



Statement by

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates

Before

the General Debate of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

26 September 2011

Pls. Check Against Delivery

The United Arab Emirates would like to extend its congratulations to you and to the State of Qatar for your election as President of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The UAE would also like to congratulate H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, for the renewed confidence in him and his re-election as Secretary General of this international organization for a second term, and we wish him all the success in his sincere efforts to promote the role of the United Nations and achieve its objectives.

The UAE would also like to congratulate the Republic of South Sudan for becoming the 193rd member state of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Practical experiences have proven that addressing great International challenges are best resolved through consolidated and collective work, with the participation of all states, including the small and developing nations, in international decision-making structures, institutions and mechanisms, based on the principles of equality, justice, and transparency.

Therefore, my country undertakes extensive preventive diplomatic efforts in order to contain tensions and disputes occurring in its surroundings and beyond. The UAE vigorously seeks to promote direct and indirect humanitarian relief, developmental and economical aid which extends to several developing countries, with a particular focus on those countries with situations of conflicts or natural disasters, in addition to its other



effective contributions in peace keeping operations, protecting civilians, and re-building efforts for states which have just emerged from violent armed conflicts. These contributions represent the UAE's significant partnership with several parties, and its dedication to achieve solid objectives of maintaining and consolidating international peace and security.

The UAE also contributes effectively to the activities of the UN, and the programs of its specialized agencies, and continues its support to all endeavors and efforts with the aim of reaching comprehensive reform by coordinating between the different structures and work programs of this international organization, particularly its main institutions *i.e.* the UN Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council, in order to help the organization to promote its role and fulfill its responsibilities with regards to dealing with the current international political, geographical, economical, and environmental variables.

Mr. President,

The UAE has always placed great emphasis and priority to the issues of stabilization of international peace and security. This is demonstrated in the UAE's respect for the UN Charter and provisions of International Law, especially which call for respect of the sovereignty of states, refraining from intervention in their internal affairs, denouncing violence, and resorting to peaceful means to resolve conflicts. This has been practiced within the joint framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and in other bilateral and regional arrangements.

The solid strategic political approach adopted by the United Arab Emirates is not limited to bilateral and regional cooperation; it is also evident in the way of its handling all of its issues. My country seeks to establish peace and security, eliminate tensions from the region and enhance confidence building measures. We apply the same approach in dealing with the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three UAE islands: Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

Since the illegitimate occupation of these islands in 1971, the UAE has adopted a flexible diplomatic approach to resolve this matter through peaceful means, through direct bilateral negotiations, or by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice.

However, the UAE expresses its deep concern over not achieving any progress in direct, regional, and international contacts made with the Islamic Republic of Iran in relation to reaching a peaceful, just and permanent solution. The actions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran with the aim of changing the legal, physical and demographic situation of the islands are null and void and have no legal effect whatsoever. Those Iranian



actions also constitute a violation of International Law, and the UN Charter. Therefore, the UAE demands of the Islamic Republic of Iran to enter into serious and direct negotiations between the two countries, or to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice in the light of its continuous illegal occupation of the three islands which are an integral part of the territorial sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. President,

The UAE has been closely monitoring the developments and the major complications surrounding the Palestinian issue, which unfortunately resulted in halting the efforts and chances of resuming peace talks due to the intransigent stance taken by the Israeli government. The UAE is deeply concerned at the deteriorating conditions of the Palestinian people who are suffering from deprivation as a result of the continued occupation of their land, the ongoing exploitation of their natural resources, and the frequent aggressions and violations committed against their inalienable rights under the International Law.

The UAE condemns the continuous evasion by Israel of its international obligations. The UAE condemns in particular Israel's settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, especially in Arab East Jerusalem where it has intentionally been confiscating hundreds of homes from their original Arab owners, and has set an agenda aiming at building thousands of illegal settlement units with the aim of changing its Arab demographic, historical and holy features.

The UAE reaffirms its continuous support to the Palestinian Authority and to its endeavors to restore the legitimate rights of its people in returning to their homeland. The UAE also supports the Palestinian Authority's current attempts, which are backed by member countries of the Arab League of states and the UN Members, to gain international recognition of the independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant international resolutions, the road map, and the Arab peace initiative, and also supports Palestine's quest for full membership in the United Nations. The UAE regards this legal step as complimenting the pillars required for the establishment of the Palestinian State, and does not contradict the efforts of resuming peace talks. We reaffirm that just and comprehensive peace will only be achieved with the full withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

The UAE believes that a comprehensive and just peace between Arab countries and Israel would greatly assist in reducing tensions and depriving voices of radicalism and violence from using this ongoing issue as one of the major justifications to promote extremism and violence.



Mr. President,

The UAE has been closely monitoring the recent events in the brotherly Kingdom of Bahrain, which have adversely affected its peace and stability. While we are extending every required support to the Government of Bahrain, we denounce any external intervention in Bahrain's internal affairs.

The UAE will work within the framework of the GCC to continue its support for the good efforts undertaken by His Majesty Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, to promote national dialogue among all segments of the Bahraini society with a view to maintaining peace and stability in the Kingdom, preserving domestic peace, strengthening national unity and pursuing reforms and progress, in order to realize the hopes and aspirations of all the people of Bahrain. The UAE commends the steps taken by the Government of Bahrain to create suitable atmosphere for dialogue, establish a commission of inquiry to investigate the violent events that took place in the country, and the release of prisoners.

We emphasize that the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Bahrain are an integral part of the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf region, and also part of the responsibilities of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council in the region, where all members of the Council are keen to consolidate good-neighborly relations with all states based on the principles of international law and other international covenants.

Mr. President,

In regards to the Lebanese situation, the UAE has always supported all efforts aiming at achieving peace and stability in this brotherly country, and hopes that all political parties in Lebanon, including members of the new Government, would wisely work together to reach national unity and resolve all outstanding internal issues in a way that meets the aspirations of the Lebanese people. The UAE emphasizes the need for the international community to compel Israel to stop its daily violations of Lebanese airspace and its frequent trespassing of the Lebanese sovereignty on land and sea, including its cessation of its exploitation of Lebanese natural resources in its exclusive regional and international waters, in respect for its obligations under international law.

Mr. President,

The UAE followed the transition of power in both Egypt and Tunisia, and it calls upon the international community to respect and support the endeavors of the peoples of these



two brotherly countries to realize all their national aspirations, achieve security, social and economic development and establish stability in their countries.

Mr. President,

The UAE renews through this international platform its full commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. The UAE also stresses its commitment to the Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973 of 2011 in regard to the protection of civilians. The UAE has played a vital role in international efforts aiming at protecting the people of Libya, and helping them fulfill their aspirations. Also, the UAE humanitarian field mission has been extending humanitarian support since the outbreak of violence to civilians in Libya, who were affected by the conflict, through its relief agencies.

The UAE also played a vital role within the Contact Group on Libya. It hosted the third meeting of the Contact Group in Abu Dhabi in June 2011, which focused on extending immediate support for the Libyan people, and laying down the foundations to be determined by the people of Libya for the political transition. To this end, my country calls for releasing the remaining Libyan frozen funds, and congratulates the people of Libya for the Libyan Transitional National Authority taking Libya's place in the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The UAE is concerned about the recent developments in Yemen, and calls upon all relevant Yemeni parties to maintain patience, wisdom, and reconsider their stance regarding the peaceful solution initiative suggested by five GCC states, and consider this initiative as an appropriate basis to overcome the current situation, and ensure a peaceful transition of power that responds to the will and choices of the Yemeni people, and preserves the peace and stability of the country.

Mr. President,

The UAE has watched with satisfaction the latest positive political developments in Sudan represented in the local and international recognition of the newly emerged Republic of South Sudan, and the signing of the Doha Document for comprehensive peace in Darfur between the Sudanese Government and the Liberation and Justice Movement in the region. We hope that these steps would enable all Sudanese parties to put the interests of the country above all other interests, and move forward to the phase of domestic peace and genuine reconciliation, which are capable of addressing and



containing all disputes that still hamper the realization of stability, progress and prosperity of the people of Sudan.

Mr. President,

With the support extended by the UAE to the current political process in Somalia, we are looking forward to increasing the multifaceted support provided by the international community to the interim government of Somalia, in order to enable it to build its institutions and handle security in the country. The UAE is committed to continuing its support to the people of Somalia in an effort to alleviate the humanitarian suffering. The UAE will work towards fulfilling its international commitments with regard to the famine that has affected Somalia and in line with the calls by the Secretary-General in this regard.

The sum of the aid provided by the UAE to Somalia in the recent relief campaign have amounted to USD 50 Million, in addition to other aid given by a number of institutions and charitable agencies under the leadership of the UAE Red Crescent, in order to meet the basic needs of the Somali people. The UAE Red Crescent provided the daily needs of people in the areas where it operates, established a field hospital and distributed medicines to Somali hospitals. The UAE also built two hospitals with the cost of \$4 million, dug wells and water basins costing \$3.1 million, and distributed food items costing \$700,000.

Mr. President,

The UAE sees maritime piracy as one of the major growing challenges of the 21st century, which affects global trade and commerce, and has adverse impact on prosperity in the rest of the world. The UAE plays a vital leading role in international efforts to counter piracy, and has hosted a high level conference on the issue in Dubai from 18 to 19 April 2011 under the theme: “Global Challenge, Regional Responses: Forging a Common Approach to Maritime Piracy.”

The UAE is also participating in the military efforts to counter piracy, and the UAE armed forces were active in rescuing ships from the attacks of pirates. It succeeded in April 2011 in freeing an Emirati ship from the pirates, released the hostages, arrested the pirates, and prosecuted them.

The UAE sees that the promotion of the developmental efforts on land is an essential component of international response, which is equally important together with the military and political efforts.



Mr. President,

With regard to the unstable situation in Syria, the UAE hopes that President Al Assad fulfills his recent commitments to stop military operations against Syrian civilians, and carry out meaningful political reforms.

Mr. President,

The UAE has made substantial contributions for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, restoring peace and stability in the country, and for alleviating the suffering of its people, and calls upon all Afghani parties to cooperate in order to achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation and extend the Government's control over all its Afghani regions. The UAE also looks forward to the convening of international conference on Afghanistan in Bonn next December, and will continue its support for the efforts of the international community, including the United Nations, in order to improve the situation of the Afghani people, reconstruct their national institutions, and achieve peace and stability in all the country.

The UAE since 2001 was keen to strengthen its strong partnership. During the past ten years, the total contributions made by the UAE were estimated at 1.5 billion U.S. dollars, in addition to humanitarian contributions from private institutions, including the contribution Extended by the Sheikh Khalifa Foundation in cooperation with Bill and Milenda Gates of US\$ 50 millions for vaccination of children in Afghanistan. The UAE also announced last August that it will provide a grant of US\$ \$250 million, which will be managed by the Abu Dhabi Development Fund, to support development projects in Afghanistan, particularly in the fields of housing for widows, orphans, and disabled persons, and the rehabilitation of the capital Kabul and other provinces of the country.

Since 2007, the UAE has been contributing directly to the international efforts in the reconstruction process, and has been providing support and assistance to Afghani people on the ground.

The UAE and its partners are committed to the stability and development of Afghanistan, especially that the success in this regard will be a focal point in countering extremism, radicalism, and international terrorism in the region. In addition, peace and stability of Afghanistan directly affects regional security including the Arabian Gulf Region.



Mr. President,

The UAE maintains long-standing historical ties and outstanding relations with Pakistan . This is clearly reflected through the strong ties between the two countries at various levels, where Pakistanis worked and contributed positively to the UAE for many years.

The UAE is strongly committed to stability and long-term development of Pakistan, which is reflected in the support the UAE has committed itself to provide since the year 2000, amounting to U.S. \$800 million to date. The aim of the UAE's efforts is to build an attractive environment for international trade and investment in Pakistan, as well as to help the Pakistani government in the promotion of moderation and political stability in the country. If achieved, this will help Pakistan curtail violence, extremism, and international terrorism.

Since international participation is central in ensuring the stability of Pakistan, in 2008 the UAE has undertaken the initiative to participate in the establishment of the group of "Friends of Democratic Pakistan". In this context, the UAE is working closely with Pakistan on many issues concerning stability and long-term sustainable development.

The UAE is well aware of the importance of the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as the improvement of relations between the two countries is considered to be essential and important in order to achieve stability in Afghanistan and the region as a whole. The UAE is actively working with Pakistan to achieve stability and success in Afghanistan.

Mr. President

The UAE is committed to a long established policy on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to work with the international community to avert the risk of nuclear proliferation. This stand by the UAE is reflected and proven by its signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995, and its signing of a comprehensive safeguards agreement in 2003, in addition to its ratification of the additional Protocol of 2010.

In manifestation of its policy to support all international, regional and multilateral efforts aimed at creating a safe and nuclear weapons free world, the UAE has recently joined the Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Weapons Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

The UAE is concerned over the continuation of the Israeli nuclear program outside the control and surveillance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); therefore,



the UAE looks forward to the convening the International Conference in 2012 on establishing a Middle East nuclear weapons free zone in accordance with agreements reached during the last NPT Review Conference. We reiterate our call upon Israel to ratify the NPT treaty and place without conditions all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the IAEA. In this context, we also reaffirm our support for all efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement to the Iranian nuclear issue within the framework of the provisions of related international resolutions, and the control of the IAEA.

Mr. President,

The UAE seeks to obtain civilian nuclear program that is committed to the highest levels of safety, security, non-proliferation and operational transparency. The UAE government, in the context of its development of its nuclear program, explained the peaceful objectives of its program without ambiguity. It also developed its position in regards to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the policy document issued by the government in 2008, in which it explained its intention not to attempt the full enrichment nuclear fuel in order to implement its peaceful program.

The UAE is working closely with the IAEA and its international partners to improve the global participation of non-proliferation, and is an active member in many international initiatives such as: the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism, and the Security Initiative to Counter Proliferation. The UAE is firmly implementing the resolutions of the UNSC calling for halting materials and sensitive technology shipments to Iran.

Simultaneously, the UAE pursues a responsible role as a producer of conventional energy resources on both national and international levels, by supporting oil and gas prices' stability in the markets, boosting the development of additional reserves of oil and gas, ensuring the availability of safe supply routes, and meeting the requirements of long-term sustainability through the development and consumption of low-carbon energy.

The UAE intends to continue working as a reliable and stable provider of resources for the rest of the world, in addition to its work through the OPEC and the International Energy Forum, and as a strong advocate of the stability of prices and the ongoing dialogue between producers and consumers around the world.

In addition, the UAE is leading the march towards developing renewable energy resources. It is hosting the newly established entity, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The UAE is investing billions of dollars in renewable energy locally and around the world, and it is also working on building the City of Masdar that will be



fully sourced with renewable energy, and will host the leading companies in the field of low-carbon technologies.

This is linked to the work of the UAE in its promotion of international multilateral efforts aiming at reducing emissions and the effects of climate change. The UAE in this regard, renews its support to the road map and the Bali Action Plan issued in December 2007, aiming at reaching an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the era post Kyoto. The UAE also stresses the need to consider carefully the interests and economies of oil producing and exporting countries. We reaffirm our readiness by actively participating in initiatives and efforts of the international community in order to build its capacity in facing the effects emerging from climate change, in which its serious environmental, economic, and humanitarian consequences have negatively affected all countries without exception, particularly the developing nations.

Mr. President,

Food security is one of the biggest challenges facing the world. It is estimated that in 2010 more than 900 million people worldwide suffered from famine and chronic hunger. The recent tragedy in the Horn of Africa demonstrated the urgent need for concrete efforts by the international community in times of crisis to ensure protection for the most vulnerable peoples.

Upon seriously discussing the issue of food security, we cannot overlook the significance of water security, especially when we know that agricultural production consumes around 70% of freshwater resources globally. Therefore, the UAE deems it important to place the issue of scarcity and security of water in future plans aiming at increasing food production in the world.

Mr. President

In line with its belief in the importance of promoting international partnerships to address several current challenges faced by our people in the 21st century, the UAE was keen to make the necessary national legislation which aims at activating its international and regional cooperation in order to counter all acts of terrorism, transnational crimes including drug and small arms trafficking, money laundering and other crimes.

Countering terrorism is a key element in the efforts of the UAE to ensuring its national security and enhancing regional and global security. Therefore, the fight against terrorism emerges as one of the top priorities on the foreign policy agenda of the UAE. The UAE has taken significant steps to counter terrorism including: countering money laundering, securing ports and container security, securing maritime corridors, and setting procedures



for nuclear non-proliferation. Additionally, the UAE is actively working through military cooperation with its allies to combat terrorism.

Since countering terrorism requires more than mere military efforts, the UAE is working on applying different mechanisms to support its objectives in the field of countering terrorism. These mechanisms and initiatives include education and poverty alleviation, cultural dialogues, and other areas of concern. While violent ideologies feeding terrorism are mainly based on the absence of hope, and political and economic slowdown, the UAE believes that the best means to eliminate terrorism in the world are: encouraging prosperity and economic growth and the existence of just and accountable governments. The settlement of international disputes is the best guarantee to combat terrorism. These core principles reflect the role played by the UAE in global affairs.

Mr. President,

The UAE is fully committed to the global efforts in countering human trafficking, and is working on taking the lead regionally in this regard. The UAE was the first country in the region to take the initiative of enacting a comprehensive law against human trafficking. It has issued a federal decree in 2006, aimed at countering human trafficking through protecting the communities affected with this horrible crime. In recent years it also issued a number of legislations aimed at regulating the recruitment and outsourcing of employment, maintaining the full rights of labourers, fighting all acts of human trafficking, prosecuting individuals involved in it, and ensuring the protection and support for all people affected based on commitments approved in related bilateral and international agreements, which have been signed in order to curb this scourge.

In 2009, the UAE joined the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. It also announced in 2010 its full support to the United Nations global plan to combat human trafficking through offering annual donations to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Mr. President,

The UAE realizes that the success of women's empowerment is an essential component to building a modern and tolerant society. Therefore, the UAE has achieved a number of remarkable successes in the field of empowerment of women, which represents clear evidence of the absence of any conflict between the Arab, the Muslim, and the Modern. The UAE has a significant track record in the field of women's rights, 40 years ago females were not sent to schools; however, in today's society women represent 70% of all



university graduates in the UAE. Women now also occupy around two thirds of government jobs, and 22.5% of seats in the Federal National Council, in addition to the fact that the federal government has four female ministers. We also have now the first UAE federal judge, and recently, three female pilots were accredited as women pilots in the UAE Air Forces.

The UAE constitution guarantees equal rights for both men and women, where women enjoy the same legal status, preserving their own family names and titles, the right to education, and the right of employment, as their male counterparts. The UAE Constitution prohibits any discrimination between women and men in salaries. The UAE further joined a number of international conventions on human rights, including the Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was signed in 2004.

Based on the above reasoning, the UAE sees the importance of supporting international efforts in the field of women's empowerment. In this context we would like to commend proudly the establishment of the United Nations for Women (UN-WOMEN), and we declare extending a contribution of USD5 million to this newly established organ.

Mr. President,

The UAE supports international efforts to promote human rights that guarantee all peoples in the world the right to enjoy the freedom to live in peace with security and prosperity. The UAE also believes in the importance of economic development and prosperity for the people of the world enabling them to enjoy their human rights, which the international community has worked vigorously to establish. Therefore, the role played by the UAE in the field of international development, along with its long-standing commitment to eradicate poverty in the world, is at the heart of its foreign policy. The UAE has been continuously calling for a strong international commitment aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals; therefore, it focused its efforts on reducing gender discrimination, promoting access to health care, and eliminating child labour and human trafficking.

The UAE has always been keen to integrate the principles of fundamental human rights stipulated in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its own Constitution and Laws. The UAE has also ratified the UN conventions related to human rights and child rights, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK



البعثة الدائمة
للإمارات العربية المتحدة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

The UAE is an active member of the United Nations Council for Human Rights, and has first appeared before the Council in the Universal Periodic Review performed in December 2008. The UAE is also seeking to attain the membership of the Council for the period 2012-2015.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations here contribute to the promotion and development of all forms of understanding, solidarity, and international cooperation aimed at addressing global issues on our agenda.

Thank you Mr. President,