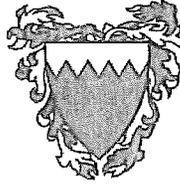


*Permanent Mission of the
Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN
New York*

البعثة الدائمة لمملكة البحرين
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك



STATEMENT

By

*H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain*

*before the
Sixty-Eighth Session of the United Nations
General Assembly*

New York

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Your Excellency John William Ashe, President of the General Assembly

Your Excellency, Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Heads of Delegations,

It gives me great pleasure, at the outset, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over the 68th session of the General Assembly and, by the same token, to pay tribute to your friendly country, Antigua and Barbuda. I am confident that your vast diplomatic experience, with which I am personally familiar, and your thorough knowledge of international affairs augur well for the success and good conduct of the business of the present session. Further, I want to express gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for his skillful and judicious management of the 67th session of the General Assembly. I would like also to strongly commend the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his efforts to reinforce the United Nations and uphold its principles, notwithstanding formidable and increasing challenges it faces. We pledge our full support to him in his endeavors to enhance the role of the Organization and its peace building capacities in the face of such major challenges.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the people and government of Pakistan for the loss of hundreds of lives as a result of the earthquake that hit south-west Pakistan. We pray for their souls and extend our sympathy to their families. We condemn the terrorist act that targeted a commercial centre in Nairobi and the scores of innocent victims who lost their lives as a result of this act of cowardice.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain firmly believes that it is imperative to link peace to development. This concept has been acknowledged in all United Nations bodies for many decades, and must now be enhanced and activated at all levels. This is the reason why the Kingdom of Bahrain works to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 as a top priority of its development plans. We note that the Report of the Secretary-General to this session puts before us an accurate portrait of global problems in all their complexity. This requires efficient solutions to such problems, all the more so given that we are at the doorstep of the 2015 deadline. We therefore believe, Mr. President, that your choice of the theme of this session to be the post-2015 development agenda is most judicious, and calls for collective efforts to attain these desired goals in line with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Eminent Persons so as to guarantee the sustainability of development. It implies also the existence of a monitoring mechanism to follow up, under the auspices of ECOSOC, on all recommendations issued by sustainable development related conferences for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain is located in the Arabian Gulf, a region of vital strategic importance, which has been at the confluence of world civilizations since times immemorial. Today, the countries of the region live through one of the most prosperous epochs as they build a society based on progress and development with all their political, economic and, social and cultural dimensions. The region occupies advanced positions in the rank of nations by human development standards as reflected in successive UNDP annual reports. In this respect, we reaffirm our keen interest in following a pattern of orderly advancement towards progress and development for the benefit of the peoples of our region, making use in the process of the formidable progress in information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as other issues pertaining to security, environment, natural resources and population. As an integral part of the world, our region seeks to consolidate a new concept of regional security emphasizing the geo-political dimension of the region and taking into account security as it relates to humanitarian needs, food, water and the existing coalitions linking it to friendly countries through a number of strategic and historic agreements putting emphasis on human security, food security, and water security, aimed at reinforcing stability, enhancing dialogue and promoting the culture of peace, friendship and mutual respect.

Mr. President,

We in the Kingdom of Bahrain and GCC countries, base our actions on three important strategic pillars for interacting among ourselves, enhancing our progress, building healthy and sustainable relations with our neighbors, our engagement with the world at large and our response to all developments and challenges.

These three pillars are the axis of today's global politics in a world characterized by globalization and fruitful cooperation between the nations of the world. We therefore believe that the first pillar is that of regional partnership, among ourselves and with our world partners, in the field of security. Indeed, we in the GCC system work in unison to preserve our common stability and security within the framework of coordination, cooperation and complementarity leading to the desired unity. Our partnerships extend out across our Arab and Islamic world. Here in the United Nations, we continue to pursue this partnership for the maintenance of world peace and security and to find political and economic solutions to many of the global problems within the framework of a multilateral cooperation that encompasses other strategic partnerships through dialogue with political powers and economic groupings such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the Russian Federation, China, Japan, India, and ASEAN member states, with a view to playing an active role in consolidating the principles of international cooperation and friendly relations between nations.

In this context, we are keen to reach our principal goal of sparing humanity from the scourges of war, conflicts and disasters. We therefore call for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region and compliance with the criteria and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy

Agency, especially as regards nuclear safety. From this perspective, we support the efforts of the P5+1 group with the Islamic Republic of Iran to reach a swift solution to the Iranian nuclear program issue in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons, while guaranteeing the right guaranteed to all states for the enjoyment of the fruits of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. We reiterate here the necessity of convening the international conference on establishing a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East which had initially been foreseen to be held in 2012 in accordance with the resolution of **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference of May 2010**.

Consistent with the principles and objectives we all endeavor to uphold in the context of our cooperation with the United Nations to enhance stability in sensitive regions, we reaffirm our utter rejection of terrorism, extremism and violence in all their manifestations and forms, irrespective of their reasons, justifications or sources, along with our condemnation of all terrorist acts threatening regional peace and stability, noting the need to inscribe organizations such as the Lebanese Hezbollah on the international list of terrorist organizations in view of their criminal terrorist acts aimed at terrorizing peaceful civilians and generating instability and chaos.

Mr. President,

We are committed to seeking peace, cooperation and security for our countries, within the framework of both international and regional organizational structures, by cooperating with our allies from other friendly countries of the world to ensure the freedom of maritime navigation in the Arabian Gulf and protect commercial vessels from piracy off the coast of Somalia, in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden. We also contribute to peace keeping and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan.

We stand side by side with the Arab Republic of Egypt and support it in its efforts to achieve stability and security and to rightfully defend its vital interests and implement the road map leading it to safety and proposing clear steps to realize the aspirations of the Egyptian people and restore its leading role in the Middle East region.

We also reiterate our principled position of unwavering solidarity with the sisterly Kingdom of Morocco as regards its territorial integrity and the solution of the Western Sahara problem in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

The second pillar is upholding the principles of good neighborliness, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, abiding by international law and its instruments, and peaceful coexistence. We are keen at the same time to benefit from any opportunity offered to put these principles into practice in our response to the challenges confronting us and their transformation into opportunities to protect the region from tensions, threats and instability. The first among these challenges is the need to put an end to Iranian intervention in the internal affairs

of the countries of the region and its occupation of the three Emirates' islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa and to heed the repeated calls of the United Arab Emirates for a just solution to this question either through serious direct negotiations between the two countries or by referral; to the International Court of Justice for arbitration in conformity with the UN Charter and the provisions of international law. As we face this challenge, we look forward to a new language, a positive discourse and tangible initiatives from the Islamic Republic of Iran, capable of ending tensions and instability in the region and contributing to confidence building, cooperation and the establishment of friendly relations based on good neighborliness and mutual interests.

The second challenge, Mr. President, concerns the Palestinian question, and the need to reach a just, permanent and comprehensive solution that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people. To face this challenge, we have the benefit of an important opportunity: the Arab Peace Initiative launched by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn AbdulAziz, and endorsed by the Arab Summit in Beirut in 2002. We still adhere to that initiative as an important opportunity for peace, security and a bright future for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the basis of coexistence, cooperation and good neighborliness between the Arab states and Israel. We look forward to transcending wars and animosity. Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived for centuries side by side in this region and made its common history in a framework of coexistence and tolerance, based on mutual respect for each other's beliefs, culture and religion.

The Arab Peace Initiative stipulates that the Palestinian people should obtain all their legitimate rights as is the case of all other peoples of the world. It reaches out to the Israeli people with guarantees of security designed to reassure it against any threat or danger on its existence. It is in this context that we affirm our full support to H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas in his sincere endeavor to realize the aspirations of his people. He is one of the best leaders ever produced by Palestine, and deserves our support in each step he undertakes toward the attainment of the desired peace.

Today, we reaffirm our support for the tireless and sincere efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry to resume the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples with the intention of reaching a permanent solution on the basis of international legitimacy, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the creation, within the 1967 borders, of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and any agreed swaps between the two parties. We look forward to a halt to the oppression of Palestinians, the lifting of the blockade of Gaza and an end to the building of settlements so as to provide an environment conducive to the success of these good offices. We welcome the position taken by the European Union by refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of Israeli settlements that occupies Palestinian territory and suspending any transaction with them.

Mr. President,

The third pillar is the need to realize the aspirations of our peoples. Foremost among these is raising the standards of living, peace and security, respect for human rights through pluralism, democracy and participation of all in a continued dialogue that takes into account the cultural values of the society and the stages of political, economic, social and cultural developments of its peoples.

Mr. President,

Throughout the modern history of the Kingdom of Bahrain, going back two centuries, its leadership always been keen to interact with its people and engage in a dialogue with them in full transparency and commitment. Ever since His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa assumed the leadership of the country, the Kingdom has pursued its firm policy of laying down the foundations of the modern sovereign state based on sustainability, competitiveness, justice, constitutional and legislative reforms encompassing all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life as well as human rights and the enhancement of the role of women in building a society faithful to its values and heritage. His Majesty's achievements have been realized thanks to good governance and His Majesty's support to intellectual efforts and political and organizational visions for the construction of a state of institutions that provides equal opportunities to the talents and creativity of all its citizens as they seek to play their role as active citizens of the contemporary world. All this has immunized our country against any sectarian tensions and conflicts witnessed in many other countries, notwithstanding the acts of violence perpetrated on our country by some extremist and terrorist groups targeting security officers, residents and expatriates with the intention of spreading terror and discord and sabotaging the national economy and development efforts. Such acts are being dealt with in conformity with the law and justice system.

Convinced that Bahraini citizens have a role to play in the building and development of their society, we seek to cooperate closely with national and international civil society organizations in an ongoing dialogue based on exchange of experiences and opinions and in a spirit of cooperation, not confrontation. For we are all parties to the same cause in which we all believe, namely, support to and protection of human rights. In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved concrete results in the field of enhancing human rights, notably the establishment of the Commission of Prisoners and Detainees, the establishment of the National Fund to compensate those affected by events, the establishment of a general secretariat for grievances within the Ministry of Interior operating as an autonomous body within the laws of the country, and the professional standards of police activities as stipulated in the police code of conduct.

It is in this spirit that H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa took the historic initiative of proposing the creation of an Arab Human Rights Court, a proposal that was endorsed by the Arab Summit Meeting held in Qatar in March 2013 in response to the aspirations of the Arab peoples. This constitutes a qualitative stride in the region and comes as a confirmation of the rule of law and the similar practices in other parts of the world. For the first time in modern Arab history, this court will lay down firm basis for the protection of human rights in the Arab world.

Mr. President,

In response to the aspirations of the Arab peoples, the GCC countries have spared no effort to achieve peace and security, and to restore stability in some Arab countries facing serious challenges of late. In this respect, the GCC initiative led to the national consensus dialogue in Yemen towards a peaceful settlement to the crisis, in line with the aspirations and expectations of the Yemeni people to achieve security and stability in their land.

Desirous of seeing stability restored in the Syrian Arab Republic, and cognizant of the right of the Syrian people to choose their own political system, the GCC countries welcome diplomatic steps towards destroying the Syrian chemical arsenal, the agreement reached by the United States and Russia, as well as Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) of September 27, 2013, which calls on all parties concerned to take serious and concrete steps to address the Syrian crisis and its repercussions (with particular emphasis operative paragraphs 16 and 17) related to the transitional period and implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. All this should be complemented by an integrated political process towards realizing the aspirations of the Syrian people for democracy and political pluralism. We invite the United Nations and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities by taking the appropriate deterrent measures to halt the serious violations of human rights to which the Syrian people are subjected to and to put an end to the crime of genocide perpetrated by all kinds of lethal weapons that have so far claimed more than a hundred thousand martyrs and injured, as well as causing millions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Mr. President,

I do not want to take more of your time, consistent with its international responsibilities, the Kingdom of Bahrain is keen to play, in all honesty and sincerity, an active role in achieving international cooperation and strategic partnerships with the international community. Bahrain looks forward to a better and brighter tomorrow in which individual dignity and fundamental freedoms of a human being are a reality, and their legitimate rights protected. Bahrain rejects conflicts and wars and is keen on maintaining friendly relations with all countries of the world, within the framework of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs as stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. President.

