



Statement

by

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**Your Excellency President Mohammed Hosny Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellencies Ministers,
Distinguished Members of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to join previous distinguished speakers to express our profound gratitude to the people and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful resort city of Sharm el Shiekh. Let me also pass to you the warm greetings and best wishes of your brother President Isaias Afwerki, who despite his best efforts, was not able to attend this esteemed Summit due to urgent commitments.

I congratulate the sisterly country of Egypt for assuming the Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement. I also would like to express my Government's appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Cuba for its outstanding leadership of our Movement in the last three years.

Other speakers have addressed eloquently and in detail the themes of this Summit: "International Solidarity for Peace and Development" and "The Current Global Economic and Financial Crisis". I will thus confine my brief remarks to a problem that merits, in our view, high importance at the international and regional levels.

Mr. Chairman,

The Somali problem has become an international agenda eclipsing its domestic and regional ramifications. Somalia, which is formally a Member State of this Movement, has been enveloped in turmoil and its existence as a unitary State virtually erased for the past twenty years. A political vacuum characterized by the absence of an effective central government continues to prevail in Somalia to date. What are the underlining reasons? Why has it proven elusive to find effective remedies?

Although domestic causes are often cited in much exaggerated tones, the primary causes are external agendas, interferences and complications.

Successive US Administrations, and especially the proponents of domination, have in the past worked tirelessly to balkanize and fragment Somalia into ‘Cantons’ and mini entities; to create and perpetuate a political vacuum; and, to foment internal discord by propping up warlords. The chaos thus created would offer favorable ground for terrorism while the latter would in turn be used as a convenient pretext for their intermittent interventions directly or by their proxies. The net outcome is a complex reality, or “accomplished facts” on the ground, allowing them to manage the crisis which they have created in the first place. All these acts are motivated by their desire to promote their narrow interests in the Horn of Africa region.

To this end, all prospects for achieving lasting and genuine solutions have been and remain obstructed. All legal and practical options were and continue to be rejected. Instead of promoting comprehensive and coherent solutions, US Administrations have used their leverage in international and regional institutions to install and remove, at different times, various warlords who control narrow strips of territory in the country in breach of accepted international norms and Charters. In this manner, they have installed and removed, in the past five years alone, three “Transitional Governments.”

In order to perpetuate their design of management by crisis and to cover up their true intentions on the one hand, and to stifle any moral voice that does not toe their line on the other, they have and continue to target Eritrea as a scapegoat. As it happened, they have been frantically campaigning to ram through unwarranted resolutions against Eritrea in various international Summits. Unfortunately, there are those who inevitably join the chorus.

It must be underlined that the issue pertains, first and foremost, to Somalia. This is not a problem or an issue of Eritrea. The position of Eritrea on the Somali problem does not contravene legality, the rule of law, respect for the sovereignty, independence and unity of Somalia. It is based on the fundamental respect of free choice of the Somali people. It is also based on a sincere desire to see an end to the prevailing crisis that was created deliberately and that has aggravated the suffering of the Somali people for the past twenty years, with its destabilizing ramifications to the Horn of Africa region. To distort the position of Eritrea by peddling false accusations and divert the attention from the main problem cannot be justified under any pretext and should not be tolerated.

Mr. Chairman,

In as far as the new US Administration is concerned, the earnest hope and expectations of all those who cherish justice has been and remains for a new and constructive approach based on a sober assessment of the reality, instead of a blind pursuit of the destructive policies of its predecessors.

The early signals are not however encouraging as clearly illustrated by the actions of the Administration in the Summit of the African Union that was convened in Sirte, Libya, at the beginning of this month. It may not be prudent to reach a hasty conclusion and the matter requires further follow up. Furthermore, these developments must not distract us from the most critical issue, which is finding a lasting solution to the suffering of the Somali people.

In this respect, Eritrea urges this august assembly to address the problem of Somalia as an agenda of high priority. The people of Somalia deserve support to extricate themselves from the past twenty years of incessant external military interventions, and impositions of unrepresentative “transitional governments.” They must be supported to launch an inclusive process that ensures the participation of “Somaliland”, “Puntland”, and other areas in Somalia as well as the Diaspora in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting solution.

Mr. Chairman,

Permit me, once again, to congratulate you, on your assumption of the leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement. We have great confidence in your ability to effectively guide our Movement during your Chairmanship, and I would like to assure you Eritrea’s unwavering support.

Thank you!