

23 September 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-level Meeting on Yasuni Initiative**

President of the Republic of Ecuador, His Excellency Mr. Rafael Correa,
Mr. Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to join you today at this special High-Level Meeting about the Yasuni-ITT Initiative of the Government of Ecuador.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Ecuador for taking active steps to advance climate change policy and develop creative solutions to fight global warming and biodiversity loss.

I would also like to recognise the United Nations Development Programme and all the partners present here today, who have worked extremely hard in favor of this important initiative.

The Yasuni National Park is 2.5 million acres of tropical rainforest, rich in biodiversity and home to indigenous peoples. I welcome the Yasuni Initiative as a non-technical but innovative development solution to addressing climate change challenges, and I would encourage Member States to support this initiative.

Along with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, today's high-level meeting offers the opportunity to raise political awareness, and galvanize political will and commitments to address the grass-roots and interlinked challenges of biodiversity loss.

It is also an opportunity to consider how the adverse impact of climate change can be effectively tackled for the benefit of future generations, and to help in achieving the MDGs.

I would encourage you, the Member States, to share lessons learned and best practices from the Yasuni initiative. I would also encourage you to bring these experiences to bear on the policy-making processes for COP 17 in Durban and for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 - and beyond.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our relationship with Earth is one of mutual inter-dependence: we rely on the Earth's rich resources as much as it relies on us to succeed in the struggle against climate change. We must come together to take action in the fight against global warming, taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

For this reason, meetings aimed at finding creative solutions to climate change, such as this one, are so important. I wish you every success for a productive meeting.

Thank you.