



Statement of

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
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Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to join all the previous speakers who have congratulated your Excellency on your election as President of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your experience in international affairs will contribute to the success of this session, and we stand ready to fully support you during your presidency. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, H.E. John Ashe, for his wise leadership of the previous session, and to thank H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and United Nations staff globally, for their continued efforts to promote global peace and security and achieve development and well-being for all peoples of the world.

Mr. President,

We meet today as we do each year to renew our commitment and adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter upon which the United Nations was founded, and to reiterate our firm belief in its objectives, including creating a peaceful and secure world and achieving prosperity and development for all peoples. We believe that these noble objectives can be achieved by playing

an effective and responsible role in regional and international issues through constructive dialogue, positive engagement and peaceful resolution of disputes, and by creating a suitable environment for international relations, based on the principles of good neighborliness, moderation, tolerance and non-violence.

Mr. President,

The UAE expresses its serious concern at the current forms of extremism, terrorism and sectarian divisions in the region, which have become a grave threat to international peace and security. In addition to being a violation of human rights, terrorism threatens the integrity and values of States, undermines their social fabric, destroys their security and development achievements, and erodes their cultural and human heritage. The acts of these terrorist organizations, which include indiscriminate killings, mass executions, kidnappings and intimidation of innocent women and children, are criminal acts, which are strongly condemned by the UAE. The UAE also denounces the brutal methods used by such groups in the name of Islam, as Islam rejects such crimes, which are inconsistent with the moderate approach of Islam and the principles of peaceful coexistence among all people.

With the increased incidence of terrorism and extremism in our region, most notably perpetrated by ISIS, the international community must be aware that the threats posed by these terrorist and extremist groups are expanding beyond our region to threaten the rest of the civilized world. Several countries in the region such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and the States of the African Sahel, are suffering at the hands of terrorist “Takfiri groups”, which have exploited the unstable conditions in these countries and are creating an environment that they believe will guarantee them steady funding, logistical support, training and recruitment. These extremist and terrorist organizations promote an obscurant, exclusive and illicit message, in tandem with brutal acts to impose their control and increase their influence in order to achieve their goals. The current collective action to confront the threat of ISIS, and other terrorist groups, reflects the international community’s common conviction of the necessity to confront this imminent danger. Civilized communities have no other option but to succeed in this test and eliminate this threat.

With regard to Libya, the UAE is concerned about the deteriorating security conditions and their repercussions on the stability of neighboring countries, and strongly opposes the acts committed by the terrorist groups, which have undermined the work of the legitimately elected institutions in Libya. The UAE’s policy towards Libya is to provide full support for the legitimate decisions taken by the Libyan people through their nationally elected House of Representatives. The latest developments in our brother country, Iraq, are increasingly alarming, where ISIS has exploited the sectarian practices of the former government in Iraq to garner support from affected communities in expanding their influence over large parts of the country with extreme brutality. While these

terrorist groups are threatening the sovereignty of Iraq and its social, cultural and religious fabric, they continue to exploit the chaos in Syria to achieve their purposes without any regard to sovereignty or national borders.

In this context, the UAE believes that the current collective action will address the growing threat of extremist fighters in Syria, which has increased in the midst of the violence inflicted by the Syrian regime upon the Syrian people. At this critical juncture, we must support the moderate Syrian opposition as part of an effective strategy to counter extremism and terrorism.

From this platform, we express our deep concern at the grave developments taking place in Yemen. The Houthis, who are trying to undermine the political process and the constitutional legitimacy of the Yemeni State through violence, compels all of us to take a firm and immediate stand against changing the reality through violence and force. We have to realize that the exclusive sectarian and individual approach is not an acceptable option to the Yemeni people who aspire to building an inclusive civil state, which is capable of committing to the terms of national dialogue and continuing the implementation of the GCC initiative and its mechanisms. The UAE will continue to support the political transition process in Yemen and will support the efforts of the Yemeni State towards achieving stability and development.

Mr. President,

In light of the recent developments in the region, it is incumbent upon us, as nations pledged to abide by the principles enshrined in the Charter, to focus our efforts on combating this dangerous scourge. The UAE, therefore, calls upon the international community and Member States to cooperate in combating these terrorist groups and to take comprehensive measures to fight them through a clear, unified strategy. These efforts should not be limited to Iraq and Syria alone, but must also include the locations of these groups wherever they exist. We also point out that taking gradual measures to address these challenges are futile, as they require intensified efforts to be made in order to combat these groups promptly and effectively.

While our attention should be fully focused on countering terrorism, the UAE believes that supporting governments facing serious security challenges is of critical importance. Active participation is also required in providing the necessary assistance to restore peace and security in those countries through supporting their legitimate institutions. In this context, we continue to highlight the importance of respecting the sovereignty and independence of States, and supporting all political efforts aimed at achieving peaceful settlements of ongoing conflicts and disputes. Without these efforts, violence will continue. The UAE hopes to see security and stability prevail all countries.

Mr. President,

I once again reiterate the UAE's firm position towards renouncing terrorism and extremism in all their forms and whatever their sources are. My country is fulfilling its responsibilities and is committed to participate constructively at the national, regional and international levels to combating violent extremism, and affiliated beliefs and terrorist acts. The UAE, through its membership in the Global Counterterrorism Forum, coordinates with other international organizations and concerned countries to ensure that their territories are not exploited in facilitating or executing terrorist acts, as well as other related crimes such as financing terrorism, human trafficking and recruitment of people for committing such egregious crimes. Through hosting the Hedayah Center for training, dialogue and research to combat violent extremism, the UAE continues to support the international community in building capacities and exchanging the best practices on this issue.

My country also continues to develop its national policies and its legislative and executive systems in order to deter and confront all acts of terrorism, eradicate its roots and protect our youth from being lured into the circle of extremism and violence. To this end, the UAE recently adopted a federal law on combating terrorist crimes, which contains strict penalties against those found guilty of inciting terrorism or committing terrorist acts. The UAE is also strengthening preventive policies by establishing centers for the rehabilitation of people influenced by extremist and terrorist ideologies.

Mr. President,

The UAE hopes for the recovery and restoration of security and stability in the region, so that governments can carry out their duties and obligations and their peoples can resume their normal lives. This hope is driven by the remarkable progress achieved by the new government in Egypt and its good governance in implementing its political roadmap. Despite the challenges facing Egypt, the signs of normalcy in public life and the revived economy and culture are promising.

Therefore, the UAE regrets the statements of some countries and their unacceptable questioning of the legitimacy of the Egyptian government. The present Egyptian government was freely elected by its people, who believe in their ability to fulfill their aspirations. Questioning the Egyptian people's will and their right to choose their representatives is an interference in the internal affairs of Egypt and undermines its stability. Accordingly, I would like to emphasize that the stability of our region depends on the stability of Egypt, and therefore the UAE calls upon the international community to provide the necessary support to the Egyptian government and its economy to boost their efforts towards achieving progress and prosperity. I would also like to commend the generous

initiative of the King of Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in supporting the Egyptian economy through announcing “The Egyptian Economic Summit”, which represents a visionary approach towards supporting the future of Egypt, and maintaining moderation in the region.

The UAE expresses its disappointment at the lack of tangible outcomes resulting from the peace negotiations between Palestine and Israel. The UAE strongly condemns Israel’s aggression against Gaza, especially the destruction inflicted upon its population and civilian facilities, including United Nations’ facilities, and we demand a thorough, transparent and independent investigation be conducted, in order to determine the legal responsibility for these damages. We hope that the continued failure of peace negotiations will not lead to a resurgence of violence, which would allow the return of terrorism to the region in a new form.

Mr. President,

Establishment of peace and security in the region is a key element in achieving global stability, and is a UAE foreign policy priority, which derives its principles from the UN Charter and the provisions of international law. On the basis of these principles, my Government expresses, once again, its rejection of the continued Iranian occupation of the three UAE islands: the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa, and demands the restoration of the UAE’s full sovereignty over these islands. We also emphasize that all actions and measures being taken by the Iranian authorities are contrary to international law and to all norms and all common human values.

In this respect, we would like to point out that the Islamic Republic of Iran has recently hoisted the Iranian flag on the part of Abu Musa Island allocated to the United Arab Emirates based on the 1971 agreed Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Abu Musa Island. My country strongly protests this action and considers it a flagrant violation of the Memorandum of Understanding devoid of any legal effect on the island. In this regard, we renew our call from this platform to the international community to urge Iran to respond to the repeated peaceful, sincere calls of the United Arab Emirates for a just settlement to this issue, either through direct serious negotiations between both countries, or by referral to the International Court of Justice to settle this dispute in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and the provisions of international law.

On the other side, the UAE welcomes the ongoing negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement on Iran’s nuclear program, and affirms that in order to avoid emergence of an arms race in the region, a final and strict agreement must be reached, as the region does not need further tension and instability. Nevertheless, the UAE believes that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is a necessity in order to meet the world’s growing energy demands, and we are proud to be pioneers of a successful model in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, that is compliant with the highest standards of transparency, safety and security.

Mr. President,

Despite the challenges facing the region, my country has always sought to preserve its accomplishments to remain a model of moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the region, consistent with current international efforts. The UAE strongly believes that investment in human development is important in the long-term, and therefore it attaches great importance to the negotiations process on the international development agenda beyond 2015, and its sustainable development goals, and welcomes the results of these consultations which put the "eradication of poverty" at the heart of development goals.

My country has also supported the inclusion of goals focusing on: providing sustainable energy for all, developing a green economy, food security, safe drinking water, gender equality and women's empowerment. The UAE is committed to pursuing economic and social policies focusing primarily on achieving individual development and providing all means that are necessary for leading a decent and productive life and promoting prosperity. In this context, I would like to point out that Dubai has won the right to host the World Expo2020, and we thank all those countries which supported us in this endeavor and we look forward to work with the Member States to organize an exhibition that meets their aspirations.

Mr. President,

Comprehensive and sustainable development cannot be achieved without the participation of all segments of the society in the national development process. Accordingly, the UAE pays special attention to women's empowerment, where the UAE now occupies a prominent place among the countries of the world in terms of women's achievements and successes in all areas of life. Our efforts are not limited solely to empowering women in the UAE, but also include supporting women in the region and around the world. Abu Dhabi will host a UN Women Liaison Office with the support and leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak. The UAE also assists UN Women in the preparations for the high-level global review on women, peace, and security. These efforts reflect the UAE's interest and participation in international efforts aiming at treating women as effective partners and agents in preventing wars and resolving conflicts, and who also play a key role in countering violence and promoting peace and security in the world.

Mr. President,

We must continue to pay special attention to the issue of climate change. Recent international reports indicated that the implications of climate change have become a major challenge to development, but we still have enough time to mitigate its impact through international cooperation. In this context, the UAE welcomes the outcome of the UN Climate Summit held few

days ago at the United Nations, and we thank His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his efforts to advance this important issue. We also urge all parties to abide by the agreements reached in this regard and stress that developed countries must take the lead in this respect.

The UAE efforts in the field of renewable energy cover different parts of the world, where the UAE invests more than half a billion dollars in the form of grants and low-interest loans for renewable energy projects in developing countries. We also have extensive and various commercial investments totaling billions of dollars in the renewable energy sector internationally. These initiatives, investments and grants all contribute to addressing climate change and its repercussions all over the world.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the UAE will continue making every effort to achieve our aspiration of contributing to a secure and stable world in which people can live in dignity, peace and well-being.

Thank you