

13 September 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Dag
Hammarskjöld's Death**

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of H.E. Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations.

A true statesman, Mr. Hammarskjöld embodied the spirit and purpose of the United Nations. He dedicated his life to service and the protection of humanity, beginning his career in 1931 in the Swedish public service. As Secretary-General in the early years of our organization's history, Mr. Hammarskjöld was formative in shaping the UN's methods of operation. He believed firmly in preventative diplomacy and traveled extensively to help address first-hand the needs of countries, including those that were newly independent. He was also dedicated to promoting progress towards peace in the Middle East. Mr. Hammarskjöld was the driving force behind the establishment of the first United Nations Emergency Force, dedicated to securing and supervising the cessation of hostilities in the Suez Canal- an approach that is now a core function of our activities- today called "peacekeeping".

In addition to being a world peacemaker, Mr. Hammarskjöld was deeply committed to the individuals that make up the United Nations. Under his leadership, the first staff regulations were drawn up, defining the role and responsibilities of UN staff, including their independence as an international civil service. He also personally dedicated his time and energy to designing the UN Mediation Room, a place dedicated to contemplation and silence for people of all faiths and religions.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Hammarskjöld set a standard of service that we can all continue to aspire to. I firmly believe that this year, as we face unprecedented developments in the Arab world, the ongoing global financial crisis, and a seemingly endless stream of natural and man-made disasters, we can continue to draw inspiration from Mr. Hammarskjöld's strong commitment to peace, international cooperation and the universality of the United Nations. Mr. Hammarskjöld once said that "no life is more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country- or humanity". Let us ensure that his vision and his legacy live on.

Thank you.