

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

25 September 2011

Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly, on the Value of the UN's Role in the World

Good morning.

It is my great honour to join you for today's service at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. Let me extend my sincere gratitude to Very Reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski and esteemed members of the clergy for the invitation to share my thoughts with you on the value of the United Nation's role in the world.

The peaceful and prosperous co-existence of people and nations is the cornerstone of the United Nations mission.

We are bound together as the international community in the belief that - despite different cultures, languages and religions- there are fundamental shared values and principles that underpin our humanity. We are bound together, as the UN family, because we recognize that it is through the celebration of our diversity, as well as through the promotion of tolerance and dispelling fears of the "other", that we will build a more peaceful world. And we are bound together because we understand that the citizens of the world share common problems that require global solutions.

By bringing together 193 countries from around the world, the United Nations is uniquely placed to enrich humanity, steer progress, and build a culture of peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As part of my efforts as President of the General Assembly, I will urge Member States to focus their efforts on overcoming prejudice and reaffirming that extremism and hatred can not be associated with any particular religion, belief or culture.

It is important to recognize here the vital role played by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, which was established in 2005. The Alliance brings together the international community to bridge differences and overcome the intolerance and divisions that potentially threaten world peace. Indeed, the Alliance of Civilizations, through its activities in promoting respect for diversity and pluralism – along with equality of all religions, races and ethnicities – is a coherent expression of the founding principles of the United Nations itself.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is clear that, as the most universal and preeminent centre of global decision-making, the United Nations has a unique role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security, advancing development, and protecting and promoting human rights.

But how we work when we come together in this forum is critical to our success. It is my strong belief that what is required is a united global partnership, founded on open dialogue and close collaboration. No one country can fix the issues before us alone. As the central global forum of deliberation and action, the United Nations has a unique role to play in this respect.

To succeed in addressing the global issues before us, Member States must continue their work to reform and revitalize the United Nations General Assembly, to ensure it retains the necessary political power and remains not only efficient and effective, but also inclusive and representative. As President of the General Assembly, one of my key priorities this year will be UN reform and revitalization. I will also focus this session on the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, improving disaster prevention and response, and sustainable development and global prosperity.

Underpinning our efforts at the United Nations is a shared, interfaith belief in the inherent goodness of every individual and our commitment to peace, forgiveness and compassion. Consider for a moment:

In Christianity, it is said: “Do to others what you would like others to do to you.”

In Islam, we hear: “Wish for others what you wish for yourself.”

In Judaism, we learn: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.”

In Buddhism it is declared: “Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

And in Hinduism we hear: “Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.”

Ladies and gentlemen, at the heart of the United Nations is these very values, common to us all. Our organization is the ideal forum whereby we can start to make peace within ourselves, within our families and between our communities and our nations.

May God be with us all. Salam.

Thank you.