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Unofficial Translation

**Statement of
H.E. Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi**

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

**before the 72nd session of the United Nations
General Assembly**

New York, 19 September 2017

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Mr. President Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you for assuming the presidency of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish you all success in carrying out your duties. I also seize this opportunity to express the utmost appreciation to Mr. Peter Thomson, the president of the 71st session of the General Assembly, who has most ably overseen the work of the previous session.

Mr. President,

Each time we meet at this august body, we rekindle the hopes and aspirations of the peoples whom we are honored to represent and serve, to provide them with peace and development. New generations look up to us to realize their dreams for a decent life within a just international order; a global order that can face challenges, such as climate change, natural disasters, diseases and epidemics, as well as other man-made crises such as war, terrorism and the huge discrepancies in the distribution of resources and development opportunities.

It is evident that the purposes and principles of the United Nations are still valid as a basis for a world that offers everyone an opportunity to benefit from the great strides in scientific advancement, economic development, as well as the information revolution, which has brought societies ever more closer in an unprecedented manner. These developments offer great potential for establishing a just and secure international order; one that is based on the right to development, freedom, progress and open interactions between peoples.

In Egypt, we adamantly believe in the values of the United Nations and the purposes of its Charter. We have great confidence that realizing such values is not only possible, but rather an obligation and a necessity.

Egypt's longstanding involvement with the UN, both as a founding member of the United Nations that has been elected to the Security Council for six times, and the seventh largest contributor to peace keeping operations world-wide, bears witness to our constant strive to build a world that is worthy of the aspirations of our children and grandchildren to live in freedom, dignity, security and prosperity.

The responsibility that we bear necessitates that we be frank in saying that this world that we seek and is very possible to achieve remains unfortunately far from reality. We are still unable to prevent armed conflict,

confront terrorism, realize nuclear disarmament and address the major structural imbalances in the international economic order, which have widened the gap between the developed and developing worlds.

Based on the experiences of the African and Arab regions, I can state with a clear conscience that these experiences summarize the current crisis in the international order, and its inability to deliver on the goals of this organization.

The Arab region, Egypt's civilizational and cultural milieu, has today become an epicenter for some of the most vicious civil conflicts in recent human history. It is the most prone region to the dangers posed by terrorism. One out of every three refugees in the world today is an Arab, and the Mediterranean Sea has become a conduit for irregular migrants from Asian and African states, who are fleeing the scourge of civil strife, as well as the despair of economic and social hardships, as reflected in the Arab regional report on multi-dimensional poverty conducted by the League of Arab States in collaboration with the United Nations.

As Egypt's geographical home, Africa lies at the heart of Egypt's foreign policy, for it is in Africa that our historic roots lie, and it is from Africa that we derive pride in our identity and our deep sense of belonging. This continent has also become subject to the same security threats facing the Arab region, and constitutes a major example of the crisis in the current international economic order, which cements poverty and economic disparity. This global order bears a major responsibility in the economic, political and social crises that threaten international peace and stability, rendering any discussion on sustainable development goals futile.

Mr. President,

Egypt is encircled by the most dangerous crises in the world. It is our destiny to navigate confidently through these unprecedented dangers, relying on an ambitious development strategy based on radical and bold economic reforms. Such reforms aim at empowering the youth, who represent the majority of the population, not only in Egypt but also in most of the societies of the Arab countries and the developing world.

In a world that is interconnected, complex and full of challenges that cannot be confronted by any country alone, regardless of its capabilities, it is imperative for Egypt's ambitious development plans to correlate with an active foreign policy strategy. Such a strategy is guided by the long established moral principles ingrained in our heritage and culture, and abides

by the legal principles of the international system, which Egypt has actively participated in formulating. It is also based on a vision to address the shortcomings that have prevented the realization of the objectives of the United Nations.

Our vision is based on the following five main principles and priorities:

First: The only solution to the of the crises afflicting the Arab region is through upholding the notion of the modern nation-state, which is based on the principles of citizenship, equality, rule of law and human rights, thereby defeating any attempts at retracting to doctrinal, sectarian, ethnic or tribal loyalties. The path towards reform passes inevitably through the realization of the nation-state, and cannot be built on its demise.

This principle lies at the core of Egypt's foreign policy, and it is the foundation on which we base our positions in addressing crises affecting our region.

With regards to Syria, we believe that there would be no salvation for Syria except through a consensual political solution amongst all Syrians at the core of which is the preservation of the unity of the Syrian state, the maintenance of its institutions and the broadening of their political and social base to include all factions of the Syrian society, and to decisively counter terrorism until it is defeated. The way to achieve this is through the UN led negotiations process, supported by Egypt as stridently as we reject any attempt to manipulate the tragedy in Syria to establish international or regional zones of influence, or to carry out the subversive policies of some regional parties, whose practices have caused great suffering to our region over the past few years. It is now high time for a final and decisive confrontation with these practices.

Similarly, we believe that a political settlement is the only viable solution to the ongoing crisis in Libya. Libya continues to face attempts to dismantle the state and to turn it into an open field for tribal conflicts, a field of operations for terrorist organizations, and a theatre of activity for arms and human traffickers. Here, I would like to emphasize very clearly, that Egypt will not allow the continuation of attempts to tamper with the unity and integrity of the Libyan state, or to undermine the capabilities of the Libyan people. We will continue to work diligently with the United Nations

to achieve a political settlement based on the "Sokhairat Agreement." This political settlement is inspired by the recommendations agreed upon between Libyans during their consecutive meetings in Cairo during the last months. The aim is to end the current political stalemate, and to revive the settlement process in the country.

The aforementioned same logic applies to the Egyptian strategy regarding the crises in Iraq and Yemen. A unified, capable and just modern nation-state is the only way to overcome the current crises, and to realize the legitimate aspirations of Arab peoples.

Second: It is time for a comprehensive and final settlement to the longest outstanding crisis in the Arab region, namely the Palestinian cause, which is a clear depiction of the international community's inability to implement a long series of United Nations and Security Council resolutions. The closure of this chapter through a just settlement, based on established international norms and principles, establishing an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, is a necessary precondition for the entire region transit into a new phase of stability and development. This is also necessary to restore the credibility of the United Nations and the international order. Undoubtedly, achieving peace will eliminate one of the main excuses terrorism has been manipulating to justify its proliferation in the region. It is time to permanently overcome the barrier of hatred forever. I would like to underscore that the Arabs still extend their hands in peace. Egypt's experience validates that peace is possible, and is indeed a realistic objective that we should all continue seriously pursuing.

Third: It is impossible to envisage a future for the regional or international order without a definitive and comprehensive confrontation with terrorism. This should be approached in a manner that eradicates terrorism and eliminates its roots and causes, in addition to openly challenging any party that supports or finances terrorism, or that grants it political, media fora, or safe havens.

In all candidness, there is no room for any serious discussion on the credibility of any international system that applies double standards. A system that fights terrorism while tolerating its supporters, and simultaneously engaging them in the discussions on how to eliminate a threat they created in the first place. In order to be true and faithful to our peoples, members of different international alliances should answer the pertinent questions we are raising, for answers are usually avoided by those

who prefer duplicity in order to attain narrow political interests at the demise of states and at the expense of blood shed by their people, which we shall not allow to be lost in vain under any circumstances.

We in the Muslim world need to face our reality and work together to rectify misconstrued notions which have become an ideological pretext for terrorism and their destructive discourse. As you may recall, Egypt has launched an initiative to rectify religious discourse in order to revive the moderate and tolerant values of Islam. Egypt's religious institutions are currently engaged in this process in coordination with relevant international entities worldwide.

Egypt, which is currently engaged in an unrelenting battle to eradicate terrorism from its territory, is committed to track, confront, and eliminate terrorism decisively wherever it exists. It is evident that confronting terrorism has been at the forefront of Egypt's priorities during its membership of the Security Council in 2016/2017, as well as its chairmanship of the Counter Terrorism Committee. This was not only in defense of Egypt's future, but also in defense of the future of the international community as a whole.

Fourth: The elimination of the root causes of international crises and sources of threat to international stability, necessitates the operationalization of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between members of the international community, in order to narrow the economic and social gaps between developed and developing countries.

How can the United Nations, Agenda 2030, and the sustainable development goals have any credibility when the international economic order is in itself responsible for augmenting disparities in a manner inconsistent with the values of justice and equality?

And how can there be any opportunity for less developed countries to implement fundamental economic reforms to rectify defects aimed at managing their resources, without fundamentally addressing issues that are no less foundational to international economic conditions? This requires involving developing countries more in the international economic governance structure and facilitating their access to easier financing, markets and technology transfer.

Fifth: Settling disputes in our world today can only be achieved through respect for the principles of international law, and negotiation on the basis of legal, historic, and moral principles, as well as the respect of the sovereignty of states and of the principle of non-intervention in their internal affairs.

After more than seven decades have elapsed since the establishment of the United Nations, force and zero-sum games cannot remain as a means to realize interests, especially in today's world, which is based on mutual interdependence among nations, and where significant horizons for cooperation and understanding exist to achieve the common interests for everyone.

Based on the aforementioned principles, Egypt has been at the forefront of countries that have been keen on initiating the Nile Basin Initiative in 1999. It has also pursued the conclusion of a trilateral agreement between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia to address the Renaissance Dam issue from a cooperative perspective, in a manner that establishes a clear legal framework to manage this issue in accordance with international law and established principles, as well as the well established rules governing relations between states sharing basins of trans-boundary rivers all over the world. This agreement remains as the legal framework that can translate the logic of cooperation and sharing between its three parties, as long as good faith persists and the parties apply the agreement fully and with integrity. In this regard, it is of paramount importance to carry out what has been previously agreed upon between the parties in the context of this agreement, especially given the pressing time factor, in order to avoid squandering the opportunity of presenting a successful model for the management of relations between three sisterly countries in the Nile basin.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, our meeting today in this august body, is an opportunity for truthful self-reflection, where we should admit the several deficiencies that hinder the international system from delivering on the noble objectives and aspirations it was set up to realize. It is also an opportunity to renew our commitment to establish a more equitable international order, given that the attainment of justice globally remains a necessary condition to confront the immense challenges impacting our world today, and endangering the credibility of the international system.

The humanitarian tragedy facing the Rohingya minority in Myanmar represents another reason to remind the international community of its moral obligations, let alone its legal responsibilities, as reflected in the UN Charter, to promptly work towards a lasting solution that ends the plight of civilians and addresses the root causes of the crisis, which has become a threat to regional security and the stability of neighboring countries.

Let us move together to empower the people of this world regain control of their destinies, and to explore new horizons of cooperation between members of the international community... Let us transcend together the vicious circle of narrow interests as well as the futile logic of power politics to the broader horizons of common human interests and cooperation among all.... Let us be true to ourselves and dispel the mentality of polarizing policies...For the world today is in dire need to uphold common human interests. It is incumbent upon all states to strive to further relations with all partners with malice to none.

This, Mr. President, was Egypt's message that I have conveyed to you today... explicitly and clearly. I am full of hope that our joint efforts during the upcoming period will succeed in realizing a better world, which is more secure, stable and prosperous.

Thank you....

Long live Egypt.... Long live Egypt.... Long live Egypt....