



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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As delivered

Address by

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Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The General Debate of the Sixty-eighth Session
The United Nations General Assembly

New York, 27 September 2013

Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election as the President of the United Nations General Assembly. It is a fitting recognition of your distinguished career.

I also commend Mr. Vuk Jeremic, for his outstanding leadership of the General Assembly in the past one year.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has led the organization ably and wisely. We were glad to receive him in Pakistan in mid-August, as our honored guest on the anniversary of the Independence Day of Pakistan.

Mr. President,

I stand here today before this Assembly, soon after my country has seen a new dawn.

I come before this house in all humility, as the elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, for the third time. I feel exonerated, as my supporters and I stood firm in our struggle for democracy.

I am happy to inform the distinguished delegates that we now have a strong Parliament, an independent judiciary, a free media and a vibrant civil society.

But there is no room for complacency. We cannot lower our guard. Democracy needs constant vigilance and strong institutions. It needs careful nurturing. Most importantly, it is not promises, but good governance that sustains democracy.

My Government has put people at the centre. We will work to give them peace and security, an environment of growth and development. I am pursuing an inclusive approach for the entire nation.

Mr. President,

Pakistan is an ardent supporter of the United Nations, which is an anchor of peace and a beacon of hope for all nations.

The United Nations' universal character provides a forum to discuss, evolve and implement global responses to pressing problems of our times.

Pakistan upholds international law and promotes international consensus.

The security of our world is assured and reinforced by friendly relations between nations and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

The United Nations needs reform. But it should be a reform that reflects the interests of all; not the ambitions of a few.

We believe that the Security Council's composition should be made more representative, democratic and equitable; and its work more effective, transparent and accountable. The intended reforms must however plan for a dynamic future, not entrench or replicate outdated historical patterns, based on privileges.

The role and authority of the General Assembly must be fully restored and revitalized. In the past few years, the General Assembly has regained influence in responding to challenges in regard to peace and security, development and climate change. It is becoming a platform of choice. Yet, it has to go a long way to acquire its full authority.

Mr. President,

To save the world from the scourge of war, we have to continue to strive for a fair and just international order, based on rule of law. Festering disputes must be resolved. In this regard, the United Nations has to play a critical role.

The United Nations must continue to remain attentive to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and the full realization of the right to self-determination of its people. The suffering of the people cannot be brushed under the carpet, because of power politics.

As in the past, Pakistan calls upon the international community to give an opportunity to the Kashmiris to decide their future peacefully, in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The issue of Jammu and Kashmir was presented to the Security Council in January 1948; and yet the issue remains unresolved after nearly seven decades.

I have an aspiration for regional peace and stability. I have shared this vision with leaders in our neighborhood. Shortly after assuming office, I received a message of goodwill from the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. I extended an

invitation to him to engage with us to address all outstanding issues between our two countries. Prime Minister Singh's response was positive.

Our two countries have wasted massive resources in an arms race. We could have used those resources for the economic well-being of our people. We still have that opportunity. Pakistan and India can prosper together; and the entire region would benefit from our cooperation.

We stand ready to re-engage with India in a substantive and purposeful dialogue.

I am looking forward to meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here in New York to make a new beginning. We have a solid basis to do that. We can build on the Lahore Accord signed in 1999, which contained a road map for the resolution of our differences through peaceful negotiations. I am committed to working for a peaceful and economically prosperous region. This is what our people want and this is what I have long aspired for.

Mr. President,

It gave me great pleasure to welcome President Karzai in Islamabad last month. We reaffirmed our shared goal of a peaceful, stable and united Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan are and should remain masters of their own destiny. We support an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, leading to national reconciliation.

I reassured President Karzai that we do not wish to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs; nor do we have any favorites in that country. In fact, we have an earnest hope that the Afghans themselves will unite for peace, prosperity and development of their great country.

Pakistan encourages United Nations' efforts for the stabilization of Afghanistan. We will work together with Afghanistan for regional and economic cooperation that would establish and reinforce regional trade, energy and communications corridors.

A manifestation of our solidarity with the Afghan people has been our willingness to host millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan for many decades. International support for their repatriation as well as reintegration in Afghanistan is indispensable.

We also look forward to UN support in addressing other trans-regional challenges, including the flow of narcotics.

Mr. President,

Last year, Palestine was given the status of non-member observer state by this Assembly. We hope that soon Palestine will join this body as a full member state. We are glad that the stalled peace process has started again. It should lead to the consolidation of an independent, viable and contiguous state of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital. Pakistan will continue to demonstrate its solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Mr. President,

Even as we meet here, Syria is in turmoil, with Syrians killing Syrians. We appeal to the Syrian Government and opposition groups to move to the negotiating table in Geneva to prepare a road map for national reconciliation and the necessary political transitions. More war will lead to more killings that need to be stopped.

As party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Pakistan remains opposed to the use of chemical weapons. We condemn its use in the strongest terms.

We welcome the agreement reached between the United States and Russia, and supported by other permanent members of the Security Council, to secure and destroy chemical weapons in Syria. This crucial step has facilitated consensus within the Council to adopt a resolution, which will not only address the issue of chemical weapons but start the stalled political process in Syria that would lead to national reconciliation and solutions that are acceptable to the people of Syria. Pakistan will support that resolution. Acceptance of the Geneva One document and a decision on the dates for the convening of the Geneva Two Conference will be a big step in ending the crisis in Syria.

I call on all forces to invest their political will and capital in diplomacy to bring peace to Syria.

Mr. President,

As a responsible nuclear weapon state, we will continue to pursue the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation and adhere to the policy of Credible Minimum

Deterrence, without entering into an arms race. We would not, however, remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics in South Asia, nor would we agree to arrangement that is detrimental to our security and strategic interests. Our position on the proposed Fissile Material Treaty is determined by our national security interests and the objective of strategic stability in South Asia.

Safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy, without discrimination, is essential for economic development. Pakistan qualifies for full access to civil nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, to meet its growing energy needs, for continued economic growth.

By the same token, as a mainstream partner in the global non-proliferation regime, Pakistan has impeccable credentials to join the multilateral export control regime, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Pakistan will continue to participate constructively in the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process, which is a laudable initiative.

Mr. President,

As a country that has suffered grievously for the past many years, we condemn terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations.

In the past twelve years, we have given huge sacrifices, in blood and resources. We have lost 40,000 precious lives of men, women and children, which include 8,000 defense and security personnel. There have been colossal damages to social and physical infrastructure as well. Our economy has been denied the opportunity to grow fully.

This must change now. I have tried to forge national consensus on a cohesive policy to eliminate terrorism from our soil. For that purpose, I convened an all Parties Conference, which spoke unanimously against terrorism.

We are resolved to oppose the forces of terrorism, by all means at our disposal. At the same time, we have offered dialogue to end violence, wean young extremists off extremism, and integrate all segments of our society into the national mainstream.

Winning hearts and minds, particularly of the youth, is as important as using guns to deter terrorism. But dialogue should not be seen as a sign of weakness or a tool of appeasement.

Mr. President,

The war against terrorism must be waged within the framework of international law. The use of armed drones in the border areas of Pakistan is a continued violation of our territorial integrity. It results in casualties of innocent civilians and is detrimental to our resolve and efforts to eliminate extremism and terrorism from Pakistan. I have urged the United States to cease these strikes, so that we could avert further casualties and suffering.

Mr. President,

Terrorism knows no borders. It has no religion or creed, which is why maligning a whole people or a religion on this account, is unfair and unwise.

Islam is a religion of peace, compassion and brotherhood.

And yet most insidious form of contemporary racism in the name of religion is on the rise. Peaceful Muslim communities are profiled and subjected to discriminatory practices. Their faith, culture, holy personalities and scriptures are under attack.

Stereotyping of Muslims as extremists and terrorists must stop. We must all use the influence and reach of the United Nations to avert a clash of civilizations and promote harmony among followers of diverse religions, all around the world.

Terrorism negates Islam's humanistic outlook and noble values. Those who perpetrate terrorism are enemies of Muslims and Islam itself.

Mr. President,

Pakistan is the largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping. Since 1960, we have contributed 150,000 troops. One hundred and thirty five of our peacekeepers have lost their lives in service of peace. This is our most tangible assistance to the United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security.

We fully support the United Nations' effort to finalize and implement a single, coherent post-2015 Development Agenda that identifies benchmarks for poverty alleviation, sustainable development and social inclusion. More importantly, we should prepare ourselves to respond effectively to save our planet from the ravages of climate change.

Mr. President,

Our Government has undertaken an economic revolution in Pakistan so that it too, can become part of the emerging markets. We have all the fundamentals and human and natural resources for such a transformation. In the immediate future, our challenge is to overcome a volatile security environment, correct structural imbalances in the economy and bring an end to energy shortages. We are building a new Pakistan with a robust economy. From the international community, we do not seek aid, but enhanced trade, market access, investment and strong economic partnerships.

We are creating a new framework for change to provide equal opportunities and social justice for everyone, eliminate exploitation of the poor, harness our human resources and restore the dignity of our citizens.

We intend to use education as a key driver of socio-economic development of Pakistan. We are introducing a National Health Service across Pakistan with the participation of private sector. We have also made eradication of polio in Pakistan a matter of great importance for my Government, as we are determined to make Pakistan a polio free country.

It is our strong resolve to promote full participation of women in national development, while protecting their political, social and cultural rights as agents of change. More than 63 percent of our population is under the age of 25. By investing in their education and skills, we aim to tap into this demographic dividend. Minorities are equal citizens of Pakistan. They not only have complete freedom to worship, but also full protection to their rights to education, employment and political participation.

We are deeply saddened by the recent terrorist attack on the members of a minority community in Peshawar. This heinous attack has united the entire Pakistani nation in support of our brothers and sisters of all faith in Pakistan. We share their grief and declared three days of mourning. This attack has been carried out by the same elements who have attacked mosques, shrines, innocent citizens, and members of

our security forces. However, this attack has further strengthened my Government's resolve to deal with terrorism and extremism in a resolute and comprehensive manner, as I had reiterated in my very first speech at the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize to this august Assembly that Pakistan is a strong supporter of multilateral diplomacy, convinced that it is the most legitimate, ultimate guarantor of peace and security, economic and social development, and respect for universal human rights.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Pakistan has been making every effort to strengthen the role of diplomacy to resolve conflicts and to help build states in post-conflict situations. In all instances, we have upheld the primacy of the Charter.

We need multilateral diplomacy so that we continue to respect diversity while reaching decisions that impact our fate as members of the international community. Towards this end, the United Nations – the virtual world parliament – is our best hope.

I thank you, Mr. President.
