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البعثة الدائمة لمملكة البحرين
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STATEMENT

by

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before the

Seventy-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly

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Your Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly

At the outset, I am pleased to extend to you, and through you to your friendly country Fiji, my sincere congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to wish you sustained success in the discharge of the noble tasks with which you have been entrusted. Likewise, I wish to express our appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mogens Lykketoft, for his outstanding contribution to, and remarkable efforts for, the efficient and highly professional management of the work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

We appreciate the extraordinary efforts exerted by H.E. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his two terms, with a view to achieving the goals of this international organization in establishing the foundations of peace and security in the world. Recalling his inaugural statement at the General Debate of the General Assembly, and particularly the reference to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, I share his hope that this agreement will enter into force by the end of this year. We also endorse his proposal for the establishment of a high-level panel to find practical solutions that will improve decision-making mechanisms at the United Nations. We support the continued pursuit of the great achievements that took place in all domains, notably in the fields of education and health, during the last decade. I seize this opportunity to express to H.E. the Secretary-General our thanks and appreciation for all that he has accomplished at the helm of this Organization and to wish him every success in his future endeavors in the service of his own country and the world at large.

Mr. President,

The fact that this session's theme is "The Sustainable Development Goals: A Universal Push to Transform our World" testifies to our collective will and earnest desire to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit last year. My country attaches great importance to these goals under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and it has already started achieving these goals as documented in international reports. My country will persevere in its commitment consistent with the ambitious national plans and programs, fully convinced that the achievement of these goals promises a brilliant future for its citizens.

Barely a few days ago, the United Nations held an important demonstration of its relationship with the Kingdom of Bahrain, namely the ceremony hosted by Bahrain on the twenty third of this month, on the margins of the General Assembly, entitled H.R.H. Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Sustainable Development Award. This award was presented to Professor Anna Tibaijuka, former Executive Director of UN-Habitat, a well deserving laureate. This presentation underlines the Kingdom's vision of sustainable development as a value that it not only seeks to achieve but also exerts considerable efforts to spread and to support all endeavors aimed at achieving it throughout the world.

The achievements of Bahraini women at the international level, notably election to the membership of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Executive Board of UN Women; and its first place internationally for the highest growth rate of women's participation in economic activities as documented in the ILO's report for this year, all clearly testify to the close cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations and the keen interest of my country, represented by the Supreme Council for Women under the leadership of H.R.H. Princess Sabika Bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, in enhancing the empowerment of Bahraini women nationally and internationally and accelerating their participation in all government and community sectors as a principal component that has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the process of community development and progress.

"Development that does not have the citizen as its target is futile and undesirable" those were the words of H.M. the King at the launch of the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, clearly affirming that the wellbeing, happiness and stability of our citizens are the main pillars of development in all fields and that the Government's efforts to achieve the international development goals go in parallel with its national economic vision, the Government Action Plan, and Bahrain's Country Programme Document between the Kingdom of Bahrain and UNDP. Bahrain shall continue to guarantee that all citizens, men and women alike, enjoy all their constitutional rights. We shall persist, without pause, in our approach towards progress, prosperity and advancement, despite all the political and economic challenges and all the attempts to divert us from this solid national path.

Mr. President,

Development goes hand in hand with the security and stability of the citizen and society at large. Neither could be achieved in separation from the other, and neither could be attained without a stable and secure state, with good governance and solid and effective institutions. Such is the proper formula that should be preserved and guaranteed in all states of the world in general, and in the Middle East in particular in view of the enormity of challenges facing the region, which are considered grave threats to international peace and security.

It is for this reason that the protection of the foundations of the nation-state in our countries and preventing their collapse in other countries is the basis for sustaining security, development and prosperity. It deserves to become the major objective of all actors and groupings of the international community without double standards or hidden agendas. We are capable, if united regionally and internationally, of addressing all these challenges, particularly terrorism. We should jointly commit ourselves, without hesitation and in full determination, to eradicate all its underlying causes and to cut off its sources of financing, and to resolutely and vigorously protect our societies from the discourse of hate and extremism.

In this respect, we assert that anti-terrorist measures will not be effective through legislation and laws that contravene the UN Charter and the principles of international law, such as the step taken

by the American Congress in passing the “Justice Against the Sponsors of Terrorism Act” which jeopardizes international relations based on the principle of equal sovereignty of states and their sovereign immunity. It constitutes a dangerous precedent in relations between nations, and a threat to the stability of the international system, which in turn adversely affects international efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr. President,

Among the serious issues generated by the situation prevailing in some of our region’s countries, negatively impacting development efforts, is the question of displaced persons and refugees which, if left without solutions, will lead to more instability not only in the region but also throughout the world.

The Syrian crisis, with all its stages and developments, constitutes the greatest human tragedy of our contemporary world. In a country that only a few years ago welcomed thousands of refugees, the population today is unable to live in peace and security on its own land. More than half of the Syrian people live as refugees or internally displaced persons as the situation deteriorates day after day, creating a vacuum exploited by terrorist organizations to consolidate their position and threaten the entire region. It is therefore an ethical and human imperative to address these threats, and the international community must act in unison to confront this problem from all angles.

We appreciate the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Lebanese Republic and the Republic of Turkey, to mitigate this humanitarian predicament. We invite the international community to aid the efforts of our countries. We commend the United Nations for its efforts in this respect, recently culminated in the convening of the High-Level Plenary Meeting to address large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the mitigation of this problem through follow-up action to implement the provisions of the Declaration.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain has consistently supported the aspirations of the Syrian people to build, of their own will, a civil state with a national fabric rich in cultural and human heritage and diverse in its various components, with a view to restoring the spirit of love and tolerance. Hence our call to all states with some leverage on the Syrian crisis, notably the United States and the Russian Federation, to join efforts towards the achievement of a political solution to the crisis along the lines of the Geneva 1 Communiqué and Security Council resolution 2254. Furthermore, it is imperative to implement Security Council resolution 2165 stipulating direct, unfettered and immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance to the entire territory of Syria, thus saving this beloved country and its people from their tragedy which we all want to come to an end, avoiding the collapse of what remains of the state’s institutions, preserving the territorial integrity of Syria,

eradicating all terrorist organizations roaming in the country and putting an end to regional meddling, whether direct or by proxy, hindering the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

In the same vein, we encourage all efforts in Iraq to overcome the problems facing the reconstruction of the state and its institutions and the fulfillment of the will of the Iraqi people through participation of all political factions, without external pressure. We stress the need, at the same time, to persevere in the efforts to regain the authority of the state over their entire national territory from the hands of terrorist organizations and to combat the criminal and inhumane practices of extremist militias against Iraqis and their neighbors under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

Mr. President,

We are entitled, and look forward, to the day when we see an independent Palestinian State, living in peace and security, side by side with the State of Israel. I have no doubt whatsoever that the peoples of the region, including the Arabs and the Israelis, are eager for this day to come and look forward to this just and all-encompassing peace. This hope remains contingent on Israel's admission that its security and stability can only be obtained if the same is guaranteed for the Palestinian people. Israel needs to be serious about achieving a just and durable peace in the region, with Palestinians and Israelis alike feeling safe for themselves, their future and the future of their children. An end must be put to the practices that hinder this long awaited peace, notably the violations against the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque that offend the feelings of Muslims all over the world. All illegal settlements should be dismantled from occupied Palestinian territory, and recognition must be given to the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state, within the boundaries of 4 June 1967, and with East Jerusalem as its capital, consistent with international law and instruments, and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Israel should react positively and in an open spirit to the Arab Peace Initiative, which is still valid and on the table. We hold tight to it and shall not back down as it offers the right and suitable solution to lay down the foundations of peace in the region and cooperation between its nations and states.

As regards to the situation in the Republic of Yemen, the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a member of the Arab Coalition to Restore the Legitimacy in Yemen will continue steadfast. Bahrain spared no resources or blood to achieve this noble goal and we shall continue in this path no matter how high the sacrifices, until such time that the legitimate Government, under the leadership of H.E. President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, is in a position to take control of the entire Yemeni territory. We underline the humanitarian role played by the Coalition forces and their determination not to target civilians. We demand that the coup d'etat forces and its supporters refrain immediately from their negative action that hinder stability and highlight their ambition to take control of the institutions of the State. We do not stand against any Yemeni party but rather we stand by Yemen and the Yemeni people against all who try to harm Yemen or control it from outside, until such time as a peaceful solution is reached through a political settlement putting an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people and preserving their security, stability and unity in

accordance with international terms of reference, notably the GCC initiative and its executive mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue and Security Council resolution 2216 (2015). We commend the efforts exerted by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Yemen, and by the state of Kuwait to help find an exit from the crisis.

With regards to Libya, this brotherly Arab country badly needs the solidarity of all parties and the unification of their efforts to go through this difficult stage and to overcome the challenges facing it and its people's aspirations to live in peace and to enjoy stability under the auspices of a unified state and robust modern institutions. We welcome the formation of the Government of National Accord, and stress the need to provide it with the necessary support and to grant it confidence by the Libyan House of Representatives so that it may lead the country, discharge its duties and responsibilities and rid the country from terrorist organizations by eradicating them.

With regard to the issue of the Moroccan Sahara, the Kingdom of Bahrain underlines the necessity of finding a political settlement on the basis of the Moroccan initiative for self government and the relevant Security Council Resolutions, to guarantee the territorial integrity of Morocco and to enhance security and stability in the region. We welcome the return of Morocco to the African Union and the resumption of its vital role in Africa.

Mr. President,

Concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran, we in the GCC and all Arab countries have spared no effort to build with this neighboring country the best possible relations on the basis of good neighborliness and respect for the sovereignty of states, consistent with the practices and principles of international relations between states. We did not hesitate an instant to build bridges and improve relations with it. However, all these efforts and sincere wishes were met with no serious response from Iran, and always ended either in an impasse or by the fabrication of new problems and crises to return us to square one. We still hear the same irresponsible sectarian discourse from Iran, and witness the damage done to our bilateral and collective relations with it. In the last such incident, the Iranian officials made false allegations against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country that plays a remarkable role in providing care and hospitality to the huge numbers of pilgrims, and assumes responsibility for their safety and protection with great efficiency during the seasons of Hajj and Umraa. No one can deny or belittle their efforts. We still face Iran's attempts to jeopardize our security and social peace through support provided to groups and militias under its authority such as the terrorist Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran is still occupying the three Emarati islands in the Arabian Gulf and refusing mediation for a peaceful settlement. The situation is clear and there is no way that it will change if Iran does not change its foreign policies comprehensively and put an end to its hostile policies and show an open attitude towards our countries, thus paving the way for the region to enter a new era of stability and development.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the need to join efforts to establish a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region, while stressing the right of countries to the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Indeed, nuclear power was created to serve human beings and to improve their lives, not to harm them or be used as a lethal weapon to obliterate entire cities and kill millions of innocent people.

Mr. President,

We have before us an opportunity and possibility to overcome the challenges facing us and to maintain the strength and cohesion of our nations and peoples. Indeed we belong to a region that has made tremendous human contributions and great civilizational achievements. It has contributed effectively to all that we witness and live today by way of human progress in the various sciences and fields. All this was only made possible because all who lived in that region did so in full security and harmony, away from the dividing lines of ethnicities, ideologies and religions. We should hold to this as we look forward to the future we seek for our countries and future generations, so that we may continue to make our important contribution to human civilization of which we are proud. May I recall here a few words by H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, "The Kingdom of Bahrain and its people epitomize the principles of friendship, tolerance, mutual respect and openness to the world. We are proud of our diversity and our solid belief that every individual has the right to enjoy a safe and decent life."

These words, characteristic of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its citizens, also reflect, most definitely, the spirit of the region and the aspirations of its people. Let me conclude by saying that the Kingdom of Bahrain, with its leadership and enlightened people eager to embrace the love and peace of the world and all its peoples, shall remain faithful to these lofty human values and principles on which we have prided ourselves since time immemorial. We shall hold to them to illuminate our path as we face the challenges confronting the Kingdom's safety and its achievements, for the benefit of a safe and stable society in which all enjoy security, prosperity and progress.

I thank you Mr. President.