

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Permanent Mission of the
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
to the United Nations
New York

البعثة الدائمة
لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

Statement by

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Foreign Affairs

United Arab Emirates

before

the general debate of the 63rd Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, it is a pleasure for me to express to you and to your country our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the current Ordinary Session of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend my thanks and congratulations to your predecessor, His Excellency Srgjan Kerim, for his successful management of the previous session.

I should also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General, for his unceasing efforts to strengthen this organization and its role in global affairs.

Mr. President,

The United Arab Emirates has made major progress internally in a number of spheres, such as the expansion of the representation of women in its executive and legislative bodies and the enhancement of their role and participation in the labor market. We are also developing our national legislations and laws pertinent to the preservation of human rights and we are exerting major efforts to improve the welfare of those with special needs. We are also developing legislation to regulate the organization of the recruitment of labor from overseas and to ensure that the full rights of the labor force are safeguarded. In keeping with our commitments under the relevant bilateral and international agreements, we are also increasing our efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, protecting the victims of such trafficking and providing them with all necessary support.

Mr. President,

In terms of the environment, the United Arab Emirates attached great importance to environmental issues and launched a number of ambitious strategic programs. We launched earlier this year, in association with the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the Masdar City, a sustainable development project which will be the first carbon-free city in the world, completely dependent on renewable and clean technologies, such as solar energy, which will be used for power generation and the desalination of water.

Mr. President,

Foreign aid occupies an important place on our national agenda. We have continued to provide various types of financial and humanitarian assistance as well as other forms of aid to many countries. This is intended to help them to fund their development programmes and infrastructural projects. At the same time, we provide help to those who have suffered from natural disasters, both directly and through our membership in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Donor Support Group and through our contributions to the UN's specialized agencies and programmes. This aid takes several forms, and is distributed through a number of organizations, including the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Khalifa Humanitarian Foundation, the Zayed Humanitarian Foundation, the UAE Red Crescent and the Mohammed bin Rashid Humanitarian Foundation. Another channel is the recently-announced Noor Dubai initiative, which seeks to provide treatment for more than one million people suffering from eye disease, mainly in Africa and Asia.

In order to alleviate the suffering of many peoples of rising food prices, the UAE has dispatched 2 million tons of wheat to Yemen, Syria and Egypt. As part of its foreign assistance, it has also extended financial assistance to some developing countries in order to assist them in facing the phenomenal increase in their energy bill.

In this context, while we express our concern at the repercussions of the financial crisis in the international markets, we affirm that this issue requires an urgent international joint mechanism that contributes to the establishment of well enforced and transparent rules for regulating the international financial markets.

Mr. President,

The pattern of the development of the United Arab Emirates provides a living example of tolerance and co-existence. We hope, through our education and cultural programmes, to enrich and enhance these values, because we strongly believe that interaction between different nations and peoples is of fundamental importance, and is, indeed, an essential pre-requisite for the achievement of stability, prosperity and security in our region.

It is for that reason that the UAE attaches great importance to the development of and radical re-structuring of its educational system, so that it is in line with innovations in technology and education and so that it meets the needs and requirements of our development programmes.

In addition, we believe that providing education for all is one of the major issues that faces us. It is essential that the adequate resources are allocated to it, since in the process of education lies the hope that we can break the evil cycle represented by poverty and ignorance that, in turn, leads to the creation of fertile soil in which terrorism and extremism can take root and grow.

This belief in the fundamental importance of education has been behind several initiatives taken in the UAE, including 'Dubai Cares', which is a campaign primarily intended to provide primary education to over four million children in 14 countries in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East, through partnerships with multi-lateral organizations from many parts of the globe.

This initiative seeks to enhance and to focus efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to provide access to primary education for all by the year 2015, regardless of their gender or ethnicity. Those of primary school age are, after all, the generation of tomorrow. It is the duty of all of us to address their needs today.

Mr. President,

The continuation, since 1971, of Iran's occupation of the three UAE islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb is an issue of central importance for us. In this forum, I would like to state that we adhere to our position of demanding a full

restoration of the UAE's sovereignty over the three occupied islands, their territorial waters, their air space, their continental shelf and their Exclusive Economic Zone. These islands and their surrounding waters and air space, are integral parts of our national sovereignty and patrimony. We reiterate that all actions, whether military or administrative, undertaken by Iran with regards to these three islands since their occupation are void, illegitimate, in breach of the United Nations Charter and of the provisions of international law and the principles of good neighbourliness. There is not, and cannot be, any legal effect related to the Iranian actions, regardless of how much time may pass.

We renew our call that the international community should urge Iran to respond in a positive way to the genuine appeals and gestures of good will made by the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf Co-operation Council and the League of Arab States by agreeing to resolve this issue through dedicated direct negotiations or through a referral of the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

Mr. President,

We emphasize our belief in the importance of the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf becoming demilitarized zones, especially with regards to weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm our belief in the necessity for Israel to be obliged to comply with United Nations resolutions by bringing its nuclear facilities into compliance with the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to sign, unconditionally, the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty. We also urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its collaboration with the IAEA and the international community, so as to dispel concerns and suspicions related to the nature and objectives of its nuclear programme.

At the same time, we urge other concerned parties to commit themselves to continue the current political and diplomatic approach in tackling this issue, within a framework of complete transparency and avoiding any escalation, until such time as a peaceful solution is achieved that is capable of providing peace and security for the region and its peoples.

Pursuant to our firm conviction of the undeniable right of countries to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the safeguards framework of the IAEA, we urge the developed nations to support the legitimate needs of developing countries for access to such energy by providing them with the best possible access for the acquiring of tools, devices, nuclear materials and the technological know-how applicable for peaceful purposes. In this context, the UAE believes that its peaceful nuclear programme represents a practical and responsible example of transparency for meeting our energy needs while, at the same time, committing ourselves not to engage in enrichment or re-processing, with the support of some friendly countries and organizations, and under the supervision of the IAEA.

In this regard we refer to the following website:

http://mofa.gov.ae/pdf/Nuclear_document_Arabic_E.pdf

Mr. President,

On another front, the United Arab Emirates has spared no effort, and will continue to spare no effort, in supporting and enhancing all regional and international endeavors designed to help Iraq and its people. It is our hope that the latest initiatives taken by the United Arab Emirates, including the writing off of debts and due interest, together worth over US \$ 7 billion, and the re-opening of our Embassy in Baghdad will contribute to promoting economic development and strengthening the political process which requires the renunciation of all types of communal and sectarian violence and full commitment to the unity, sovereignty and stability of Iraq, the preservation of its Arab identity and the rejection of any moves to divide the country.

Mr. President,

As for the region of the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates has strongly supported the Palestinian - Israeli peace process, including the final status negotiations, and the outcome of the Annapolis Conference. In that context, we would wish to draw particular attention to our concerns about Israel's growing lack of interest in negotiations. We call upon the International Community and, in particular, the United Nations Security Council and the Members of the Quartet, to exert further pressure on Israel, so that it lifts the siege it has imposed on the Palestinian people, and implements the international resolutions related to halting and eliminating all its unlawful settlement activities and the ending of its occupation of all those Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and some Lebanese territories. Such an ending of occupation would be in compliance with relevant legitimate international resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative and will ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and ensure Israel's security.

Mr. President,

With regards to the situation in Sudan, we commend the efforts being exerted by the United Nations and by the African Union to resolve the crisis in Darfur. We call on all parties to work to put an end to their differences in order to reach a political settlement that will preserve Sudan's sovereignty, its political independence and its territorial integrity.

At the same time, we look forward to intensifying and accelerating regional and international mediation efforts in order to bring an end to the violence in Somalia.

We express our satisfaction at the positive developments in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and view this partnership as a major component in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. President,

My country has collaborated effectively with all efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms, including financial aspects such as money laundering. We will continue to do this, in order to rid the world of the epidemic of terrorism and to obliterate those forces that engage in it or support it. At the same time, we re-emphasize our support for all those initiatives that are being undertaken to promote a dialogue between civilizations and to promote a spirit of tolerance between all faiths.

Mr. President,

I would like to emphasize our belief in the necessity for an enhancement of the current process of reform of the United Nations. We are deeply concerned that no progress has been made regarding the issue of fair representation on the United Nations Security Council and an enlargement of that body. The United Arab Emirates urges the Permanent Members of the Security Council to show the necessary flexibility and goodwill to permit an agreement to be reached on the increasing of the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council, in such a way as to implement the principle of equality between sovereign states and to address the issue of the under-representation of small and developing countries in this vital organ of the UN.

I would, Mr. President, wish to stress that a full compliance with the principles of the UN Charter and international law is essential if we are to tackle the enormous challenges that currently face the international community. I hope that the interventions at this Ordinary Session of the General Assembly will lead to the achievement of an international consensus on how those challenges can be tackled for the benefit of all mankind.

Thank you, Mr. President.