

31 October 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Second Committee Meeting on Sustainable Development  
(Agenda 19)**

Under Secretary-General Mr. Sha Zukang,

Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP,

Mrs. Margarethe Wahlstrom Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action,

Mrs. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary for the United Nation Framework Convention on

Climate Change, Mr Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of United Nation Convention to Combating Desertification.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with you this morning.

I would like to share some ideas that I hope will help facilitate your deliberations on the agenda item 19 “sustainable development” and address the second committee for the second time.

In exactly 216 days time, world leaders will come together in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the UN conference on sustainable development - 20 years after the first “Earth Summit”. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) is much more than a commemoration of Rio 1992, but presents an important benchmark in the global development agenda and global strategy for sustainable development.

Rio+20 will address the gaps in means of implementation, green economy in the context of poverty eradication and strengthening institutional framework for sustainable development.

I strongly believe that the international community should have a stronger sense of urgency and responsibility in the Outcome of Rio+20.

We must reconfirm the Rio, Agenda 21 and Johannesburg principles and commitments. Action-orientated and actor-driven is also urgently needed to extend the benefits of sustainable development to people of all countries and in particular, countries in special situation such SIDS, LDS, LLDS, and Africa.

We should build consensus, enhance coordination and cooperation, and improve an efficient and effective governance framework for sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on the willingness, availability, accessibility and timely provision of adequate means of implementation, through both domestic and international efforts.

To ensure the broadest possible participation and engagement of Member States throughout the preparatory processes of the United Conference on Sustainable development Rio+20, I reiterate my call for Member States that are in position to provide a financial support to address the budgetary constraints facing by developing countries.

As President of the General Assembly, I am deeply committed to the success of Rio+20. The “Sustainable development and global prosperity” is one of my four areas of focus this session. I intend to provide the appropriate settings whereby Member States can exchange lessons learned, bridge the gaps and build consensus toward the Rio+20.

My other focus areas during this 66th session are “Improving disaster prevention and response”. This is a crucial cross-cutting issue that contributes to development. In this context, Disaster Risk Reduction is a key component contributing to reducing socio-economic vulnerabilities. Based on preparedness, disaster risk reduction is an essential component of building resilience and sustainable development.

We need to continue to strengthening the capacity of United Nations system in addressing the disaster risk reduction and prevention.

Pursuant to the mandate of resolution 65/160, which requested me to report to the UNCCD COP.10 on the outcome of the High-level meeting on desertification, which was held on the 20th of September, earlier this month I travelled to Changwon City, Republic of Korea, and attended the opening session of the High-level segment of the COP. I presented my report to the COP, focusing on key issues that need to be addressed if we are to raise the profile of DLDD.

One common message I sensed throughout the opening ceremony of the COP 10 is that the international community stands ready to take bold action to address desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development. The risk of inaction being the potential adverse effect on food security, poverty, forced migration, adverse impact of climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, political instability and conflict.

As we march towards Rio+20 Conference, I invite this Committee to act decisively to put the DLDD agenda at the center of the Rio+20 deliberations. DLDD constitutes an effective way for the achievement sustainable development for the benefit of the planet and its inhabitants.

Action in the area of climate change remains critical for the survival of humankind. To ensure concrete action on all the four pillars of the UNFCCC process – mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology - I encourage Member States, in their next meeting on COP17 in Durban, to adopt an outcome that is comprehensive, equitable, balanced and based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibility. Such an outcome will constitute an important step in strengthening our common efforts to fight climate change. Especially, to maintain and build on what we have achieved in Cancun, last year.

In this regard, I fully support the efforts of the Government of South Africa to achieve a successful conference in Durban next December.

Biodiversity is crucial for our continued existence and we may be on the verge of the 6th mass extinction if we do not take urgent steps to reverse biodiversity loss.

In this regard, I commend the two new landmark Protocols recently finalized and adopted: the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, and the Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The extent of advocacy and awareness generation activities undertaken during the International year of Biodiversity are also commendable, including the outreach to and engagement of other stakeholders. I look forward to activities to be undertaken under the UN decade for Biodiversity.

Finally I wish to underscore the commitment and leadership demonstrated by the Executive Directors of the three Rio Convention: Ms. Christiana Figueres, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif and others working in the field.

The Second Committee has a broad agenda and expertise on the linkages between poverty, macroeconomic policy and sustainable development issues. Your work during this session will be a vital step towards making Rio+20 a success.

Thank you for your attention today; I wish you successful and consensual deliberations.