

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Statement of
His Highness
Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Emir of the State of Qatar

Before

The Fifty Ninth Session of
The United Nations General Assembly

New York, September 21, 2004

Check against delivery

Mr. President:
Mr. Secretary-General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives great pleasure to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, currently presided over by my country, Qatar. I would like to seize this opportunity to extend congratulations to Mr. Jean Ping on his assumption of the Presidency of the current session of the General Assembly, wishing His Excellency every success in the discharge of his functions. I would also like to extend thanks to his predecessor Mr. Julian Hunte for guiding over the work of the previous session.

It also gives me great pleasure to express to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, my appreciation for his judicious conduct of the work of this organization during a critical period in which international relations have faced and are still facing immense challenges.

Mr. President:

The United Nations was established six decades ago as an expression of the aspirations of all the members of the international community to save the world from the scourge of war, the maintenance international peace and security, and the achievement of cooperation among nations and people in various fields. About two decade after its inception, on 15 June 1964, to be exact, the Group of 77 was established to express the aspirations of scores of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to work with each other under the umbrella of the United Nation with a view to promoting their common economic interests, developing their negotiating capacity regarding various international economic issues and increasing the bonds of their technical cooperation. Just as the United Nations has grown, its membership has increased and the scope of its activity has expanded, the Group of 77 and China has attracted, through its mission, new members into its membership which now stands at 132 states constituting more than two thirds of the membership of the United Nations.

Our group, Mr. President, embodies the commitment of the developing countries to the mission of the United Nations, and their determination to be

guided by the lofty principals included in its Charter. While the Ministerial meeting of the group highlights its close relationship with the international organization, the actions of it states, since April 2000, when it convened its first meeting at the level of Presidents and Heads of Governments, reaffirm the interest of the members of the group in promoting coordination among them selves, inspired by the principles of the United Nations to achieve their aims.

Mr. President,

The difficult challenge facing the international community today, in the view of the Group of 77 and China, is that of maintaining international peace and security while achieving economic welfare and development. The history of international relations over the second half of the last century has shown that it is almost impossible to maintain peace and security as long as the minimum standards of a basic livelihood are lacking Poverty and destitution have often resulted in tensions that have eventually led to breaches of international peace and security. It is no coincidence that the poorest regions in the world are the ones that have suffered the most complicated regional conflicts.

To achieve the aims of security and development at the same time, the international community needs to adopt more equitable policies that do justice to a large segment of the members of the international community who still lack many of the basic necessities of life.

Mr. President

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indisputable that globalization has acquired an immense momentum and yielded unequivocally positive results. Yet, it has been accompanied by some adverse effects that require a review and reconsideration of a number of current international economic policies so that it can acquire the human face it is supposed to have. The continued imbalance in the distribution of the benefits of international economic interdependence, the progressive widening of the gap between the developed and the developing countries, the deterioration of the economic conditions in quite a few countries in the South and the attendant adverse effect, on the environment would accentuate the feelings of discontent and frustration and could even lead to abhorrent forms of international conflict.

Therefore, it is necessary to overcome the obstacles that make it difficult for developing countries to reap the fruits of the world economic growth, and the international community must reaffirm its commitment to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs through a deeper and more comprehensive integration of the developing countries in the world economy.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China is attached to its call for the establishment of a multilateral open trading system that takes into account the norms of justice and the rule of law, and is geared to assist the developing countries combat poverty and underdevelopment. This necessitates the elimination of bias in the liberalization of trade between the developed and the developing countries, and discontinuing practices that continue to impede free commercial exchanges, such as agriculture subsidies and blocking the movement of natural persons, which make it impossible for the developing countries to tap their potential or market many of their products.

In this regard we call on the developed countries to liberalize trade at a faster rate by removing the various obstacles that have so far deprived the developing countries of their right to enjoy international trade relations based on equal opportunities. While noting the progress achieved in the Doha negotiations on the question of agriculture, we advocate that the access of the other products of interest to the developing countries to the world market be accorded the priority that it merits. Moreover, there should be agreement on specific measures that ensure sufficient financial flows to the developing countries, especially FDI, to assist those countries in building the production capacity they need to compete on the world market. We would also like to underline the importance of granting every one the opportunity to benefit from the achievement of science and technology, access the sources of knowledge and assist in achieving development.

Mr. President,

A review of the Millennium Declaration, indicates that its objective relating to the countries of Africa and the Least Developed Countries have so far seemed unattainable. This is due, in large measure, to the failure to fulfill the commitments were so generously made at various UN conferences and summits.

Since that we are going to undertake next year the first review of the Millennium Declaration, we should seize the opportunity provided by our meeting today to renew the commitment to the prompt implementation of this declaration. At the time of the review of the Declaration, the Group of 77 and China will present a series of proposals to put it into effect, most of which focus on the development of multi-lateral international relations. The group will continue to be engaged with the situation in Africa, the Least Developed Countries and the Land-Locked Developing Countries. We have actually participated in seeking practical solution to the problems besetting this region, and will participate in the forthcoming review of the Barbados Program for SIDS early in 2005. I would like to seize this opportunity to urge the international community to support this program since its an integral part of our efforts to move toward a better world.

Mr. President,

Allow me now to address, on behalf of my country, Qatar, a number of political questions closely related to our aim of enabling the developing countries and people to enjoy their full economic rights. Of these, I would like to single out the question of the absence of democracy and the prolonged slackening of political reform in quite a few countries in the South, which was probably most evident in the last few years in the Middle East region. Such absence and slackening have been at the root of most of the harsh social and economic suffering currently plaguing it.

Political reform and the people's participation indecision-making are no longer an option but a necessity. It is no exaggeration to say that they have now become an imperative, since the long course of international relations has shown that those states that have made economic achievements were the most committed to the exercise of democracy, be they in the North or the South.

Mr. President,

If there are some instances of states that have managed to improve their economic performance without bringing their political conditions in line with the principles of democracy, they represent limited instances and have continued to be vulnerable to sudden economic upheavals.

Just as international economic relations, Ladies and Gentlemen, are dominated by the discourse of sustainable development, another discourse must be launched about what I would like to call sustainable reform. There is no lesson to be learned from the fact that the countries of the South undertake political reform in one era, then regress in another era, or that they take one step forward toward democracy to serve a topical interest then, take two steps backward once that interest has been satisfied. Rather, the real lesson is to be drawn from the long history of development the annals of which have only done justice to those who understood that the economy can only be based on efficiency, and that efficiency can not be achieved by fiat and the policies of intimidation and confinement but through discussion of and participation in various public affairs.

Mr. President,

The Question of Palestine embodies the suffering of a people deprived of both its political and economic rights, which is trying in spite of the difficulty of such an attempt to remedy its situation. However, the Israeli occupation remains a crushing burden on the legitimate Palestinian dreams of freedom and development. For more than 50 years, the question on Palestine has been inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly. Hence, the international community needs to heed the voice of its conscience, so that it would reconsider its position on a question that it has allowed, in spite of its humanitarian nature and manifest legitimacy, to fester from one century into the next, thus compounding the tragedy of the Palestinian people before the might of the Israeli occupation forces.

Compelling Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy is more than a mere duty, because such legitimacy, in my view, should not be applied selectively. Also, Israel must fulfill the commitments it has made including its commitment to the Roadmap, in addition to halting the construction of the separation wall which has harmed the Palestinian homeland and livelihood in harms way, in accordance of advisory opinion of the ICJ on 9 July 2004 Endorsed by the General Assembly by its tenth emergency special session, and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its rights to self determination, and establish its independent state, with Al Quds Al Sahrif as its capital, that would co exist in security and peace with Israel.

Related to this is the need to achieve a comprehensive peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967, including the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Shaba'a Farms. In this regard, we stress the need to transform the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, without any exception, in order to achieve the security and peace that would serve the interest and welfare of all its peoples.

As regards Iraq, it is our hope that security council resolution **1546** will help stabilize the situation so as to allow the implementation of the schedule included in the resolution regarding the holding of free, democratic elections, and the timely drafting of a permanent constitution as a prelude to the establishment of an elected constitutional government. Also, we will spare no effort in supporting the reconstruction, and affirm our position of principle regarding the need to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and refrain interference in its internal affairs. We would also like to emphasize the central role of the United Nations in Iraq.

We note with satisfaction the commitment of the Sudan to work closely with the International community to resolve the conflict in the Darfur region. This makes it incumbent on the international community to cooperate positively with the Sudanese government, especially since it has initiated actions to restore the rule of law to mitigate the suffering of the inhabitants of this region. We also welcome the accords that were signed in order to find a peaceful settlement of the problem of Southern Sudan and urge the international community to support the efforts of the government of Sudan in this regard.

Mr. President,

The latter issues I have raised, although seemingly of a political nature related to chronic regional problems, mainly in the Middle East, are not actually far removed from the endeavours of the Group of 77 and China to achieve a more equitable international order. The regional stability that is sought in each of these cases will allow economic reconstruction on a sound basis in every instance.

The Group of 77 has been striving for more than 40 years on more than one front. While building bridges among developing countries, it has actively

sought to reach out to the developed countries and convince them that the interest of the international economic order lies in narrowing the gap, rather than widening it. Moreover it will always remain committed to the principles of the UN, mindful of the need for continuous coordination with its organs and bodies.

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your kind attention, and may peace and God's mercy and blessings be open you.