

20 September 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Breakfast Meeting of the Group of Friends of Mediation**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today at this important meeting of the Group of Friends of Mediation. It is a timely meeting and an excellent opportunity to discuss, together with the distinguished representatives of key Member States and organizations, how to further the issue of mediation, which has become more relevant than ever.

The Group of Friends of Mediation has played a significant role since its establishment a year ago towards increasing the visibility of mediation and giving the issue impetus. In this vein, thanks to the initiative and tireless efforts of the Group, resolution 65/283 was adopted with consensus three months ago. As you all know, before I assumed the General Assembly Presidency, my team and I were following the draft resolution closely since the concept of Mediation is close to my heart.

This resolution was a landmark achievement not only for the General Assembly, but also for the whole United Nations system. The resolution provides a comprehensive normative framework. The intensive negotiation process for the finalization of this text itself has proven to be very useful in our understanding of almost all aspects of mediation.

Apart from the General Assembly, the Security Council has also been giving a particular emphasis to this matter in the last few years. In two days, the Council will hold a meeting, under the Presidency of Lebanon, on preventive diplomacy. This meeting follows the open debate in July and the summit in September last year on similar issues, after which Presidential Statements were adopted.

Over the past decade, we have also witnessed regional and sub-regional actors, civil society, high level personalities, women mediators and elders playing an increasing role by using mediation to prevent and resolve conflicts in various parts of the world. This is a welcome trend that we all need to support.

As a result of these major developments, we have reached a tremendous momentum in mediation. Now, the challenge before us is to keep this momentum and further enhance the critical role of mediation in conflict prevention and resolution. For this reason, I suggested the theme “the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means” for the General Debate. I have been encouraged by the great interest in and the demand for mediation by Member States and the increased capacity of the United Nations, particularly the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs.

As I said in my opening statement of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on 13 September, I will give a high priority to mediation in the upcoming year. Today's interactive discussion with the participation of such a highly experienced and knowledgeable Foreign Ministers and representatives of international and regional organizations will be very helpful for us to further identify key areas on which we need to concentrate our deliberations. Therefore, we are looking forward to the outcome of this meeting.

Before concluding, let me commend Finland and Turkey, as the two co-initiators, and other distinguished members of this Group for their leadership role on mediation. I wish you a successful and fruitful meeting. My office will be in close consultation with the Group in the course of the sixty-sixth session for the special activities that I am planning to organize in the General Assembly.

Thank you.