

21 October 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
to the First Committee**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you here today.

Let me congratulate Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland for the exemplary manner in which he is leading the First Committee in its important work.

It is normally not a common tradition to have the President of the General Assembly address the First Committee. Indeed, my presence here among you today is not dictated by any such tradition, but rather by my personal intention to deliver to you a message of appreciation and strong encouragement.

As you approach the action-taking phase of the Committee, I found it essential to renew to all of you my full support of your work. It is my hope that you will manage, through a spirit of understanding, cooperation and compromise, to bring your work not only to a successful conclusion, but also to make progress in practically advancing the cause of disarmament and arms control on all levels.

As mentioned in my remarks at the opening session of the 66th session of the General Assembly, we have an important year ahead of us on the issue of disarmament. Nuclear disarmament, in particular, remains a prominent and ever-more pressing priority for the United Nations.

2012 includes a notably busy agenda of disarmament and arms-control meetings. These include the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, the Review Conference of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the First Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and several others. I assure you that I will conduct the relevant consultations with all interested parties, and will exert all the necessary efforts so that long-awaited, tangible progress in these areas is realised.

One key issue remains the revitalization of the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Since it is often the case that many experts from Geneva participate in the work of the First Committee, I hope that this can contribute to a better mutual understanding of the complementary nature of the work in Geneva and New York, and help to promote the overall better functioning of the machinery.

I call upon you all to maintain a constructive and future-looking atmosphere in the remaining phase of the Committee's work, and to aim at consensus building, to the maximum possible extent. I look forward to progress in your work and I wish you success in your deliberations.

Finally, as President of the General Assembly, I am deeply committed, along with my entire team, to working with each of you to successfully moving forward the Assembly's agenda. I explicitly acknowledge and express my thanks for the Committee's significant role and contribution to the overall success of the General Assembly.

I thank you for your attention.