

**STATEMENT BY MR. YASHWANT SINHA, MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
AT THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ANNUAL MEETING  
OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEADS OF THE DELEGATION OF  
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2002**

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to compliment you and South Africa for your stewardship of the Movement over the last four years. I would also like to use this occasion to congratulate Malaysia and say that we look forward to working with Malaysia as they take over the chairmanship in February next year.

At our last ministerial meeting in Durban in April, we deliberated on the question of the NAM agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All of us recognized and reaffirmed the continued relevance of NAM in a changed world, where military blocks may have disappeared but the quintessence of NAM seen as the independence of judgment and independence of action in international affairs continues to be important. The task before us is to recognize the new challenges, to collectively respond as developing countries to these challenges and to draw a road map for our work in the coming years.

Madam Chair,

We believe that there are a number of global issues, which need a response from the South. Let me

merely identify some of them of particular relevance at the UN: The democratization of the United Nations and its reform and restructuring; the importance of commitment to multilateralism rather than ad-hoc and arbitrary unilateralism; the priority to Development Agenda of the UN the need for global and complete disarmament to the fight against global terrorism, the imperative of sustainable development. These are some of the issues wherein our perspective as developing countries need to be projected clearly and forcefully in the world fora.

Madam Chair,

Inevitably, the combat against global terrorism is a high priority issue on the agenda of the GA. This is, as it should be, since the evil of terrorism has cast a shadow on many of our countries and regions. We are agreed upon the fundamentals in the combat against terrorism. First, there can be no justification – religious, ethnic, political, ideological or any other – for terrorism. Second, the fight has to be comprehensive and not compartmental encompassing this or that region, this or that religion. The fight has to be sustained and not short-term with the

illusion that it can come to an end with one group or organization of terrorists having been dealt with. Finally, the fight is not only against terrorists and their organizations but also against those who support, sponsor or provide safe havens to terrorists. India had initiated discussions on a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN to provide, as the name suggests, a comprehensive legal framework to deal with terrorist acts. Much progress has been achieved but some issues remain in the finalisation of this Convention. As members of NAM, we should make every effort to conclude the Convention speedily and thus to provide ourselves with a blueprint adopted by consensus to deal with this menace.

Another important issue relates to the reform and the restructuring of the UN itself. Such reforms would entail a better balance and coordination between the Security Council, the UNGA and the other organs; greater transparency in the decision-making processes of the UN and greater democratization of the Security Council. NAM should persevere in its efforts to bring about these reforms.

We meet soon after the conclusion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Durban, which resulted in modest gains. As NAM members, we need to ensure that the implementation of the goals of the Millennium Declaration, of the decisions of the WSSD and the importance of the Development Agenda are adequately emphasized in our deliberations at the UN.

Since the last meeting in Durban, the situation in West Asia has continued to deteriorate. India is deeply disturbed by the events and developments which has caused great suffering to the two peoples, has adversely affected the prospects for peace and regional stability and is a matter of widespread global concern. Support to the Palestinian cause remains unaltered as part of India's foreign policy. Both sides must seize all acts of violence and fully cooperate with the efforts of the international community. India fully supports the vision postulated in UNSCR 1397 of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side with secure and recognized borders. We were one of the six countries who participated in the Ministerial level group, which visited President Arafat to express the feeling of solidarity of the Movement.

The situation in Iraq continues to be a matter of deep concern. India has historical relations with Iraq and is sensitive to the strategic importance of the region. We note with some satisfaction that the issue is to be deliberated at the UN. We are distressed by the continued suffering of the Iraqi people. We believe that the sanctions should be exercised in tandem with the compliance by Iraq of its obligations under the Security Council Resolutions. We fervently hope that a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the pending issues are found without recourse of military options. India has a stake in the peace and stability in the Gulf region which is our extended neighbourhood.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, we believe that the NAM countries under your leadership should play an active

and energetic role in the deliberations of the UNGA and should forcefully articulate our common positions.