



Permanent Mission of Eritrea
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. OSMAN SALEH
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE STATE OF ERITREA

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 65th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 28 SEPTEMBER 2010

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, and your country, Switzerland, for your election to preside over the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that, with your extensive experience and diplomatic skill, you will lead this session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion. I pledge the support of the Eritrean delegation in your noble efforts for the common good. I wish also to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Dr. Ali Abdulsalam Treki, President of the 64th session, for his excellent leadership. He indeed served us well. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership and his report on the work of our United Nations at the outset of this General Debate.

Mr. President,

We meet again at this 65th session of the General Assembly to expound on the state of our individual countries and to reflect on regional, continental and global affairs. We come year after year to this august gathering to share our thoughts and explain our positions on some issues of interest. Yet, we realize that the outcome of our deliberations and resolutions fall far short of our own expectations, let alone the aspirations of humanity. We agree that the institutions and procedures of this organization have long outlived their time; and yet, we remain paralyzed in transforming the United Nations.

While the prospects for a rapid reform of the United Nations system appear to be dim, we cannot and will not give up. We have to continue to speak out and work tirelessly for a United Nations that is fit for the 21st century as well as for a more just and equitable world. At the same time, we have to focus on our own nations and regions to ensure peaceful and stable environment as well as dignified life for our peoples.

Mr. President,

It is this perspective that informs Eritrea's policies at the national, regional and international levels. Internationally, Eritrea seeks, through robust and constructive engagement, to make its modest contribution to global peace, security, justice and equity, and to the protection and enhancement of the environment in the face of changes that threaten the very survival of humanity.

Regionally, Eritrea's efforts are directed at securing peace, stability, development and cooperation in the wider Horn of Africa and the Red Sea regions. We endeavour to contribute to transforming our dangerous neighbourhood, a neighbourhood mired in numerous conflicts. into a cooperative and peaceful

In this connection, I wish to touch upon some of Eritrea's immediate concerns:

1. The Sudan

In regards to the Sudan, Eritrea is working closely with the Sudanese parties, as well as with regional and international actors, as the country enters a critical period in its history. Eritrea believes that the international community as a whole needs to wholeheartedly support the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or the CPA, as they approach the momentous referendum date in January 2011 and beyond. Irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, relations of trust and cooperation between the parties are crucial for peace and stability, not only in the north and South, but throughout the region. For all these reasons, we ought to encourage the parties to reach agreement on the post-referendum issues and relations as soon as is feasible. There is a need as well to simultaneously help the protagonists in the Darfur conflict to finally reach an agreement within the context of the Doha talks that are set to resume in the next few days.

2. Somalia

On Somalia, it is Eritrea's considered view, borne out by the bitter experience and spiraling violence of the past two decades, that there can be no military solution to the problem in Somalia. While this is a conviction that by now is widely shared in the international community, serious doubts continue to be raised as to whether the alternative -that is, a Somali-owned and Somali-driven, inclusive political process- is possible and practicable. Eritrea does not by any means believe or suggest that this is easy or that it can lead to immediate results. It will undoubtedly be a complex and protracted process, but ultimately achievable. For, even in the past two turbulent decades, Somalis have more than once, demonstrated that given the right environment, they are capable of finding home-grown solutions to their problems. Eritrea, therefore, urges the United Nations and all those concerned with peace and stability in Somalia to earnestly engage all Somalis and to give the political process the serious and sustained attention it deserves.

3. Eritrea-Ethiopia

While the United Nations grapples with Sudan and Somalia, it continues to ignore the grave consequences of Ethiopia's continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, eight years after the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), and three years after the Commission ended its work by depositing in the United Nations the demarcated boundary between the two countries. Ethiopia's illegal occupation and the United Nations' silence, which mean the continuation of the conflict, is exacting a heavy price on the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia and complicating the regional situation. I wish to remind the

United Nations that Eritrea awaits responsible and urgent action to end Ethiopia's violation of international law and its threat to regional peace and security.

Mr. President,

Eritrea's constructive engagement on regional and international matters stems from its firm conviction that a conducive, external environment is essential for nation building. As Eritrea enters its 20th year of independence, it remains focused on broad-based and people-centered political, economic, social and cultural development that will afford a life of dignity and prosperity to our people. After several years of consistent investment in health, education, agriculture and other essential infrastructure, we have created a solid basis for sustained economic growth. It is expected that trade as well as domestic and foreign investment will provide additional impetus for the growth of our economy. I wish to seize this opportunity to extend our invitation to all interested countries and their enterprises to become our partners in development.

I thank you, Mr. President.