

**Speech of Hon. Rohitha Bogollagama, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
At the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting of XV NAM Summit  
Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 13 -14 July 2009  
Interactive Debate  
“International Solidarity for Peace and Development”**

Thank you for the opportunity afforded me to speak at this Interactive Debate. Let me begin my speech by expressing the deepest appreciation of my Government and myself to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for the excellent arrangements made and the warmth of friendship and hospitality extended.

02. Your country, Egypt, has traditionally been a friend of the developing world. It has given leadership to a number of regional and global processes contributing to the strengthening of international peace and development. As Egypt takes over the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement now, let me reaffirm Sri Lanka’s solidarity and support for your efforts at taking forward the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement for the next three years.

03. Both as a longstanding member of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as one of its former chairs, we take pride in being present in this City of Peace, Sharm El Sheikh, at this defining moment in the history of the Movement. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Srimavo Bandaranaike, the former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka- and the world’s first woman Prime Minister- who entrenched the principle of Non-Alignment in Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy. Her role and contribution in the world of non-alignment not only brought nations and peoples closer to Sri Lanka, but also brought glory and fame to my country worldwide. This policy, today, continues to be upheld by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who has given it practical scope and depth in his engagement with the outside world.

04. Currently the Chair of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is committed to advancing solidarity and cooperation for the benefit of peoples, Sri Lanka seeks fruitful deliberations on the future agenda of our Movement in the promotion of South-South Cooperation. Sri Lanka will soon be taking over the Chair of ACD (Asian Cooperation Dialogue) which it hopes will be strengthened further to help achieve practical and meaningful cooperation on potential areas of mutual benefit.

04. This first decade of the 21st century has seen many challenges. The world has confronted a number of environmental hazards with increased frequency, in addition to food crisis, energy crisis and now the economic and financial crisis. These crises have affected the developing countries and their populations severely. Armed conflicts and terrorism also pose greater threat to peace and stability of States. Global challenges require collective responses. It is time therefore that we strove hard together to find solutions to these problems. Such collaborative efforts on the part of all States could effectively contribute to international solidarity for peace and development.

05. As was witnessed in several regions recently, terrorism continues to remain a major threat to the security of our nations and peoples. In the modern civilized world, there is absolutely no room for expression of dissent through terrorism. Our Movement should reiterate this message in unequivocal terms. It is important that we also demand of the international community to shed double standards in fighting terrorism. The focus should now be on concerted action to combat terrorism wherever it occurs.

06. One of the oldest democracies in Asia, Sri Lanka had long been tested by terrorism. For over 30 years the terrorists had sought to destroy our multicultural and multi-religious heritage and our co-existence in the spirit of one nation. However, the Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa steadfastly confronted this scourge. Under his leadership, our heroic Security Forces were able to rout one of the world’s deadliest terrorist groups, LTTE, and rescue civilians and secure fully the North and

East of Sri Lanka. Through his single-minded commitment, vision and perseverance, President Rajapaksa helped to unify the country, further strengthening its territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty, and the liberties of the people.

07. Sri Lanka's democracy is both vibrant and resilient. It has the potential and the capacity to overcome all challenges with the support of the people. Now that we have successfully accomplished our campaign against terrorism in the North, the Government has already arranged to hold elections to the Municipal Council of Jaffna and the Urban Council of Vavuniya in August 2009. The people in those areas will exercise the right to elect their own representatives in a peaceful manner.

08. As with several other countries within NAM, which are on the forefront of a concerted global campaign against terrorism, Sri Lanka too believes that "no entity postulating or practicing terrorism can or should be allowed to claim to represent any community, ethnic or religious interests". No country is better able to eliminate terrorism effectively on its own. Efforts at combating terrorism therefore require the active collaboration of all States if they were to achieve success.

09. Today the economic and financial crisis appears to be engulfing all the regions, pushing more than 1 billion people below the poverty line. The G – 20 addressed this crisis only recently and agreed on a package to tide over this problem in the short to medium term. However, the initiative lacked a comprehensive approach, which took account of the specific challenges faced by developing countries.

10. In June 2009, the UN General Assembly convened a High Level Meeting in New York to address this challenge in a more holistic manner. A wide-ranging "Outcome Document" containing recommendations to fight the global recession and follow-up processes that may open the doors to promoting deeper reforms of the global financial and economic architecture, has resulted. Sri Lanka supports the Outcome Document and calls for its expeditious implementation.

11. The reforming of international financial institutions is necessary in order to render them more effective in providing timely assistance to countries in need. International institutions should be proactive in providing necessary assistance to ensure that development aid and financial aid flow into developing countries, for development projects to continue unhindered, and for the economies to withstand external macroeconomic shocks.

12. It is important that the Non-Aligned Movement and the developing countries should continue to emphasize the need to modernize the global financial institutions in such a way that it would enhance the perspective, voice and participation of developing countries. Inclusive consultations on further reforms to improve the responsiveness of the World Bank, as called for in the Outcome Document, should follow without further delay.

13. The food crisis was historic in its size and in the scope of its challenges. A practical solution to this crisis calls for a multi faceted approach. On the one hand, the industrialized countries need to be prevailed upon to scale down their dependence on bio-fuel and also to review some of their agricultural policies including on subsidies. On the other, measures need also to be taken to improve agricultural productivity through increased access to education, agricultural training, pre-harvest and post-harvest techniques, and sharing of advanced technology. Smart solutions to this problem require the creation of a virtuous cycle of enhanced child health, improved food production, higher incomes and better quality of life for women and their entire families. The Non-aligned Movement needs to ensure that the international processes designed to address this challenge yield an acceptable outcome for the affected populations.

14. Migration of workers across international boundaries in search of economic opportunity has enormous implications for growth and welfare in both origin and destination countries. The effects of migration on individuals, societies and countries are profound and multifaceted. Many of these effects are directly or indirectly linked to development processes.

15. It is common concern that restrictive policies and practices adopted by most industrialized countries have a negative impact on international migration. Such policies seek to deny developing countries an opportunity of deriving development benefits for

economic advancement. A greater focus on the complexity of the relationship between migration and development is therefore warranted. The interest today is, most significantly, on how migration can be a positive force for development. As with other countries in the Non-Aligned Movement, Sri Lanka prefers a development approach to international migration.

17. It has become established that the current outline for a Palestinian–Israeli peace agreement has been a two-state solution. It is important that countries in the region show flexibility and maturity in striving for a solution, which could usher in lasting peace for all the people in the Middle East, a secure state for the Palestinians, and security and greater acceptance for Israel within the Middle East and beyond.

18. Sri Lanka supports all efforts for achieving a comprehensive peace in the region. It is time that Palestinians were afforded the long-awaited opportunity to enjoy peace and harmony, which has eluded them for so long.

19. I wish to thank you for your leadership of this important meeting. As your country takes over the chairmanship of the Movement from Cuba, it is our fervent expectation that you would build on the momentum and exemplary leadership provided by Cuba and chart the future of this Movement in the years ahead. On behalf of Sri Lanka, let me take this occasion to thank Cuba and its leader His Excellency Raoul Castro for their effective stewardship, strengthening a sense of solidarity and consensus within its membership. It is our collective hope that under the chairmanship of President His Excellency Hosny Mubarak, the Movement will receive further impetus and continue to march forward.

20. As I conclude, let me reaffirm my belief that, with you in the chair, this meeting will be able to accomplish its agenda effectively, for the leaders of our Movement to take decisions on important regional and global concerns when the 15th Summit convenes shortly in this City of Peace.

13th July 2009