

31 December 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
Marking the End of Year (2011) - Ushering in the New Year (2012)**

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

As the year 2011, draws to a close, it is fitting for us to take stock of the unique challenges that the international community has faced, including through the United Nations General Assembly over the past year, especially since the start of this 66th Session in September. Such an assessment should help guide, inform and motivate our deliberations and decisions as we prepare to enter the New Year.

Increasingly during the main part of this session, UN Member States and the international community have worked from the need for collective responses to various global challenges, including concerns over the global financial and economic system, the calls for democracy and freedom across the world, especially in the Arab World, concerns over the Middle East, including the issue of Palestinian statehood, as well as the toll and impact of natural and man-made disasters on many populations around the world.

These developments in 2011 reinforce the relevance of the four key pillars we have identified to help us focus and channel our attention appropriately during the three remaining quarters of the 66th Session of the General Assembly.

The need for the General Assembly and Member States to make more use of Mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, especially in the Middle East, is growing. This urgency is anticipated and reflected in the first pillar of this Presidency.

On pillar number two, UN reform and revitalization are needed now more than ever before, to reflect the realities of the XXI Century and ensure the effectiveness of our United Nations. In addition to the ongoing Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, there is the need to highlight and intensify our collective efforts on GA revitalization and other activities aimed at enhancing the power of the UN system. I urge all Member States to demonstrate the necessary will to generate utmost convergence and compromise that can lead to consensus in support of our common interests.

As demonstrated in 2011 by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, floods in Thailand, the Philippines and some other Asian nations, as well as by the humanitarian disaster in the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia, the international community and Member States of the UN will need to intensify efforts in the area of improving disaster preparedness and response, which is our third pillar. Though much has been done to share lessons and improve systems of alert and quick response around the world, we must do

more to implement policies and measures that can mitigate the impact of natural disasters and also address or prevent man-made catastrophes.

On our fourth pillar of Sustainable Development and Global Prosperity, we must work on implementing measures that deal effectively with the urgent social, economic and environmental challenges of our time. In this regard, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 is going to be an important international forum where the collective will of Member States can be readily applied in finding lasting solutions to some of the development challenges facing the world. The exercise of this global collective will has been demonstrated in the past few days in the agreement that Member States reached over the budget of the United Nations, and serves as a good sign going forward into the New Year.

As we prepare to enter the year 2012, with nine months of the 66th Session of the General Assembly ahead of us, I wish to commend all Member States for the hard, diligent and collective work conducted during the main part of the GA's activities. The start of the New Year will also mark the beginning of the renewed term of UN Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon and I take this opportunity to wish him success in his mandate.

I urge all Member States to continue to support the work of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, especially with renewed efforts around the four key pillars: Mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, UN reform and revitalization, Improving disaster preparedness and response and Sustainable development and global prosperity.

I take this opportunity to wish all Member States of the UN General Assembly and people around the world, a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year, 2012.