

Permanent Mission of the  
Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN  
New York



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STATEMENT

By

**H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa**  
**The Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain**

at the  
Sixty-Seventh Session of the United Nations  
General Assembly

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Your Excellency, Mr. Vuk Jeremić,

Your Excellency, the Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. President,

As we begin this session, it gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its 67<sup>th</sup> session. I am confident that, with your competence, capability and rich experience in diplomacy in the service of your friendly country, the Republic of Serbia, you will conduct the work of the session successfully.

May I also express our great appreciation for the president of the last session of the General Assembly, H.E. Ambassador Nasir AbdelAziz Al Nasr, a son of the sisterly state of Qatar, for the vital role he played and the constructive issues he advanced as well as for his excellent management of the business of the 66<sup>th</sup> session. We are proud of him as a seasoned diplomat from the Gulf Cooperation Council and wish him all success in his future endeavours.

Let me also express our great appreciation for the strenuous efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in enhancing the effective role of the Organization in its fields of competence. We look forward with anticipation to a renewed role for the Organization in light of the new vision of the SG so that this international organization may be in a position to address the major challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. President,

Since joining the United Nations, the Kingdom of Bahrain works tirelessly to support the noble principles and objectives of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace and security and the development of friendly relations between nations on the basis of mutual respect. I am therefore honoured, in harmony with those principles, to represent here a country responsive to its international responsibilities while laying down the foundations of a modern state through initiatives, plans as well as political and organizational visions aimed at constructing a modern society, organized and committed to its values in the various areas, notably education, health, vocational training, economic reform and advancement of women. Throughout its long history, Bahrain has opted for dialogue as an approach to all its modernization efforts oriented towards meeting the requirements of modern times, beginning by the election of municipal councils in the twenties and the parliamentary councils during the last decades. Important results were achieved in providing a greater degree of equality, participation, transparency, political rights and human dignity. This represents a historical achievement towards a society based on competitive sustainability, justice, rule of law, equality and the consecration of the principles of popular representation and participation in the decision making process.

Notwithstanding all these remarkable national achievements, the Kingdom of Bahrain faces, since last year, some serious challenges to its security and stability which it addressed with full transparency, commitment and honesty in order to restore security and stability. In this context, the Bahraini Independent Commission of Investigation was created to establish the truth and give each person his or her due. Consequently, a comprehensive dialogue took place among the various sectors of society and resulted in a series of constitutional and legislative reforms encompassing all aspects of life: political, social and legal.

Against the backdrop of this experience, H.M. King Hamad Bin Issa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, proposed the creation of an Arab court of human rights to lay down the foundations of an enabling environment for human rights and to protect those

rights in the Arab world on the model of the Inter-America Court of Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Council of the Arab League endorsed this historical initiative and arrangements are currently under way to set forth the legal basis for the establishment of the court which, it is hoped, will become a reality very soon.

Mr. President,

Consistent with its continued efforts aimed at building a pluralistic Bahraini society and its commitment to the protection and enhancement of human rights, the Kingdom of Bahrain last week accepted, before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, more than 90% of the recommendations made by the Council in the context of the Universal Periodic Review, including considering accession to the Optional Protocol attached to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Mr. President,

The challenges and threats facing our region led the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council to appreciate the need for greater synergies among them, notably by endorsing the proposal made by the Custodian of the two Holy Shrines, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to move from the stage of "cooperation" to one of "union" with a view to addressing those challenges and threats and building the capacities necessary to achieve a unified society based on a shared vision for the future, commensurate with accelerating movement of the world and responding to the aspirations of the peoples of the GCC, deeply convinced that their interests and assets can only be served through solidarity and unity so as to preserve national independence and state sovereignty and to adapt to the strategic global and regional transformations.

Mr. President,

My country firmly believes that the role of the UN is indispensable in addressing international and regional problems and finding appropriate solutions to them. Our region, specifically, is now in great need of that role given the speedy and regrettable developments in Syria. The international community, represented in the UN and its bodies entrusted with the maintenance of peace and security, is called upon to unify its position so as to put an end to the humanitarian suffering of the Syrian people and to find a political solution to the crisis that brings to an end violence and bloodshed, preserves the unity of Syria and the cohesion of its people and spares the region as a whole serious repercussions spilling far beyond the borders of Syria. Our organization must therefore shoulder its responsibilities for the protection of unarmed civilians and must not allow the procedures of the United Nations to impede its ability to prevent crimes against humanity. It must put aside the narrow geopolitical interests and proceed to the attainment of the supreme goal which is the responsibility to protect civilians in armed conflicts. My Government welcomes the appointment of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as joint Special Representative of the UN and the League of Arab States and wishes him every success in his endeavours to achieve the legitimate demands of the Syrian people.

Based on this same humanitarian principle, we should also stand by the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar in their ordeal and provide them with assistance while giving good counsel to the Government of Myanmar on that subject.

Mr. President,

Even though the Syrian crisis is to-day the main concern of the international community, the Palestinian question remains the core issue for the Arab states and the international community. The Kingdom of Bahrain believes that it is imperative to redouble efforts towards a just, durable and comprehensive solution, notably through the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in conformity with the

relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Arab Peace Initiative and the decisions of the Quartet. We are most concerned by the attempts to violate the sanctity of the sacred shrines in Al Quds Alsharif and to alter their identity. We call on the international community to support H.E. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, in the relentless efforts he exerts to defend the cause of his occupied country and to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. We therefore urge the international community to demand from Israel to halt its settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory and dismantle the settlements that jeopardize the chances of peace. We also stress the necessity of implementing the resolutions of the GA and the Security Council by taking practical action to halt the ongoing Israeli violations and aggression and ensure the observance of the principles of international legitimacy in this respect, notably the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, prohibiting any geographical or demographic alterations in the occupied territories. We look forward to peace in our region for the good of all its peoples.

Mr. President,

One of the tenets of our foreign policy is to enhance peace and security in the region. In this respect, Bahrain reaffirms its unflinching position of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This would only be possible by compelling Israel to implement the relevant international decisions in the matter, to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to subject its nuclear facilities to inspection by the IAEA. Moreover, we stress that the Islamic Republic of Iran must fulfill its commitments of total and transparent cooperation with the IAEA. Indeed, nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to peace and security in the entire region and the various parties must assume their responsibility for peace and security and refrain from the language of intimidation and counter-intimidation that has of late dominated our region.

In this respect, we stress the importance of an excellent preparation of the 2012 Conference, to be held pursuant to the agreement reached in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also reaffirm that the principle of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in

the Middle East does in no way preclude the right of all nations to access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, provided they do so in all transparency and abide by the IAEA guarantees system.

Mr. President,

While the Member States of the GCC stretch out their hand to their neighbor, the Islamic Republic of Iran, they unfortunately find no response that may facilitate confidence building and peace and security. On the contrary, they have to face constant interference in their internal affairs. Of late, Iran has been reiterating menacing threats to GCC Member States in contradiction to the spirit of good neighborliness, thus generating tensions and suspicions in the region. More important, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the necessity of solving the problem of the three United Arab Emirates islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, either through direct negotiations or through arbitration by the International Court of Justice.

As regards the situation in Yemen, we are aware that a successful transitional period is most important for the stability of the country in line with the agreement reached at in the framework of the GCC initiative and its executive mechanisms. We welcome the steps taken by H.E. President Abdou Rabbou Mansour Hadi to launch the national dialogue and we are fully confident in his wise leadership of Yemen during the transitional period.

In this respect, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the convening of the Conference of donors in Riyadh, sponsored by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and fully supports the recommendations and conclusions agreed upon with a view to build a brighter future for Yemen as well as the outcomes of the meeting of the “Friends of Yemen” held to-day in New York.

We also reaffirm the unwavering, principled and consistent position of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco, regarding the preservation of the

territorial integrity of Morocco and the peaceful settlement of the Moroccan Sahara issue pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

As regards the current political developments in Somalia, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the election of H.E. Hassan Shaikh Mahmoud, as new president of the republic as part of the transitional process. We call on the international community to offer its support for the restoration of peace and security in the country and the preservation of Somalia's territorial integrity and political independence. We commend the efforts deployed by the Somali government to restore peace, stability and cooperation, particularly as regards combating piracy in the Horn of Africa in cooperation with the international community.

Mr. President,

We have of late witnessed ugly insults and denigration addressed to our beloved prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him, his family and his companions). A typical example of that is the shameful film that the Kingdom of Bahrain condemns in the strongest terms and which led to the fueling of religious sentiments that seek to deliberately insult the sacred symbols of peoples and the resulting violence and vandalism in many countries of the world. Our concern is compounded by the unjustified aggression perpetrated against the diplomatic mission of the United States of American in Benghazi that cost the life of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and a number of innocent American diplomats, in a flagrant violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

In spite of these serious developments and repercussions, we should not let this gloomy scene hide the spectacle of the crowds that took to the streets of Libya the following day to condemn this abject act. Therefore, we are all responsible, as peoples and nations, for treating each other with respect and redoubling our efforts to prevent the recurrence of insults to religions and prophets and other religious symbols as Allah commands us: ***“in the Name of Allah the most merciful, the most compassionate, O mankind, indeed We have***



*created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” (God the Almighty has spoken the truth).*

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Bahrain is among the first to have achieved the MDGs even before the prescribed time frame in fields such as free basic education, empowerment of women, expansion of social security to vulnerable groups, equal opportunities for men and women and the enhancement of health services, notably for children. The Kingdom of Bahrain therefore occupies an advanced position at the global level as reflected in the UN Human Development Reports issued during past years.

Mr. President,

For the international community to overcome the challenges facing Member States of the United Nations, our states must take up their responsibility and role as the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs is approaching. To enable the international community overcome the difficulties and challenges facing Member States, barely three years away from the deadline, our countries must assume their responsibility and role, and this would only be possible through increased efforts to review the policies designed to build national and regional capacities through interactive means designed to achieve those goals and remedy the shortcomings that stand on the way of their achievement. According to the Secretary-General’s report, and notwithstanding some negative indicators, over 89% of the population of our world has access to improved water resources, child mortality is decreasing across the world and the percentage of those living in extreme poverty has halved.

However, it seems that other objectives are still unattainable in many countries and inequalities continue to rise in some areas such as public health that remains dismal. This applies also to the scarcity of water resources. In the face of such challenges, the global

financial crisis cannot be used as an excuse for renegeing on our financial commitments to those in greatest need.

In this respect, Bahrain welcomes the outcome of Rio+20 and the Secretary-General's vision as regards sustainable development. Much remains to be done, however, to ensure that people across the world not only have access to the most basic needs, but that they have the tools to maintain them over time. We must acknowledge that sustainability is not merely the response to needs but rather a principal element of human dignity.

Mr. President,

I wish to close by saying that the formidable challenges our world faces to-day present valuable opportunities that we can only exploit through wisdom, courage, patience and common efforts. We must work with all our capacity to address the elements that divide us, particularly backwardness, extremism, isolationism. At the same time, we must continue to lend a hand to those most in need. We must use objectivity and honesty to challenge immobility and prejudice so as we can achieve the progress and prosperity our peoples aspire to.

I thank you Mr. President.