

STATEMENT BY MR. E. AHAMED, MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AT
THE NAM MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, AT BALI [INDONESIA] ON MAY 25, 2011

**Mr.Chairman
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset I would like to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of this conference and express my sincere appreciation for the people and Government of Indonesia for the warm hospitality extended to us.

We are assembled here on the auspicious occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is, indeed, befitting that this commemoration is taking place on the soil of Indonesia where the foundations of our Movement were laid at the historic Asian African Conference held in Bandung in 1955.

Today I am particularly reminded of the founding fathers of our Movement – Pandit Nehru, President Nasser, President Tito, President Nkrumah and President Sukarno.

Their shared vision of freedom of judgement and freedom of action in international relations built upon the basic principles of solidarity, peace, justice and equity gave birth to our Movement.

Describing the Movement, Pandit Nehru said, and I quote “The power of nations assembled here is not military power or economic power, nevertheless it is power. Call it moral force”.

Mr. Chairman,

The Movement helped close a long and painful chapter of colonialism, imperialism and institutionalized racism.

These are achievements of which the Movement can be justifiably proud and draw inspiration.

However, fifty years after its founding, our Movement stands at the crossroads and we need to draw on the vision of our founding fathers to guide our perspective as we move forward.

We are once again facing significant political challenges that could have a profound impact on the landscape of the global political discourse.

Our members have benefited from globalization but still face daunting development challenges.

Much work still needs to be done to attain the Millennium Development Goals for all by 2015.

Accelerated and sustained efforts are needed towards eradication of poverty and lasting improvements in nutrition, health and education, the well-being of our children and jobs for our youth.

Developing countries are being hit by the rising food and energy prices and excessive speculation in the global commodities market.

Our environment and climate challenges need to be ambitiously addressed bearing in mind equity and the cardinal principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held next year in Rio de Janeiro should place sustainable development squarely within the development agenda.

Developed countries have historical responsibilities and capabilities. They need to meet their commitments and not seek their dilution.

This is true not only in the area of environment but also for development cooperation.

Developing countries, who all face daunting development challenges, are partnering each other and doing as much as they can.

At the recently concluded UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, India committed US Dollars One Billion in Lines of Credit for the LDCs.

These South-South cooperation actions are voluntary and in a spirit of solidarity cannot be a substitute for long made but still unfulfilled North-South development assistance commitments.

A critical essential in developing countries being able to cope with the huge challenges that confront them is to have the necessary policy space at national level and multilateral institutions that are supportive of that space.

Mr. Chairman,

The creation of UN Women last year has been one of the most important transformational aspects of UN reform.

This new entity should give a significant fillip to our quest for gender equality and women's empowerment, which lie at the heart of development and distributive justice.

The expectation that political emancipation would lead to rapid socio-economic development and give the developing countries a greater say in the world order are still far from being realized.

The world's international institutions, in particular, the UN and its Security Council and the Bretton Woods Institutions require fundamental changes to reflect contemporary realities.

After years of discussion and negotiations we are at the cusp of bringing about real change in the Security Council to expand it in both permanent and non-permanent categories.

Developing countries must throw their considerable weight behind this reform so that their voice is qualitatively enhanced in the Security Council.

Mr. Chairman,

Increasing inter-connectedness and inter-dependence has created its own challenges while exacerbating others.

Terrorism is the greatest scourge of our times.

The Movement should ensure that terrorism is not condoned or justified on any ground whatsoever: political, religious, ethnic or any other.

The fight against terrorism must be directed not only against the terrorists, but also against those who sponsor, abet or support them.

It is high time that we agree on a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

Another major challenge is from the handling of weapons of mass destruction.

We need to be unwavering in our commitment for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

We need to be fully cognizant of the catastrophic dangers that transfers of WMDs to non-state actors and terrorists could entail. States need to remain accountable and ensure the elimination of these dangers.

Clandestine proliferation networks have led to insecurity for all and must not be allowed to reappear.

Mr. Chairman,

India has been consistent in its support for global, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

In 1988, Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi presented an Action Plan for a Nuclear Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Order to the Third Special Session of the UN on Disarmament.

In June 2008, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh asked others to join India in taking the critical first step - a commitment, preferably a binding legal commitment through an international instrument, to eliminate nuclear weapons within a time bound framework.

India's resolutions in the First Committee on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", "Reducing Nuclear Dangers" give expression to some of these steps and have justifiably found support from a large number of countries. India has also called for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

Mr. Chairman,

African countries form the largest single grouping in NAM.

The Movement must continue to work towards ensuring Africa's pre-eminence in the global development agenda.

And, we must stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters from Africa as they address their socio-political challenges.

The international community needs to be there to assist as per the wishes of the African countries in their quest for national answers.

As we meet in Bali, the Second India-Africa Forum Summit is taking place in Addis Ababa. This Summit process is an important manifestation of South-South Cooperation and signifies the close engagement between India and Africa in fulfilling their aspirations of development and creating a paradigm of mutual support and partnership.

India's partnership with Africa is anchored in equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit and we are guided by the wishes and priorities of our African friends.

Mr. Chairman,

Today's world of instant information and communication has provided people with a dramatic ability to be part of and influence political processes.

Several countries in North and West Africa and the Middle-East are witnessing challenging developments. It is important that violence is abjured and the route of dialogue taken to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people.

It is also important to ensure the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States. The use of force should be avoided.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM has always been in the forefront of efforts on the Palestinian issue and this time we have a special segment on the issue of Palestinian political prisoners.

The situation in the Middle-East continues to be grim with no signs of peace talks and with potentially exacerbating situations developing in the region.

It is, however, imperative that hopes raised for a Palestinian State during last two years reach fruition later this year itself.

India has a long-standing tradition of solidarity with the Palestinian people. We welcome the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas and hope that this would promote the realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and lead to peace and stability in the region.

We support the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace initiative, Quartet Roadmap and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

As we embark on the monumental task for elaborating a vision for the next fifty years, we must be guided by a new, forward-looking agenda which draws inspirations from our convictions of the past and our aspirations for the future.

The Movement also ought to position itself to play a seminal role in strengthening multilateralism and shaping a multi-polar world order with developing countries having a qualitatively significant voice in critical global institutions.

We need to focus on issues that unite while recognizing the rich diversity of countries that constitute the Movement. We need to strengthen commonality and build on our solidarity.

Thank you.

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