is imposed by the successive economic fluctuations and the deep and ever-accelerating changes taking place in our world today in all political, social and cultural fields.

At the Arab level, and based on its belief in the need to establish true channels of inter-Arab solidarity and complementarity, Tunisia will firmly pursue its efforts to promote joint Arab action and establish solid foundations for an efficient inter-Arab economic complementarity.

Tunisia has continuously played an efficient role in dealing with Arab causes, in the forefront of which the Palestinian Cause, through its firm and unwavering position supporting the brotherly Palestinian people at all stages of their legitimate struggle, and calling for finding a fair, durable and comprehensive solution that can put an end to the suffering of Palestinians brothers, and allow them to recover their legitimate national rights and establish their independent state on their land.

In this context, Tunisia expresses its deep concern vis-à-vis the situation in the Middle-East, as a result of Israel's disrespect for international legality and for the basic references of the peace process, and its persistence in the policy of settlement and in its attempts to obliterate the Arab-Muslim identity of the city of *Al-Quds Al-Sharif*. Tunisia expresses its hope that the resumption of direct peace talks, launched on September 2nd in Washington under the sponsorship of the United States, will meet the legitimate aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people. We also call on all the influential parties on the international scene, particularly the Quartet, to act for bringing Israel to adhere to the requirements of peace, on the basis of international legality, the references of the peace process, and the Arab Peace Initiative, and in accordance with a specific time schedule that covers all the relevant main points.

Tunisia also reiterates its call for putting an end to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in accordance with international legality, so that all the peoples of the region can enjoy security and peace, and devote their efforts to construction and development for a better future.

On the other hand, Tunisia hopes that the efforts exerted will promote peace and security in Iraq, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia, within a climate of unity and national harmony.

Mr. President,

Tunisia attaches a particular importance to its African belonging, based on its belief in the importance of its integration in its geographic environment and the expansion of the fields of cooperation and solidarity with sisterly African countries. Since the November 7th Change, our country has endeavored to materialize this policy, by reaffirming its commitment to the principles of the African Union, and continuously supporting all initiatives aimed at promoting the Continent, achieving development for its peoples, and preserving its potentialities, within a climate of security and stability.

Tunisia has, in fact, spared no effort to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the African continent, through participating in UN peace-keeping operations, supporting conflict prevention mechanisms, and continuously acting for the eradication of hotbeds of tension. Moreover, our country has continuously called on African countries to play an active role and find adequate solutions to their problems, through activating the central organ of the mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts, the first regional experience in terms of preventive diplomacy, then through the African Peace and Security Council which has helped re-establish stability in a number of sisterly African countries.

On this occasion, we reaffirm Tunisia's support to all the efforts of the African Union which has proclaimed 2010 a Year of Peace and Security in Africa, so that peace and stability would reign all over the Continent, which is a responsibility incumbent upon the international community as a whole.

In line with these principles and with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Tunisia calls on developed nations to act promptly so as to meet the needs of the African Continent and of developing countries in general, through activating the existing international and regional mechanisms to ensure decent living to African peoples. I take this opportunity to stress the need to activate the World Solidarity Fund, whose creation was decided by the General Assembly in 2002 upon Tunisia's initiative, to serve as one of the efficient international mechanisms for sustainable development, capable of achieving the MDGs, particularly the goal of reducing by half the poverty rate by the year 2015.

At the Euro-Mediterranean level, Europe currently constitutes an essential partner of Tunisia in various fields. Our country, in fact, has time-honored historic relations with this space. Yet, we consider that the process of these relations still needs to be further enhanced and developed, through an equitable, solidarity-based partnership that rests on mutual respect and falls in line with our strategic and civilizational choices in terms of political reform, economic, social and cultural development. This will strengthen the ties of cooperation and solidarity, and help reduce disparities among the countries and peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean.

It is based on these principles that Tunisia supported the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean, a promising initiative that can create a new dynamic in Euro-Mediterranean relations, promote a positive interaction with the challenges of the coming stage, and enhance security and stability in our Mediterranean region.

Mr. President,

Tunisia is endeavoring to positively interact with the huge changes occurring on the international scene, through developing the mechanisms of consultation and cooperation with all American and Asian countries. Our country also attaches considerable importance to the promotion of its relations with large regional blocs in the American and Asian continents, so as to enrich cooperation and explore new fields for a strong partnership that serves mutual interests. In this context, Tunisia will host, at the end of this year, the Japan-Arab Economic Forum. It will also host, in 2012, the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum. Tunisia is also keen on promoting rapprochement with south-American countries, within an Arab or African framework.

Mr. President,

The values of mutual support and solidarity, which constitute the pillar of our country's policy and orientations, and have now become a deeply-anchored tradition in our society, impose the need to provide the necessary immediate assistance to the countries stricken by natural disasters which cause thousands of deaths in many countries of the world. Tunisia has promptly responded to the urgent calls by the Secretary General to help disaster-stricken countries, like Pakistan which was recently ravaged by floods, and Haiti which, early this year, was hit by a devastating earthquake in which Tunisia and the United Nations lost one of their eminent diplomats, known for his high competence and generous devotion, the late Hédi Annabi, head of the UN mission in Haiti.

Mr. President,

Today, the world urgently needs to adopt an efficient policy for the protection of the environment, so as to spare humanity the adverse consequences of climate change which, during the past three decades,

caused the international community huge economic losses. You are certainly aware that climate change has its serious impact on stability in many countries, given the many problems caused especially by global warming, drought and floods, and the resulting degradation of harvests and scarcity of water resources.

Once again, Tunisia underlines the need to accelerate the pace of international talks on climate change, while giving priority to human interests over economic benefits, so as to reach an agreement that guarantees that a minimum of measures will be taken to meet the huge challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the developing and the least developed countries. On the other hand, Tunisia calls for establishing a decisive program of intervention to help remedy the effects of climate change and the problems it causes in terms of ecosystems, farming policies, and international food security in general.

In this context, Tunisia reiterates its support to the African position and underlines the importance of helping African countries to face the effects of climate change. On the other hand, Tunisia commends the attention granted by Japan and Korea to this issue.

We hope the forthcoming Mexico Summit will come out with positive results that can help achieve the sought objectives in this vital and crucial field.

Mr. President,

The present session has devoted a large part of its agenda to the evaluation of our countries' achievements as regards the implementation of the MDGs, five years before 2015. Implementing these goals and meeting the challenges resulting from the new world order and the deep changes it has generated, require that we step up action so as to embody the principles of the United Nations Charter in international relations, and to anchor the culture of dialogue and the values of tolerance, civilizational communication and solidarity among peoples.

On this occasion, Tunisia reaffirms its determination to continue actively contributing to joint international action to find adequate, fair and durable solutions to current problems, through joining all efforts based on dialogue, mutual respect, consensus and mutual support within the framework of the United Nations. This organization, in fact, constitutes the ideal framework for international action to promote security, peace and stability in the world, so that our peoples can devote all their efforts and capacities for comprehensive and sustainable development and for materializing their legitimate aspirations for prosperity and decent living.

Notwithstanding its complexity and intricacy, the current international situation can only strengthen our adherence to the United Nations and to its founding principles, and bolster our determination to reaffirm its central role in meeting challenges and to confer more efficiency on its activities and programs, given the pivotal role of the United Nations in terms of global governance. In this regard, Tunisia hopes that the largest possible consensus will be reached among member States for introducing the necessary reforms into the United Nations system, especially as regards the composition of the Security Council and the conferring of more transparency and efficiency on the performance of this organization. This in addition to further enhancing the role of the General Assembly, which includes all the member States, and that of the Economic and Social Council.

To conclude, I once again wish all success to this session which, we hope, will come out with constructive recommendations that serve all the peoples of the world, promote peace and stability, offer wider prospects for progress and prosperity, and help meet challenges with confidence and capability.

Thank you for your attention.