

12 March 2012

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

Delivered on behalf of the President of the GA by Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the Secretary General for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction]

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to send you the following message through the good offices of Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the Secretary General for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Disaster risk is increasing globally. We are witness to the fast growing cost of disasters worldwide, to rich and to poor countries. The accumulation of risk to the future from rapid urbanization, population growth and pressure on the resources of nature, leads to more people and more economic assets are exposed to risk.

Chronic drought and water shortage, seismic risk, extreme weather events and variability are leading to situations as we saw in Bangkok during past year, the Japanese tsunami and the resulting damage to the Fukushima nuclear power station, to high stress and migration in arid areas where peoples ability to earn their lives is undermined by lack of water for agriculture and production

Overall, countries have been successful through improved disaster preparedness and early warning, to reduce the loss of lives in disasters. The economic losses are relentlessly increasing. The social and economic damage on development is considerable.

As the President of the UN 66th General Assembly, and in cooperation with the UN Secretary General, I have made prevention and reduction of the impact of disasters a major focus of my service as the President. I therefore welcome, and congratulate the initiative of the Arab Aid Consortium as major aid donors to infra structure, social and economic development, capacity building and training, to engage in including and integrating the perspective of risk reduction in practice. This is of great importance to our Arab region as well as for all countries world wide, many of those that you already cooperate with.

Your cooperation with the UN and with many other organisations is appreciated and we look forward to your engagement in the global and regional and national work to reduce the impact of disasters on countries and communities.

To consider how we can best support and advance efforts to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development efforts, I will organize a thematic debate on the issue of disaster risk reduction on 12 April. I hope the Arab region will be well-represented at this meeting.

I wish you a productive discussion.

Thank you.