



MC.DEL/9/06
4 December 2006

ENGLISH only

Written Statement

presented by the

League of Arab States

to the

14th Ministerial Council Meeting

of the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Brussels (4–5 December 2006)



The League of Arab States, while thanking the Organization for Security and Development in Europe for inviting it to express its voice at the organization's Fourteenth Ministerial Meeting, should like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the objective of achieving peace, security and stability in its area of competence - a matter which has direct repercussions on peace and security in Europe and the entire world as well. To that end, the Arab League firmly believes in the necessity of furthering dialogue and cooperation with the OSCE in order to reach a final resolution of the Middle East conflict in accordance with international legality.

While adhering to peace as a principle, Arab Heads of State have indeed long deemed the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East to be their strategic goal, which is also a necessity for world security, stability and development. They have thus always called for the full implementation of all United Nations Security Council Resolutions while upholding the terms of reference of the 1992 Madrid Peace Conference that included the adherence to the principle of "Land for Peace" in view of putting an end to Israeli occupation of Arab territories since 1967 and resolving this conflict on the basis of a negotiated two-State solution that would result in the creation of a viable, contiguous, sovereign, democratic and independent Palestinian State



living side by side in peace with Israel, within recognized and secure borders. Ten years after the beginning of the Madrid Conference that saw its course slowed down, derailed, run into sands, halted... Arab Heads of State launched an Arab Peace Initiative at their Beirut Summit in 2002 which they have since reaffirmed in all their annual meetings. They still put it forward after the latest Israeli war on Lebanon and the Palestinians that has led to the demise of the peace process. Yet, this was to no avail as Israel continues to insist on refusing international legality and thus excluding the resolution of this conflict within the framework of the United Nations while acting unilaterally and ignoring the main regional players with whom it must one day compose if it ever wants to see a comprehensive peace encompass the Middle East: Syria must be a part of any coming solution.

The unilateral Israeli policy and its commensurate bloody violence against the Palestinian people as well as the refusal of acceptance of the results of worldwide recognized democratic elections held in the Palestinian territories has exasperated the situation. The international community has here failed to live up to its calls to promoting democracy as it condemned the Palestinian people of practicing the very democratic principles it preaches and boycotted the Palestinian Authority and imposed a comprehensive embargo on it. Words and deeds were never so far apart, thus giving full legitimacy to all those convinced



of the continued reliance of major powers on double standards in their treatment of the different parties of the Middle East conflict and, hence, of the uselessness of calling for the application of international legality. The League of Arab States, nonetheless, sees in recent developments the flickering of hope that the declared cease fire between Israel and the Palestinians might be sustained. Still, quick immediate further steps are necessary to end the political and financial boycott imposed on the Palestinian Authority upon the formation of a government of national unity, to affect an exchange of prisoners, and to resume the transfer of tax revenues due to the Palestinian Authority. The international community is more than ever faced with the responsibility of impartially contributing to a just resolution of this long-lasting conflict that has plagued the Middle East, harming universally accepted moral principles that uphold human dignity, spilling over insecurity to the rest of the world, wasting human and financial resources, and impeding the development of stability and shared prosperity.

The League of Arab States reiterates its conviction that the establishment of peace and security in the entire Middle East hinges on resolving the core conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. As all issues are indeed interrelated, there is urgency for all Middle Eastern actors and the international community to express their shared commitment to enhance their concerted



efforts to contain the destabilizing effects of the July war launched on Lebanon, to further the stabilization of Iraq by abetting the attachment of the Iraqi people to the political process underway, to democratic principles and the rule of law as well as to find a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. The League of Arab States cannot tolerate non-peaceful nuclear activities in the region and strongly reiterates its repeated calls for the creation of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction for the sake of a durable lasting stability. Iran, a major country in the region with influence on the situations in Iraq and Lebanon, must also be included in this joint process.

As the world embarks on the new millennium, the human condition at the inception of the 21st century appears rather grim as globalization is mercilessly destroying all forms of cohesion and solidarity within and between societies, creating more inequalities in the distribution of wealth and widening the gap between rich and poor. Hope in a freer and more peaceful world in which scientific advances, the virtue of education and the speed of communications would enhance more prosperity, justice and happiness seems to have vanished; and confidence in the advances of democracy and the affirmation of solidarities has been shaken. Against this background, the links between the Islamic and Western worlds matters more today than ever before, because the degree of



misunderstanding between these cultural areas remains dangerously high, and because the need for the two to live and work together in our increasingly interdependent world has never been greater. We must enhance a climate of trust, and promote a better understanding of each other, create a shared vision, and relations built on understanding, not confrontation.

Both OSCE countries and Arab countries recognize the fact that their security and stability are interlinked, and that tension and instability in any part of this area will affect the rest of the region and even beyond.

The League of Arab States calls for the deployment of all efforts by governments, civil societies and concerned institutions to attenuate, if not eliminate, the tradition of fear and distrust stemming from the contradictory ways the two worlds look at their common history. There is an urgent need to establish a dialogue based on the principles that all cultures enjoy equal dignity, lend themselves to interpretation and are able to enrich one another as well as that of respect of others. Humbleness and clear-sightedness are thus required to check the clash of ignorance at present obtaining between them.

Stability and peace will never prevail in the region without a fair end to the Arab Israeli conflict.



We are looking forward to the day our region can enjoy peace, security, economic prosperity and social well-being, and we believe that cooperation between our two organizations will help in achieving this goal.

While reiterating its call for enhanced cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the League of Arab States wishes the 14th Ministerial Council Meeting the best of success.