

9 December 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
on Human Rights Day**

High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

We can all agree with the High Commissioner that this has been a special year for human rights.

It has been special - extraordinary even - not only because of the millions of people around the world who have risen up to demand their basic human rights, but also because of the unprecedented level of support the international community has given to their aspirations.

The message from the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council – indeed from all parts of the United Nations – has been unequivocal: the popular will and legitimate demands of the people must be respected in accordance with the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The unity of voice with which the United Nations has responded to demands for freedom, justice and human rights itself calls for celebration. I think we can all rightly wear the badge distributed here that says “Proud to be a human rights defender”.

Of course, as we celebrate the human rights awakening we have witnessed lately, we must not forget that freedom from fear and from want remains a distant dream for many, too many around the world.

Our challenge, as the international community, is to continue to push the boundaries of social, economic, political and cultural freedoms so that ever more people throughout the world realise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This, indeed, is what the Charter demands of us: To achieve international cooperation in “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”.

The Presidency of the General Assembly will play its part by mainstreaming human rights in the four pillars that I have identified for this session: the peaceful settlement of disputes; UN reform and revitalization; improving disaster prevention and response; and sustainable development and global prosperity. I look forward to working in partnership with each of you to advance our common goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have been encouraged by the High Commissioner to make a human rights wish.

My wish is that for every man, woman and child worldwide, all the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will come true.

I sincerely wish you a Happy Human Rights Day!