

**STATEMENT BY MR. YASHWANT SINHA, MINISTER OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AT THE NAM MINISTERIAL MEETING OF
THE COORDINATING BUREAU ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2003**

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to see you presiding over this important meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau.

This meeting assumes importance for two reasons: it is on the margins of an unusually important UNGA in which a major theme has been the very role and relevance of United Nations system. We are reflecting on this theme in the General Assembly and in doing so the views of the Non Aligned Movement constituting the largest grouping of the UN membership will no doubt be important and influential. Second, this is the first Ministerial level meeting after our commitment in Kula Lumpur to work towards the revitalization of the Movement.

Events since Kuala Lumpur have shown that some of our anxieties and concerns were fully warranted and our resolve to revitalize the Movement and find collective responses to global challenges, well justified. In the short time available, let me merely mention some crucial issues:

The unfolding crisis in Iraq shows that a collective approach through multilateral institutions are preferable to unilateral impulses. As members of NAM, we must strive now to see that full sovereignty is restored to the Iraqis as early as possible and that a credible, viable and widely accepted political roadmap is drawn and quickly implemented. In this, the UN must play a central and critical role.

We agree with the UN Secretary General that a thorough going reform and restructuring of the UN system including the Security Council is an urgent imperative. The NAM should lend its support to these efforts.

The menace of terrorism has spread and the terrorists have reached new targets. The terrorist incidents in Indonesia, in Saudi Arabia, in Morocco and in many other of our member countries show that no region and followers of no religion are immune. It reinforces the view that there is no connection between terrorism and any religion; that there can be no justification based on political, territorial or ideological arguments. NAM should express its unequivocal view that terrorism, understood as the killing of the innocents, of the shedding of the blood of women and children is an evil to be condemned and combated by all of us.

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East is another important subject on the global agenda. Those who compare other issues with Palestine do great injustice to the Palestinian cause. India lends its full support to putting an end to the spiralling cycle of violence, to violent or precipitate action which can only further complicate the search for peace. We should lend our support to the Quartet to take the process forward.

On the economic agenda, we could draw some comfort from the unity and solidarity shown at Cancun by the developing countries, the majority of whom are also members of NAM. India on its part is prepared to work with our colleagues in NAM in any such serious and substantive endeavours.

Mr. Chairman,

This is not an occasion to cover the wide agenda that we have before us in the UN. Let me conclude by assuring you that India looks forward to the unity and purposiveness of NAM.

Thank you

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