

1 December 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
on the occasion of World AIDS Day**

Statement attributable to the spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly

We commemorate World AIDS Day this year with hope and optimism.

Thirty years since the first case of AIDS was reported, HIV has infected 64 million people from all parts of the world. No country has been spared. The epidemic has caused 30 million deaths so far. Fortunately, we have seen significant progress over the last few years.

The unprecedented mobilization and commitment of the international community to tackle the epidemic have produced tangible results. According to the most recent data, new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths have fallen to the lowest levels since the peak of the epidemic.

The theme of the 2011 World AIDS Day - "Getting to Zero" - reflects both optimism and the need to do much more.

The challenges ahead of us are sobering. While more than 6.5 million people now receive lifesaving treatment, 7.6 million still have no access to it. In 2010 alone, 1.8 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses, and there were 2.7 million new HIV infections. Donor funding for HIV prevention and treatment in low- and middle-income countries has declined due to the financial crisis.

The United Nations General Assembly has been at the forefront of the efforts against the epidemic. In the face of formidable challenges, the General Assembly adopted the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS at the High-level meeting on 8-10 June 2011. The Declaration reaffirmed the strong political commitment and set new bold goals to reverse the epidemic.

We cannot allow hard-won gains to unravel. Today, I call on all stakeholders to uphold their commitments, and to work together to sustain and accelerate the progress. Let us all work together towards the noble vision of zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related death and zero discrimination.