

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Ministry of
Foreign Affairs



مَمْلَكَةُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ
وَزَارَةُ الْخَارِجِيَّاتِ

Statement of

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at

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In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

Your Majesties, Highnesses and Excellencies,

Your Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis,

Distinguished delegates,

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you,

I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly in its current session, and to wish you success in managing its work. I also want to thank your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, for his outstanding efforts in leading the previous session, and to H.E. Mr. António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his continuous efforts to achieve the noble objectives of the United Nations.

I also wish to express the condolences of His Majesty the King, the Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain, to the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Libya over the victims of the earthquake that struck several regions in Morocco and the floods that swept through the Libyan city of Derna, asking God Almighty to grant the deceased His mercy, and wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

Mr. President,

The general debate of the current session is held amidst global challenges and crises that threaten the development of countries and affect the lives, security, stability and safety of peoples. Foremost of these are: the worsening of wars and armed conflicts; the dangers of extremism, terrorism and organized crime; cybersecurity threats, food and water security, climate change, as well as natural and health disasters.

Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the guidance of the Government headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain has demonstrated in all its diplomatic positions and practical efforts its adherence to its deep-rooted human and civilizational values. These values are in line with the objectives the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, as well as Bahrain's commitment to building bridges of international cooperation and promoting strategic partnerships with friendly and allied countries in order to maintain peace, security and stability and to provide a safe, prosperous and sustainable environment for the peoples of the world.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has taken confident steps at key historical milestones to strengthen alliances that have helped consolidate an international system based on the freedom of trade and freedom of ideas and individuals, in a way that supports individual freedoms and responsibilities. My country has continued to strengthen its diplomatic relations with brotherly, friendly and allied countries with common interests, and has been keen, under the leadership of His Majesty the King, to deepen bilateral relations at all levels, while playing an important role in efforts to promote international cooperation.

The signing of the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA) by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, witnessed a few days ago in Washington, with our friend the United States of America, is a testament to the Kingdom of Bahrain's firm strategic approach, which supports peace and stability in the region, and is based on the close link between security and prosperity in order to achieve the desired progress in all aspects of development, in a world where challenges are increasing day by day.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain recognises that international cooperation based on mutual trust, sincere intentions and mutual understanding is the best way to overcome common challenges, placing at the top of its priorities:

Firstly – the prevalence of the language of dialogue and a peaceful and civilized approach in ending wars and settling all regional and international differences and disputes. Foremost in this is: the promotion of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace process in the Middle East, and supporting the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital; the strengthening of peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the region, expressing our support for the extension of the United Nations humanitarian truce in Yemen; achieving sustainable peaceful solutions to the crises in Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya and Afghanistan in a way that preserves the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of these countries, supports their development process and alleviates the suffering of their peoples; and our support for international mediation efforts to achieve peace in various parts of the world.

In this context, we reiterate our call for renewed endeavours to end the war in Ukraine through peaceful negotiations and to avoid escalation, in a way that achieves the interests of the two neighbouring countries and contributes to the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law, in order to preserve security and peace in Europe, reducing its devastating humanitarian repercussions, and addressing its global impacts on global food security, energy supplies, the environment and nuclear safety.

Secondly - the establishment of international relations on the basis of the principles of good neighbourliness, respect for international law, the sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity of states, their religious and cultural values, and non-interference in their internal affairs. Here, I underline the firm position of the Kingdom of Bahrain in support of the unity, cohesion, solidarity and unified path of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States (GCC), and our appreciation of the positive regional developments represented by the return of Syria to the League of Arab States and the resumption of Saudi-Iranian diplomatic relations.

Thirdly - To promote the values of tolerance and a culture of peace and dialogue between religions, cultures and civilisations, as essential pillars for achieving security, development and respect for human rights. In this context, we call on the international community to respond effectively to the call of His Majesty the King

to adopt an international convention to criminalize religious, sectarian and racial hate speech, and to prevent the misuse of freedoms and media and digital platforms for religious contempt or to incite extremism, terrorism and intolerance.

Fourth - To galvanise international efforts in addressing common security challenges, through cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism and to cut off its financial and intellectual sources; to intensify efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure that the Middle East region is a weapons of mass destruction free zone; to cooperate in protecting the security of commercial shipping and energy supplies in the Gulf region, and to combat cybercrime.

Fifth – To deepen international partnerships and strategic dialogues towards building a more stable, just and solidarity-based global political, security and economic order, to achieve the aspirations of the people to consolidate international peace and security and implement the Sustainable Development Goals. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in intensifying efforts and channelling investments and financial resources towards achieving growth and prosperity, eliminating hunger and poverty, water and energy crises, and to support the least developed countries, open markets for their exports without restrictions, and alleviate their debt burden, in a way that ensures prosperity for all peoples, without anyone being left behind.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes and endorses the Economic Corridor Project that will link India with Europe through the Middle East region. We look forward to this ambitious strategic project contributing to the development and prosperity of the region for the benefit of all its people.

My country also welcomes the announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to establish a Global Water Organization, which aims to develop and integrate the efforts of states and organizations to address water challenges in a holistic manner.

Mr. President,

My Government is keen to promote an effective partnership with the United Nations and its specialized agencies in support of our common development goals. This was achieved through the submission and discussion of the fourth national report under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism for human rights, and the second report on progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the High-Level Political Forum of the Economic and Social Council.

Bahrain has been able to provide a model of political development, and the consolidation of the rule of law and institutions within the framework of the separation of powers and their cooperation under its Constitution.

The Kingdom is proud of its Council of Representatives exercising its legislative and oversight powers and expressing the will of citizens following the success of parliamentary elections in six successive sessions, the most recent of which was last year with a turnout rate of more than 73%. We are also proud of the establishment of justice within the framework of an impartial and independent judiciary, supported by independent human rights institutions such as the National Institution for Human Rights, the Ombudsman, the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission, and the Special Investigation Unit of the Public Prosecution, as well as promoting freedom of the press and media, the role of trade unions and civil society through 660 civil and political associations.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is proud to have established a pioneering and developed legislative system that has promoted respect for human rights and political and civil liberties, most notably: implementing the Law of Alternative Sanctions and Measures, the Open Prisons Project, and replacing prison sentences with non-custodial penalties. These have benefited more than 5,500 individuals since their implementation in May 2018, keeping pace with the latest criminal justice systems in reforming and qualifying convicts to integrate into society. In addition, we have adopted the Restorative Justice Law for Children and their Protection from Maltreatment, through which a judicial committee, courts, and a specialized prosecution office for children were established.

Within the framework of coordination between the legislative and executive authorities, my country is working to implement the Government Plan for the sixth

legislative term. Its top priorities are promoting security, stability and justice, supporting the Economic Recovery Plan, providing quality and competitive government services and integrating them with the objectives of the sustainable development plan.

Thanks to the wisdom of its leadership, the awareness of its people and its commitment to the spirit of "Team Bahrain" in turning challenges into sustainable achievements, the Kingdom set a humane and civilized example in combating the coronavirus pandemic and overcoming its impacts. This was achieved through providing comprehensive health and treatment services and free examinations for all citizens and residents, as was recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO), which labelled Manama as the first healthy city in the Middle East, and the implementation of five financial and economic packages through 40 initiatives supporting individuals, the private sector, and the most affected sectors at a value of \$12 billion, equivalent to one-third of the Kingdom's GDP.

My government is following-up on the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan and its programmes to accelerate the provision of employment opportunities for citizens, the construction of five new housing cities, the modernization of trade and financial legislation and procedures, economic openness and diversity, and the implementation of health, education, tourism and technical development strategies and projects. Over the past year, its achievements were translated into a nearly 5% real economic growth rate, an increase in the contribution of the non-oil sector to GDP by 83%, and the growth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to US\$35.5 billion, according to a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The Kingdom has also seen a rise of its prestigious international standing in international indicators, by moving up to second place in the Arab world and thirty-fifth place internationally in the list of countries with very high human development according to the report of the United Nations Development Programme, and first in the Arab world and twenty-first internationally in the 2022 World Happiness Report issued by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. It also ranked thirty-fourth globally in the Logistics Performance Index of the World

Bank, and first in the Middle East and North Africa region in the Economic Freedom Index issued by the Fraser Institute, also sharing its entrepreneurial experience with forty-eight countries in collaboration with UNIDO.

The Kingdom has also made its mark in the field of digital transformation by assuming the presidency of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), becoming a member of the Council of the International Telecommunication Union, and being classified among the "leading" countries in digital government, ranking first globally in the distribution of the internet according to the World Bank, and having a high development rate in e-government, according to the United Nations. This is evident in the provision of more than 600 government services through online platforms, a 100% coverage for fifth-generation networks, the adoption of a “**National Strategy**” to support the transformation of the fourth industrial revolution and the digital economy, and its investment in future sciences by establishing the National Space Science Authority, and launching the first completely Bahraini-built satellite.

In this regard, we are pleased to congratulate the United Arab Emirates on its remarkable progress in the space field. We would also like to congratulate them on the successful return of UAE astronaut Sultan Al-Neyadi to Earth, achieving a significant scientific milestone as the first Arab to complete a spacewalk outside the International Space Station.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has maintained its first place rank among Arab countries on the Basel Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Terrorist Financing Index, complementing its active role in establishing and hosting the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). It has also retained its prestigious Tier 1 status for a sixth consecutive year in the US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons, in addition to earning international acclaim for its human rights record and cybersecurity readiness, combating illicit drug trafficking, and addressing various economic and cyber crimes.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is proud of the advancement of women and their contributions as active partners in the process of comprehensive development achievements, as ministers, parliamentarians, judges and ambassadors. Bahraini women represent 22% of the cabinet, 23% of the members of the legislative

authority, 56% of the national workforce in the government sector, 35% of the private sector, 34% of diplomatic personnel, among other positive indicators that reflect the efforts of the Supreme Council for Women and its initiatives in the context of the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women. This is in line with other national plans, strategies and legislations to protect the rights of women, the family and children, for the care, rehabilitation and employment of the disabled, the rights of the elderly, and to protect against domestic violence and promote the system of social protection.

Believing in people's right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment, the Kingdom of Bahrain affirmed its support for international initiatives in the field of climate change, and its commitment to achieving net-zero carbon neutrality by 2060, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 2035, doubling the number of trees and in particular quadrupling the number of mangroves by 2035, improving energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources of energy, and protecting biodiversity. On that note, we would like to wish the United Arab Emirates success in organizing and chairing COP 28 at the end of this year.

Mr. President,

Peace is our strategic choice for a safer, more stable and more prosperous world. We firmly believe that peace is the way for constructive cooperation and peaceful coexistence among nations and peoples, as we recognise the inevitability of living together, that dialogue and coexistence must prevail over dispute and conflict, and based on our belief in the rights of all human beings to freedom, justice, prosperity and human dignity without discrimination as to race, origin, language, religion or belief.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Bahrain, in light of the noble initiatives of His Majesty the King, is proud of its success in sharing its pioneering experience with the world in tolerance, peaceful coexistence, respect for human rights, and encouraging the values of solidarity and international humanitarian and development work on several levels:

First: the inauguration of the "Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration" on freedom of religion and belief, the establishment of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence and the continued wise initiatives of His Majesty the King to promote tolerance, dialogue and religious and cultural rapprochement.

Second, the Kingdom has hosted regional and international conferences to promote regional security and dialogue among religions, sects and cultures, the most recent of which was the Bahrain Dialogue Forum: East and West for Human Coexistence, with the participation of His Holiness the Pope and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. It has also hosted the General Assembly meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on "Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Inclusive Societies: Combating Intolerance", which reflects the firm and deep-rooted principles of the Kingdom of Bahrain in respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, and its historical and cultural heritage spanning more than 5,000 years.

Third, the Kingdom continues to actively contribute to supporting the objectives of the United Nations by offering international awards for dialogue, peaceful coexistence, the service of humanity, digital transformation in the field of education, the empowerment of women and youth in achieving the goals of sustainable development, with the adoption of its initiatives for International Days of Conscience and Islamic Art, in addition to its delivery of humanitarian and relief assistance to many countries affected by the repercussions of wars, conflicts and natural disasters through the efforts of the Royal Humanitarian Foundation and the Bahraini Red Crescent.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain, under the reformist, humanitarian and diplomatic approach of His Majesty the King, with the support and follow-up of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and the commitment of its loyal and dedicated people, continues to maximise its developmental and civilizational gains, reinforce its noble values, its achievements and its active role in strengthening international solidarity towards a stable and secure world free from tensions and hatred, which advances with affection, tolerance, brotherhood and

cooperation for the benefit of humanity, to build a bright future for generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. President.