

Statement of H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul-Gheit
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Arab Republic of Egypt

OSCE Summit
Astana 1-2 December 2010

Your Excellency President Nursultan Nazarbayev
Your Excellencies, the Heads of States and Governments
Excellencies Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honor and pleasure to address this important summit on behalf of H.E. President Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

I would like at the outset to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for its customary kind hospitality and warm reception, as well as our appreciation to the Kazakhstan Chairmanship for the wise and competent manner with which it has guided the work of the Organization over the past year at this critical juncture of its course.

Likewise, I would like to extend my appreciation to Lithuania for chairing the Mediterranean Contact Group throughout the past year, and for having been instrumental in the promotion of the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE.

This Summit is a historic occasion as it is the culmination of eleven years of dedicated efforts of member states to draw up strategic guidelines capable of tackling new threats and challenges demonstrating the determination to build a genuinely common and indivisible security community, a step that could represent a major milestone in the history of the OSCE.

Mr. President,

Egypt long standing relationship with the OSCE goes back to the beginning of Helsinki process, which acknowledged that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean region as a whole. Egypt believes that the concept of indivisible, comprehensive and cooperative security, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act applies in the Mediterranean as well and that building Europe that is whole, free and at peace cannot ignore the reality that security of both Europe and the Mediterranean are interdependent and therefore indivisible.

Egypt has been an active OSCE partner as evidenced by hosting the five annual Mediterranean Seminars and Conferences, the most recent of which in December 2009. This involvement stems from Egypt's conviction that political dialogue and consultations, between partners on both shores, could be used effectively to develop a comprehensive approach to security in the Mediterranean as a whole.

Mr. President,

Security in the Mediterranean region faces serious challenges that need to be dealt with, and a major conflict that needs to be resolved. The Arab Israeli conflict remains the main source of tension and instability in the Middle East. Egypt has exerted much for the attainment of peace in the region, peace based on rights, justice and international legitimacy. We will carry on our efforts to reach this cherished peace, fully convinced of the right of the peoples of the region to security, stability and development, for a better future for its present and future generations.

In this regard, I would like to reiterate Egypt's strong support to the request of the Palestinian national Authority to be granted the status of Mediterranean Partner for Cooperation. Egypt is convinced that an enlarged Mediterranean Partnership including the Palestinian National Authority, as well as other states of the region, will

consolidate the Mediterranean Partnership, and will allow the OSCE to play a positive role to the cause of peace in its immediate neighborhood.

Mr. President,

The slim hope that was associated with the start of the direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis had rapidly vanished while negotiations were halted because of the Israeli persistence in continuing illegal colonization, yet, it is important to realize that negotiations are not a goal in themselves, they are only a means to reach the real aim of ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the implementation of the two states solution through the establishment of an independent, viable Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital and its borders based on the line of 1967.

Mr. President,

Among the questions of international peace and security, disarmament and combating nuclear proliferation come as priorities on Egypt's agenda. Egypt is convinced that the creation of a Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East is a prerequisite for enhancing the security in the region. In this regard the last review conference of the non-proliferation treaty had successfully concluded its work in May 2010, adopting an important document which included a plan of action and measures to implement this aim in the Middle East, that Egypt fully support.

We believe that practicing double standards in the question of non proliferation will result in a continued threat to the world stability and stand in stark contradiction with the principles and values that OSCE champions.

Egypt attaches great importance to the Organization's work in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. We welcome the emerging consensus within the Organization on the importance of this issue recently demonstrated by the High-level conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination held in Astana last June. We believe that the OSCE, through the collective will of its participating states and the contribution of its partners, will be able to move towards a more holistic and balanced approach on monitoring and combating hate crimes, including discrimination against Muslims, thereby emphasizing that there is no hierarchy of intolerance in the OSCE.

In this context we call upon all countries to assume their responsibility to propagate a culture of enlightenment based on tolerance, the respect of differences and the renunciation of fanaticism, hatred and zealotry.

Mr. President,

I look to the future optimistically, because I am convinced that, empowered by the precious developments achieved within the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership, we will be able to continue to make progress in ensuring the realization of our peoples aspirations and to find answers to the challenges of the future.

I would conclude by assuring you of Egypt's constant support and cooperation, as we move together towards achieving our common determination for peace and prosperity.

Thank you.
