



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

27 December, 2011

Excellency,

As the main part of the sixty-sixth session draws to a close, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you and your delegation for your excellent cooperation, partnership and efforts since the beginning of the session.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of the Vice-Presidents, the Chairs of the Main Committees, and the Secretariat led by His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. Their support has been instrumental in ensuring smooth and successful deliberations.

I marked the beginning of this session by stating that the world is facing unprecedented challenges. I called upon each of you to work together to build a truly united global partnership, so that we can make progress on our agenda and live up to the United Nations' purpose: to ensure peace, security and prosperity for all.

I believe that the Membership rose to this challenge. Among the many highlights since September, I would like to recall:

- The spotlight placed by the general debate at the opening of the sixty-sixth session on several new facets in the international landscape, most notably the political changes taking place in the world, and the general consensus among the wider membership that the interrelated, interdependent and multifaceted challenges of today require a strong, efficient and effective United Nations.

All Permanent Representative
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



- The discussion by world leaders of the “role of mediation in the settlement of disputes” at the general debate. I suggested this topic due to the growing interest in mediation, and I am thankful to Member States for sharing their perspectives and experiences, as well as for making specific suggestions. To assist with moving this issue forward, on 9 November I organized a fruitful dialogue on “United Nations Mediation: Experiences and Reflections from the Field”.
- The informing of the Membership by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, of Palestine’s application for Membership to the United Nations on 23 September, which became another historic moment of the general debate.
- Several high-level meetings convened by the General Assembly during the opening of this session.
 - (1) The High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases of 19-20 September, marked a landmark in the fight against NCDs and the protection of the world’s most vulnerable populations. Member States adopted by consensus a political declaration (resolution 66/2), thereby committing to take action against NCDs, save millions of lives, and enhance development initiatives.
 - (2) The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, at which Member States adopted by consensus a political declaration reaffirming our collective commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (resolution 66/3).



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- (3) The first-ever high-level meeting on “Addressing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication”, where world leaders stressed that desertification and land degradation are a global phenomena and need to be tackled wherever they occur. The high-level meeting was followed in October by the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in the Republic of Korea, which I addressed and where I presented the high-level meeting summary.
- The Assembly’s restoration, early on in the session, of the legitimate representation of the Libyan people to the General Assembly. To demonstrate the UN’s strong support for Libyans as they embark on their critical journey of reconciliation, democracy and reconstruction, I made a joint visit to Libya with the Secretary-General on 2 November. The General Assembly is expected to consider later this session the restoration of the Libyan representation at the Human Rights Council.
 - The General Assembly’s expression of concern regarding the ongoing developments in Syria. On 19 December, the Assembly adopted resolution 66/176 condemning the continued grave and systematic human rights violations committed by the Syrian authorities, and calling upon them to implement the League of Arab States’ Plan of Action in its entirety. To keep the whole membership informed, I immediately transmitted the report of the independent international commission of inquiry from the President of the Human Rights Council, as well as the report of the Human Rights Council on its special session of 2 December.
 - The marking of an historic milestone in human development: 7 billion people living on Planet Earth.



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- The substantial progress made in the preparations for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in Rio. In addition to participating in the second intersessional meeting on the UNCSD and the Preparatory Committee for Ri0+20, I convened a retreat, “Paving the way for a successful Rio+20” on 17-18 December, to encourage broader agreement on the Conference’s outcome.
- The pre- and post- briefings on G20 Summit, which was held in Cannes, France on 3-4 November, in which the Membership had opportunities to exchange views in the context of global prosperity.
- Very intensive and constructive exchange in the First Committee on nuclear disarmament and revitalization of the disarmament machinery.
- The strengthening of our partnership and interaction across the UN. I have been very pleased to undertake monthly meetings with the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, so that we can keep each other informed of our respective work, and find ways to enhance the synergies. I intend to continue this practice throughout my Presidency. In the same vein, the unprecedented joint visits that I made with the Secretary-General to Libya and Somalia further consolidated the unified message sent from the United Nations. Further, ECOSOC and the Second Committee held joint events on sustainable development. I also interacted with all the Main Committee Chairs, and addressed each Main Committee, in a show of support for their important efforts.
- In an effort to improve our outreach, my Office sought to improve access to the website of the General Assembly and of my Presidency, including from the UN Journal.

Looking forward, I would like to inform you of some of the important events I plan to organize in 2012, in support of the General Assembly's work. It is my intention that these events will provide an open, transparent forum for building momentum on the critical issues before us.

The events will be organized according to the four pillars that I have outlined for my Presidency:

Pillar One: The peaceful settlement of disputes:

- An interactive debate on fostering cross-cultural understanding for building peaceful and inclusive societies, in March 2012. Special attention will be given to the role of youth.
- A high-level event on mediation in May 2012.
- Other activities related to mediation, both within and outside the United Nations.

Pillar Two: UN reform and revitalization:

- In addition to the continuation of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council, I plan to organize a retreat on Security Council reform in February/March 2012, which will engage involved Member States in an active discussion on the question of equitable representation on, and increase in, the Membership of the Security Council and related matters, with a view to moving ahead our common understanding and making progress on this issue.



- Pursuant to resolution 65/315, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly will commence its work “to identify further ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous resolutions and evaluating the status of their implementation.”

Pillar Three: Improving disaster prevention and response:

- A thematic debate in the Spring of 2012. The outcomes are intended to feed into Rio+20. Further details to follow.

Pillar Four: Sustainable development and global prosperity:

- Informal consultations on the modalities for the follow-up to the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Contribution to Development (pursuant to A/RES/65/313), leading to an informal thematic debate on the state of the world economy, expected to take place in May 2012.
- A development dialogue on MDGs, expected in February/March 2012 (pursuant to resolution 60/265).
- An informal thematic debate on preparations for Rio +20 (date to follow).

Other events:

- An interfaith forum during World Interfaith Harmony Week (pursuant to resolution 65/5.)
- A retreat on improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee, to be held during the first quarter of next year.
- Preparations for a high-level meeting on Information and Communication Technology.



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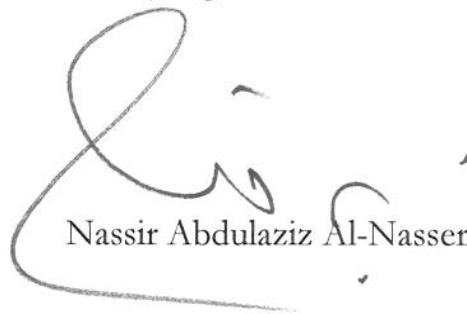
- Necessary preparations for the High-Level Event on the Rule of Law, which will take place at the opening of the 67th session (resolution 66/102).

This is just a flavour of what is to come in 2012. I will inform you of further details and any changes or additions in due course.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you again for your invaluable support and great cooperation thus far. I look forward to our continued close collaboration, and to strengthening our partnership in the months ahead.

Allow me to extend my best wishes to each of you, your staff and your families, for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Please accept Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nasser', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser