

27 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 Closing of the General Debate**

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

We have come to the end of the General Debate of the 66th session of the General Assembly. Permit me to express my sincere gratitude to every participant for your open, constructive and comprehensive contribution to this great dialogue of world leaders.

Before I begin reading my statement, I would like to express, on behalf of myself and on behalf of all Member States, my sincere grief for the passing away of Ms. Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Laureate. I would like to also extend my condolences to her family and to the Government and people of Kenya.

Without question, it has been an historic and unforgettable debate. Many Member States paid tribute to the hope awakened by the shifts taking place around the world, where people are actively questioning their systems of governance. World leaders praised the courage of those people who fought for freedom, dignity and democracy, and made it clear that governments cannot suppress their people without accountability. We welcomed the new leaders who came to this Hall to express the hopes and needs of their nations. And they called on the international community to assist in the fulfillment of their populations' aspirations for the rule of law, transparency, prosperity, justice and human rights. In this context, the international community is encouraged to unite in support for the Libyan-led transition.

We also witnessed the renewed hope and reaffirmed determination of the Palestinian people. It was indeed an historic moment when President Mahmoud Abbas announced that he had submitted an application to the Secretary-General for the admission of Palestine to the United Nations. This issue is now being handled by the Security Council.

Overall, I was impressed to hear that the overwhelming majority of international leaders called for a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East resulting in two viable, sovereign and independent States- Israel and Palestine- living side by side in peace and security. Building on this consensus among nations, it is my hope that during this session we will be able to unite our efforts to seek a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Terms of Reference and international law.

As we come together to consider these timely and complex issues, the role of mediation is clearly more relevant than ever before. Addressing the theme of this year's debate- "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes"- many delegations welcomed this theme and reflected on the increasing role of

mediation and prevention, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Examples were shared of mediation efforts from Member States' own regions. It was acknowledged that mediation is a cost-effective tool and that regional and sub-regional organizations play a vital role in the peaceful solution of conflicts. Member States noted that the full and effective participation of women in mediation efforts is vital, and that the involvement of civil society is becoming increasingly important. And there was widespread support for the Secretary-General's efforts in conflict prevention, and calls for UN capabilities in this respect to be enhanced. As President of the General Assembly, I will give high priority to mediation in the upcoming year.

I was also very pleased that, in addition to substantive discussions on the peaceful settlement of disputes, many Member States raised issues related to the other three areas of focus I have identified for this year's session.

On "UN reform and revitalization", we heard many calls for continuing comprehensive reform of the United Nations, so that it truly embodies the spirit of universality and is able to respond effectively to the changing global landscape. With unique legitimacy and unparalleled convening power, the General Assembly should pro-actively address major and emerging global problems, in a forward-looking manner.

There is broad agreement on the urgent need for early consensual reform of the Security Council. Such reform is inevitable if the Council is to reflect contemporary realities and be more representative, inclusive, democratic and transparent. I strongly urge you, the Member States, to reenergize this process, to reaffirm your commitment to the Security Council reform process, and to generate the political will necessary to proceed for achievement in a timely manner. I believe that for any process to succeed, it must be based on the will of the Member States. I will pay close attention to this fourth year of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Regarding the theme of "Improving disaster prevention and response", Member States also emphasized the importance of international cooperation in disaster prevention and recovery. Many Member States expressed grave concern for the humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa. This crisis was identified as a major threat to stability and prosperity in region. This General Assembly session, Member States will draft a resolution aimed at improving disaster prevention and response- an important opportunity for the Membership to clearly define its commitment to addressing the grave humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. As President of the General Assembly, I will be fully committed to focusing the General Assembly's attention on this humanitarian crisis.

On the issue of sustainable development and global prosperity, Member States acknowledged that we will need to act cooperatively and think creatively as the world's population reaches 7 billion next month. A common theme that emerged was the pressing need to re-think the global approach to sustainable development, which should include consideration of energy, water and food security issues, among others.

We heard many calls for a redoubling of efforts and enhanced determination to achieve progress in attaining the MDGs.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development- Rio+20- will be an important opportunity to consider new strategies for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

Many Member States also called on the United Nations to tackle climate change, through supporting countries to adapt to its effects, and for developed countries to address emissions reduction targets. The COP 17 meeting in Durban this year will be an opportunity to make progress in this respect.

Within the context of the recurrent global economic and financial crisis, there was general acknowledgement of the UN's central role and broad legitimacy in providing solutions to global governance challenges. During the debate, Heads of State and Government called on the United Nations to take the lead in the process of reforming the economic and financial order.

Of course many more critical issues were also raised during the debate. Member States spoke about the importance of providing adequate financial and human resources to the United Nations, as well as the need for shared financial responsibility and fiscal discipline. There was also support for the Secretary-General's measures for UN reform.

Many delegations reaffirmed that international peace and security can be best served through the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The maintenance of the highest nuclear safety and security standards was also highlighted as a requirement for this stability. I encourage Member States to advance their efforts to revitalize the UN disarmament machinery and, in particular, to initiate negotiations on new disarmament instruments in the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We now turn our attention to the crucial next step: the implementation of our commitments. In particular, the implementation of the Programmes of Action adopted by the General Assembly and those outcomes important for developed and developing countries, including Least Developed Countries. In many ways, this is the most important element of our work: turning talk into real impact.

In fulfilling our joint responsibilities, we must build consensus and sustainable solutions to global challenges. I will be steadfast in my commitment to work in close cooperation with each of you, so we may strengthen our efforts through a united global partnership. Heeding the calls of Member States during the debate, I will accordingly focus this session on South-South and triangular cooperation as well as dialogue among civilizations and advancing the culture of peace.

Permit me to end on a more personal note. As I said at the opening of this session, I consider you my family and my friends and I will count on your full cooperation in the year ahead. I truly believe that it is this spirit of friendship and open dialogue that will be key to moving forward the agenda before us. Coming together is the start; working together will get us to the end.

Thank you.