

24 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 Mini-summit on the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of  
Africa**

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to join you at today's Mini-Summit on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Horn of Africa. I commend the Secretary-General for bringing together the international community to discuss this urgent and devastating crisis.

Men, women and children in the Horn of Africa are facing starvation and humanitarian disaster on an unimaginable scale. As the world's preeminent forum for international peace and security, it is our collective responsibility to provide moral and financial support to these highly vulnerable populations. The right to food, life and security are, after all, universal human rights.

The solidarity demonstrated by countries from around the world to date illustrates the ability and willingness of the international community to respond when people are in dire need. I welcome all the resources that have been mobilized and efforts made to reach those in need, and I thank Member States for their generosity. In particular I would like to recognize the regional initiatives, especially those of the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, where countries have come together to help their neighbours in need.

Going forward, the effectiveness of these contributions will depend on the ability of governments and humanitarian organizations to act in concert in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia. I would encourage Member States to use the multilateral assistance framework, or work closely with it, to ensure that your generous contributions are effectively used to save lives and help rebuild local resilience.

It is also important that bilateral aid is coordinated with the UN system, through the Emergency Relief Coordinator, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to ensure the sustainability of current donations and investments.

In addressing this complex issue, we must also share information and work closely and cooperatively to ensure all needs are met. In the longer term, it will be important to support national efforts that improve communities' resilience and self-reliance in responding to increasingly recurrent droughts.

The General Assembly is an important forum through which Member States act in support of this issue. This year, as President of the General Assembly, I will be fully committed to focusing the General

Assembly's attention on this humanitarian crisis. It is our collective responsibility to provide full moral and financial support to help restore peace and security in this area.

This session, the draft resolution on strengthening humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa will provide an important opportunity for Member States to clearly delineate their commitment to addressing this unfolding crisis. The resolution will also help the affected Member States to reinforce their ability to avert another famine.

Adoption of this resolution will be an important step in responding to the crisis. It will also demonstrate the General Assembly's quick response to emerging situations of global concern.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

A few days ago, during the High-level meeting on "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", world leaders emphasised the need to combat desertification and its severe humanitarian consequences.

As President of the General Assembly, I will remain committed to the critical issues of vulnerability, food insecurity and sustainable development throughout the session. To support the General Assembly in its work, I have identified as one of my four key areas of focus this session the topic: "Improving disaster prevention and response".

It is my intention to provide informal settings whereby Member States can exchange lessons learned and strengthen their joint humanitarian efforts. Underpinning our work must be the recognition that humanitarian issues are development issues, and that our success in protecting against natural disasters, such as extreme drought, will have a direct impact on our ability to fulfill the MDGs. I am committed to working with each of you to strengthen our response efforts and to become more coordinated and holistic in our approach.

I wish you the utmost success in your meeting and in addressing this issue going forward.

Thank you.