



THE GAMBIA

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STATEMENT

BY

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&

GAMBIANS ABROAD

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Awuzubilahi Mina Shaitani Rajeem, Bismilahi Rahmani Rahim

**Your Excellency, Mr. President,
Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,
Staff and Members of the UN family
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

First of all, I thank Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) for the opportunity of the moment, when we gather here to deliberate on ways to foster peaceful international cooperation and development across the world. On behalf of my delegation and the Government and people of The Gambia, I wish to thank you for the warm welcome my delegation and I have received since our arrival. I also wish to congratulate Y.E Mr President, Dr. Ali Abdusalam Treki of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, profoundly, on your courage, outstanding and efficient leadership demonstrated during the 64th Session; and to welcome Y.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland as your successor for this 65th Session. Please be assured Mr. Deiss of The Gambia's support to your presidency. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in leading and managing the affairs of this highly complex organization. And finally, I convey to you all the well wishes of the Government and people of The Republic of The Gambia.

Mr. President,

It is admissible that the recent upheavals and crises in the global arena have put into sharp focus what the United Nations can and must do as the springboard for coordinating global responses and solutions to global issues. For this reason, Mr. President, the theme you have chosen for the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly: "*Reaffirming the Central Role of the United Nations in Global Governance*" is therefore very apt and timely. Any reaffirmation of the pivotal role of the UN must start with respect for the purposes and principles of its Charter. In the same vein, the organization must continue to implement the set of reforms that were introduced by the 2005 World Summit and other related UN Summits and Conferences. Without reform, the UN cannot be of relevance in the 21st century.

Mr. President,

One of the major reforms that we all agreed on is that the size, composition and working methods of the Security Council should change for the better. In the absence of action to implement the reform, we will put to question the legitimacy of the actions of this entity. Africa's demand for greater representation in all categories of Council membership is rooted in the need for justice and an end to its marginalisation. It is therefore high time to stop consigning Africa to a fate of second class membership of the United Nations through its perpetual exclusion from the important decision making in the Security Council.

Mr. President,

For many years, I have called for greater voice for developing countries in international and financial economic matters and today I renew that call again with deep sense of urgency. As developing countries, we believe that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should be the leading platform for the discussion and formulation of global policies in the economic and social fields. At the height of the ongoing financial and economic crisis we have seen attempts made to undermine the voice of developing countries and expose them to situations of greater vulnerability. Developing countries have been left out in discussions surrounding the policy prescriptions, and response packages to deal with the financial crisis;

yet our views matter on this.

Mr. President,

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remains a major priority of my government. Through various interventions, policies and programmes, we are poised to achieve and even surpass some of the goals. However, as we run the last stretch before 2015, the critical need for greater international solidarity and partnership need not be over-emphasized. I am confident that The Gambia will attain all the goals by 2015 as we are already on course. Our mission is to deliver our people from poverty, hunger and disease by providing them with good and easy to access quality education, health care and sanitation services, so that our people can realize their potentials as agents of development.

Mr. President,

In order to effectively become the reference point for good global governance, it is important that the UN has to play the desired leadership role and avoid the style of business-as-usual. The UN needs to earn the regard and respect of all as democratic in substance, structure and practice that operates on consensus and not on the selfish dictates of a few national interests. In short, the United Nations' mandate should always be considered as one that transcends national interests.

Mr. President,

In a world marked by diversity of various strands and intensity, where contextual frameworks are expected to respond to indigenous circumstances, it is natural to expect divergent approaches arising from this heterogeneity. In spite of this, the Human Rights Charter or the United Nations Charter and other international instruments with global acclaim and recognition provide sufficient grounds for dialogue, convergence and collective action. We should never lose sight of this.

Mr. President,

We should remind ourselves that the UN was created to unify the world and not to divide it. The Organisation should be seen to create the most potent avenue for allaying fears and restoring hopes and aspirations, fighting for the rights of the suppressed and desperate people the world over, and above all, restraining bullies who misdirect international politics, growth and development most times, using might and tyranny as weapons.

In playing this central role, the structures of the Organisation have to be seen to be justly constituted; and the procedures and principles impartial and consistent with global expectations. Unfortunately, we continue to observe with regret the imbalance that characterises representation in these structures, most prominently, the Security Council, in which Ad hoc decisions tend to be implemented more speedily than the Resolutions of the General Assembly. This is a paradox, and a paradox that calls for total re-examination in order that there are no imbalances that form the root causes of violations of human rights, interference in sovereign states, marginalisation and double standards.

Mr. President

The International Criminal Law and its institutions have a crucial role to play in global governance and hence the need to avoid selective prosecutions and politicisation of court processes in their daily activities. In the world today, there is ample evidence to suggest the existence of widespread abuse of power, oppression and violation of human rights through illegitimate wars and other forms of excessive interventions. There are times when strong

nations attack and trample upon the sovereignty of the weak while the UN and the world watch helplessly by doing nothing, except for a few that raise their voices in isolation. This will not deter us, nor discourage us from hammering home the injustices that the International Criminal Court is supposed to set right. If this institution sags under undue pressure or demonstrates weaknesses, its cracks may corrupt or undermine the credence of international judicial systems.

We know that there are leaders, past and present, who deserve to be dragged to the International Criminal Court for prosecution, but go about their business as if they were above the law. I ask whether this is acceptable.

Mr. President,

It goes without saying that Africa has been the perpetual target of exploitation and a specimen or subject of marginalisation. Africa has been isolated in global trade, technology and cooperation, and African leaders have been targeted and humiliated in unfair proportions. Yet, Africans have much more to offer than their resources. Africa still bears the hallmarks of dialogue, democracy and sound governance structures whose roots can be traced to her olden days of glory. In spite of this, there are persistent cunning attempts to misguide the African people into accepting alien precepts that apparently contradict our political culture.

Mr. President,

In consequence of all these, global governance from the perspective of the UN has to go beyond political systems to embrace exposing and neutralising strategies employed to subdue fragile states. Good governance, as the West prefer to refer to it, needs to permeate the finance structures (for example, of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) in order to render them more effective in offsetting the imbalances created through exploitation, control and protectionism. Indeed, these international financial powerhouses should be transformed into conduits for ameliorating the effects of underdevelopment and poverty the world over.

It is lamentable that the assessment criteria used as basis to provide assistance to needy people or nations in distress are tied to political affiliation cloaked in inexplicable "good governance" issues.

The Security Council, has contributed to unfair imposition of sanctions that have direct consequences on the lives of civilians. Such measures, often taken to bring down governments, continue to expose this Organisation and the ploys it subtly executes at the behest of powerful nations. We condemn such sanctions and recommend that thorough consultations and sounder procedures precede any sanction that may have a direct negative consequence on innocent lives. Similarly, we condemn indiscriminate use of banned weapons with impunity whilst the UN Security Council does nothing to punish the culprits. Combatants should legitimately engage enemy combatants, and reckless attacks on defenceless people must not be condoned.

Mr. President,

There are regional structures in almost every corner of the globe. The UN has to recognise these structures and work very closely with them to quell unrest wherever it erupts. To illustrate, let me observe that the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union have demonstrated ability, if supported, to handle unrest on the African continent. I wish to call on the UN to intensify its collaboration with these groupings in crucial state and inter-state interventions. The AU and the sub-regional organizations in

Africa have opened up many avenues for cooperation with the United Nations, especially in the area of preventive diplomacy. We would like to see greater support for UNOWA's activities in West Africa

At this juncture, it is necessary to state that in the process of championing global governance, there should be no discrimination or exclusion within the UN. The lesson for all of us is that unless double standards and racism are expunged from the various organs of the UN, they will continue to be pawns in the hands of rich and the powerful nations and become vulnerable to be discredited.

Mr. President,

It is an open secret that West African is under the onslaught of drug traffickers. We are committed to the fight against Narcotics not only in The Gambia but in the whole of Africa as narcotic traffickers are almost holding some West African States hostage. The dangers of narcotics transcend boundaries as they provide a lot of money to dangerous criminals including terrorists who have no regards for human life. Given the enormous challenges that lie ahead of us in this battle, our security forces are alert and ready to cooperate with our neighbours and all those who share our concerns. We are more than ever determined to turn West Africa into a living hell for Terrorists, Drug Traffickers as well as organized Criminal Gangs, and Human Traffickers. This is a battle we must win, and win right.

Mr. President,

Let me turn to the phenomenon of Islamophobia. It is important to note that the message of Islam is universal peace and progress, love for humanity and total submission to the Will of Allah (Subhana hu Wa ta'ala). History teaches us that the Islamic civilization, which has been flourishing for 1400 years, has always exhibited its unique capacity for peaceful co-existence, tolerance and compassion among global religions, manifested in its vast expanse of dominions cutting across parts of Europe, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe among others.

Mr. President,

Islamic teachings condemn terrorism in all its manifestations, and view such acts not only as savagery but also criminal. Islam regards human life as sacred and condemns innocent killings. The world, in particular, the West should therefore be wary of the actions of a very few, including those who abuse the Holy Quran and even threaten to burn it thereby fuelling tensions and insecurity. Their actions constitute manipulations to judge Islam and its followership in the wrong way. We must not allow bigots, racists and evil entities in the West that are masquerading as Nationalists and Far Rights to spate global religious war. If this happens, the entire human race would suffer. Therefore, Western Governments should do more to stop these real terrorists on the rampage.

Mr. President,

It is very unfortunate to note that Muslims in Western societies have been subjected to numerous prejudicial treatments and unnecessary fear. A European state's banning of Minarets for Mosques, and another's restriction on the use of Islamic veil, and the refusal of some doctors to treat women (as well as men) on account of their Islamic beliefs, are examples of shameful and arrogant attitudes from a world that considers itself as the most civilized and democratic. We the true Muslims will not be intimidated into abandoning our noble religion and our mode of worship by these measures. We will also defend our religion at any cost because there is only One God ALLAH that we worship.

Mr. President,

We maintain that the UN should play a lead role in combating terrorism through ways approved by the General Assembly. Noting that terrorism is a global challenge, no unilateral action based on any form of doctrine should be taken by any nation against another, nor must the UN succumb to external pressure from any single nation in pursuit of national gains or interests. Conversely, we support the use of multilateral diplomacy and cooperation to complement internal measures where any particular nation is the target of terrorism.

Mr. President,

My delegation's position on the issues raised in this address is to see to it that the UN reviews its governance structures in order to become more democratic. This would require that the representation quotas for various regions, particularly Africa and Asia, be re-defined on the basis of the principles of fair-play, and justice and not on sheer economic or military might.

We recommend that the laws and procedures governing issuance of arrest warrants, prosecution procedures and legal representation at the International Criminal Court also be reviewed objectively in order to avoid politicisation and selecting targeting of individuals.

Mr. President,

We also move that all sovereign states that have a legitimate government based on the will and consent of their people be admitted to the UN, and this applies particularly to the Republic of China (Taiwan). We commend the two sides of the straits for continuous progress in pursuing peace and shelving disputes in the past two years. Whilst both Straits deserve special recognition and more encouragement, the UN also need to be cognisant of the efforts by Taiwan in this peaceful process. It is important to note that Taiwan's invitation by World Health Assembly as Observer in 2009 and 2010, not only enhance international health and medical care network, but also sets positive example for Taiwan's participation. We therefore urge all member states to ensure that the other specialised agencies are opened up to Taiwan's meaningful participation in the work of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Taiwan is contributing immensely to the international community through trade, investment, air transport, finance, telecommunication technology and environmental protection in the spirit of international cooperation; and therefore we call upon the UN to find a proper way to accept Taiwan's participation in all its specialised agencies notably the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The international Community needs to recognise that Taiwan has adopted and pursued a pragmatic and moderate foreign policy in line with general expectations and we therefore encourage UN specialised agencies to be open-minded to Taiwan's participation in their activities. It is our collective responsibility to make the 23 million people of Taiwan participate more visibly and functional in the international system.

Mr. President,

We maintain that all sanctions imposed by the Security Council, which have negative consequences on the lives and well-being of innocent people, be lifted with immediate effect. Similarly, we reiterate our call in the 64th Session for the intensification of efforts to curb the excessive exploitation from the activities of multinational corporations in low-income countries.

Mr. President,

The US embargo against Cuba is one of the longest running political disputes that this Assembly has found the need to address for almost two decades. It is embarrassing that such cruel and outmoded form of settling scores in international relations is still in place. The embargo has no legitimacy, no appeal and it is time for those who imposed it to show genuine leadership by ending it.

It is worth noting that the evolution of the African Union has shown that African leadership on African issues is the key to finding solutions to the problems that continue to plague the continent. From climate change to undemocratic change of governments, from peacekeeping to peacemaking, from development to regional integration, Africa has shown that it is ready to chart its destiny with dignity. This is what we are committed to and all we ask from the international community is the fulfilment of pledges made to Africa. We are willing to cooperate with those who are willing to do so with dignity; and not with humiliating conditionalities.

Mr. President,

The Gambia's commitment to peace and stability across Africa has been manifested in not only troop contribution, but also our readiness at all times to find peaceful solutions to conflicts plaguing the African continent. We call on the international community to lend its full support to the efforts of the African Union and the United Nations in the consolidation of peace and stability across Sudan. For Somalia, we recognize the need to empower the government of Somalia so that it can assert its authority over its territory, achieve lasting peace, and in this way address the problem of piracy. Supporting one faction against another is not a decent solution to the Somali problem

Mr. President,

A major development in the evolution of the United Nations this year is the creation of UN Women. As a firm believer in gender equality and women's empowerment, my government will do all in its power to support this entity. We wish the new board well and urge them to accord a political center stage to gender issues and policies.

Finally Mr. President,

We believe and submit that there is no substitute for the UN, a body whose role in global governance we consider as critical. The missing link has been the absence of a global governance framework to embrace universality and representation.

I thank you all for your kind attention.