

Statement by
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The Prime Minister
BEFORE
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In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Mr. President,

It gives me pleasure to start my statement by congratulating you, Sir, in your personal capacity as well for being a representative of your country, St. Lucia, on your election as President of the fifty-eighth session of this Assembly. Given your skills and experience, we are confident that you will competently lead our deliberations over the pressing global issues that face this organization at this critical time. May I assure you of my delegation's readiness to fully cooperate with you in order to ensure a successful fulfillment of your mandate.

I wish also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Jan Kavan, for his remarkable contribution to the promotion of international cooperation.

Also, I wish to reiterate our appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his tireless efforts to bring peace and stability to the various troubled regions across the world. Mr. Annan deserves special tribute for his extraordinary performance in maintaining the integrity of the United Nations and its leading role in moving forward the global agenda despite the enormous challenges and high risks that face the institution and its personnel. The terrorist attack against the United Nations office in Baghdad last month which claimed the lives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and a number of his colleagues is yet another clear testimony of those challenging difficulties and immense dangers, which happened again two days ago in another terrorist attack aiming once more the United Nations in Iraq.

From this podium, I reiterate our condemnation of this terrorist and all other similar acts that occurred in the cities of Baghdad and Al-Najaf. Those attacks took the lives of highly respected religious leaders and other innocent victims. We believe that these acts are aimed not only at the underpinnings of security, stability and people's sense of confidence, but also at the noble values which we all seek to restore and consolidate in brotherly Iraq.

Mr. President,

The most appropriate response to these criminal acts is perhaps a two-track approach. The United Nations together with the international powers interested in the Iraqi question who are also seeking to establish security and stability in Iraq, should stay the course and firmly face the continuing violence there. In the meantime, further efforts should focus on enabling the Iraqi people to consolidate national legitimacy and to develop national institutions. In parallel, efforts for the reconstruction of Iraq should intensify in order to make up for the too many years of deprivation, oppression, destruction and mismanagement painfully endured by the people of Iraq during the era of the defunct regime which was removed by concerted international action anchored in Security Council resolutions relating to the liberation of Iraq.

Mr. President,

Kuwait strongly condemns the inhuman crimes and practices perpetrated by the previous regime in Iraq. The most recent manifestation of those atrocities was the discovery of many mass grave sites in various parts of the country. Those graves contained the remains of thousands of innocent human beings especially Kuwaitis and nationals of third countries, among whom 33 were identified as having been prisoners and subsequently executed by shooting in the years 1991 and 1992. This is a further proof of the brutality of that regime and its total disregard for international human rights treaties and the norms of international humanitarian law. Above and

beyond the crimes themselves, the regime persistently denied throughout the past 13 years its knowledge of the whereabouts of those prisoners. It also ignored relevant Security Council and other international and regional organizations' decisions calling for cooperation in disclosing the fate of those victims, thus aggravating the anguish of their relatives.

Having said that, Kuwait will pursue its efforts in coordination with the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, The Tripartite Commission, the interim Coalition Authority and the citizens of Iraq to determine the fate of the remaining Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners. Furthermore, we shall help in hunting down the perpetrators in order to make them account, under due process of law and justice, for the crimes they committed against those innocent defenseless victims.

Mr. President,

Responding to its national and legal obligations, Kuwait has joined the Coalition forces in their endeavour to enforce Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq. Thus, we provided all possible facilities within the framework of that legal structure which eventually led to the salvation of Iraq from an oppressive tyrant regime. May I take this occasion to express our welcome of the removal of that regime from Iraq and to congratulate the brotherly people of Iraq on their liberation and we wish them prosperity in a secure and stable Iraq.

In addition, Kuwait welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 1483 and 1500 on Iraq. We also invite the United Nations member states to join the ongoing international drive to restore security and stability to Iraq. This will help the people of Iraq to rebuild their homeland and to re-establish the political and constitutional institutions of a national government. In this regard, we underscore the central and significant role of the United Nations in this political process.

Mr. President,

Immediately after the collapse of the former regime in Iraq, Kuwait has reached out to the brotherly people of Iraq with a whole array of humanitarian assistance. Our response came in the spirit of our common Arab and Islamic heritage. Kuwait rushed material and financial aid to several local and international organizations as well as to the United Nations agencies operating in Iraq. We also contributed directly to the restoration of electrical power, health care, education services and water supplies to various areas in the country. In addition, Kuwait set up a humanitarian operations center to facilitate and coordinate relief aid activities and international emergency relief efforts to deliver aid flows into Iraq. Kuwait will continue its efforts to ensure the delivery of all kinds of assistance which we hope will alleviate the suffering of the brotherly population of Iraq.

Now it is our fervent hope that Iraq will safely cross the dire straits it is passing through and restore its security and stability and safeguard its independence and territorial integrity. All that will enable the people of Iraq to recommit their resources and energies for the reconstruction of their country so that Iraq will reclaim its legitimate and natural status in the region and the world.

Yes indeed we are fully confident that Iraq will overcome the current critical stage of its history because it is endowed with enormous natural riches, deep cultural heritage and skilled human resources. The Government and people of Kuwait will stand by the side of Iraq during this stage and we look forward for enjoying good brotherly relations with a free and united Iraq. We hope that our bilateral relations will be hallmarked by trust and confidence, good neighbourliness, and subject to established treaties and United Nations resolutions. This will help us move away from the remnants of the past and shift our focus onto building a better future that enhances security and stability in the region.

Mr. President,

Since the 11 September 2001 tragic events that struck the United States, the phenomenon of terrorism has dominated the global agenda. Kuwait strongly condemned those terrorist acts as well as all other similar crimes committed in other countries. These are horrendous acts of terrorism that created new realities on the international scene, including a universal conviction that terrorism in its pernicious manifestations is actually an evil not exclusively associated with one nation, religion or culture. All of us also realize that fight against this evil is an international responsibility all member states must bear, not just one state or a certain group of states. Therefore, we maintain that the United Nations remains the most appropriate forum for examining this issue and

developing the most effective means to combat it and eventually stem it. To this end, the universal signature, endorsement and enforcement by all member states of the twelve international agreements relating to terrorism would represent a real breakthrough in ensuring the deployment of the most effective means to contain and eliminate this pandemic.

As Kuwait firmly reiterates its stand of categorical rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as its renunciation of all acts of violence and extremism, it condemns the vicious orchestrated campaign being waged against a sister state, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by some American media agencies. Rather, we would commend Saudi Arabia for its concrete and significant contributions to the global campaign against terrorism. In the meantime, let us bear in mind the fact that Saudi Arabia itself has been the target of terrorists and suffered as a result of that. Kuwait fully endorses all measures taken by the Saudi government in its drive to eliminate terrorism and to consolidate regional security and stability.

In the same context, Kuwait will maintain its efforts in coordination with the regional states and the United Nations to fight terrorism and to further strengthen the measures it has enforced in order to completely fulfill its international obligations, especially those set forth in Security Council resolution 1373.

Mr. President,

Thirty-six years have now passed since the oppressive Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people who continue to suffer from a constant decline in their economic and social living conditions as a result of the Israeli policies and practices which contravene international and humanitarian laws and treaties. Kuwait is following with grave concern the recent escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Despite the intense international efforts led by the Quartet which yielded the Road Map for the settlement of the conflict within a specific time frame with a view to the attainment by the Palestinian people of their legitimate political rights, Israel persists in its policy of back-tracking on its commitments. In fact, it deliberately undermines every promising initiative while paying no heed to the possible consequences in terms of the perpetuation of the cycle of violence, rising tension and instability throughout the region. Against this backdrop, the question of deploying an international monitoring force to ensure scrupulous compliance with cease-fire arrangements has become more pressing now than ever.

While Kuwait renews its commitment to fully support the struggle of the Palestinian people to attain all their full legitimate political rights, including the establishment of their independent state on their national territory, with Jerusalem its capital, we demand that the Israeli government must commit itself to implement the resolution adopted last Friday by the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly and to reverse its decision to remove the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority. In the same context, we demand that Israel must fulfill its obligations and pledges set out in relevant United Nations resolutions, primarily Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the land for peace formula and the bilateral accords signed with the Palestinian Authority and the Road Map in all its provisions and implications. In addition, Israel must cease forthwith its policies of isolating local communities and denying them food supplies, incursions, destruction of the physical infrastructures, demolition of homes and arbitrary round-ups and arrests. Israel must also stop its construction of the separation wall and settlements. It should also release all Palestinian detainees. Recent developments on the ground proved that these policies and practices will not fulfill Israel's goals. Rather, they would fuel the sentiments of hostility toward Israel. They will also reinforce the sense of despair and undermine the prospects of living in freedom and dignity, thus forcing the Palestinians to pursue the course of national struggle and resistance of occupation. Furthermore, Israel must, in the final analysis, withdraw from all the Arab territories it occupied in 1967 as a pre-requisite for building the just, permanent and comprehensive peace we all yearn for.

At the regional level, and in line with Kuwait's compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially Article two, which stresses the principle of resolution of disputes by peaceful means, we call on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates to maintain mutual visits and to deepen bilateral talks with a view to resolve their dispute over the three islands. It is our hope that the resolution of the current dispute will lead to the strengthening of relations between the two countries and the consolidation of security and stability in the region. In this regard, Kuwait in its forthcoming chairmanship of the Gulf Cooperation Council will spare not effort to strengthen all aspects of political, security and economic cooperation among the states of the region. Furthermore, Kuwait in coordination with the United Nations and the regional players will explore the activation and development of regional security arrangements with interested countries in the region.

Mr. President,

The world of today is different in many ways from the world of several years back. The trade and economic boundaries of states are rapidly disappearing. Cultural interaction among various societies is expanding as a result of the immense achievements in information and communications technologies. Despite all the benefits of the digital revolution, it brought about some negative implications which could not be brushed aside. Thus, we see now increasing marginalization of the majority of the developing countries whose economies now suffer from a growing set of problems that jeopardize their prospects of meaningful growth and prosperity. In an attempt to face up to these challenges that hamper world economic growth, a series of United Nations meetings were convened to address the impediments to global economic growth. Thus, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in South Africa, and the International Conference on Finance and Development held in Mexico developed a framework of action for ensuring equity and fair interdependence and cooperation between the North and the South. Also, specific guidelines and obligations were set for all stockholders to achieve a more equitable balance in economic relations. So, at this juncture, we would like to call on the developed nations to meet their partnership obligations. These include, inter alia, adequate flows of financial and technical aid to the developing countries, alleviation of debt burden and cancellation of debts on the Least Developed Countries, removal of customs restrictions on flows of goods from the developing countries into world markets; exchange of information and expertise that would help developing countries in the building and modernization of their national institutions.

To this end, Kuwait, for its part, reaffirms its commitment to continue to provide development and financial assistance to the developing countries. Our channels will be either the United Nations programmes, funds, agencies and other multilateral organizations; or the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development which has a sterling track-record of aiding and financing a wide range of development projects and programmes in over one hundred developing countries across the globe.

Mr. President,

As we are still in the very early years of a new century, it is our earnest hope that all of us will draw the right lessons from our collective experiences of the past. Only through common action can the human kind face the challenges of our times in order to fashion a better future that offers our forthcoming generations a hope of living in freedom and dignity. Let us join hands to fulfill our common vision of a life in which law and order prevail; a life governed by the values and principles of freedom, justice and equality for all; a life that upholds the concept of "partnership and cooperation are the shortest route to security, stability and peace in the world."

Thank you, Mr. President.