

27 March 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the First Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the
Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to address you today, at the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

It gives me great pleasure to thank Her Excellency Susan Ogoo and His Excellency Alexander Lomaia, for their tire-less efforts in facilitation of agenda item: 121 Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the United Nations must adapt to the current world realities if it is to remain strong, efficient and effective.

Not only has the world evolved since 1946, but the UN's membership has grown and the General Assembly's agenda has expanded, adding more responsibility to our shoulders in responding to today's challenges.

All of these factors necessitate that we reconsider the way we do business at the United Nations.

Reforming the United Nations relies, in large part, on enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly, to let the Assembly attain the political power it deserves and the prestige necessary to reflect its role in global decision- making.

The Assembly is, after all, the UN's chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ.

It is, I would submit, the most universal, legitimate body in the world.

The General Assembly has a tremendous mandate and we must use it: as the universal place for finding solutions, responding to challenges and building global consensus.

Recognizing this need, "General Assembly Revitalization" has been on the Assembly's agenda since the early 1990s.

You, the Member States, have reaffirmed your commitment to revitalization in the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, and other relevant General Assembly resolutions as well as today, through your participation.

While we have achieved some success in the revitalization process, much more progress is still to be made.

I would argue that one of the most fundamental elements for strengthening the General Assembly and ensuring its effectiveness is the implementation of its own resolutions and decisions.

Implementation is the responsibility of you, dear Member States.

It is your task to translate international commitments into national legislations and policies.

I would therefore urge each of you to forge the political will necessary to make the decisions taken in New York a reality for populations world-wide.

In doing so, you will ensure that we truly make a difference to development, human rights and international peace and security – both for today and for future generations.

Additionally, with regard to the role of the President of the General Assembly, let us consider innovative approaches to strengthening the President's role vis-à-vis two dimensions: politically and in terms of resources.

As you are aware, the President of the General Assembly's challenging mandate normally extends within a period of only one complete session - twelve months.

During this period, it is not always the case that each President finds this limited period of time appropriate or sufficient for familiarizing him or herself with the Office, while at the same time driving the rich and diversified agenda of the Assembly forward from day one.

On the other hand, the increasing responsibilities of the President of the General Assembly demand an appropriate budget in support of his or her mission.

Bureaucracy should be no option.

We all know that the President has to search for external budgetary supports, which constitutes an extra burden on the Presidency.

Indeed, if we ensure that the Office of the President's functions are supported through the UN's biennium budget, then developing and least developed countries would be encouraged to nominate their talents for the Presidency, and to contribute their rich expertise at this level.

This should be done in a manner that supports the General Assembly's mission.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 66th session offers us an opportunity to reaffirm the chartered role of the General Assembly in matters related to international peace and security, as well as conflict prevention.

Such a role should never be perceived as a substitute for the mandate of the other principal organs of the UN.

Rather, the General Assembly offers a complimentary, viable alternative for the international community to act in moments of deadlock.

This role ensures a message of hope can be delivered to those suffering the unbearable hard-ships caused by the scourge of conflicts and atrocities.

In Libya and Somalia, I had the opportunity to deliver this message of support through my joint field visits with the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Regarding the situation in Syria, the General Assembly's engagement reflects the very mission of our organization:

To keep peace throughout the world, and to encourage respect for human rights and freedoms.

Last month, the Assembly provided a venue for the international community to consider the latest developments in the human rights situation in Syria, including through a briefing by the High Commission for Human Rights, Mrs. Navi Pillay, followed by the adoption of resolution A/RES/66/253, on the 16th of February.

These practical acts within my legitimate ruling as President of the General Assembly, presents practical measures to revitalizing the role and effectiveness of the General Assembly.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While views may vary regarding some elements of GA revitalization, I invite you, Member States, to engage actively in this important discussion, and to provide innovative and concrete proposals to further identify ways to enhance the role and effectiveness of the Assembly.

It is worth noting here, as I mentioned earlier, that the process of General Assembly revitalization is inter-linked with other important processes that fall under the wider umbrella of UN reform.

The relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs is of particular importance for the success of the work of the United Nations.

Therefore, I decided to select UN Reform and Revitalization as one of my four main area of focus this session.

As President of the General Assembly, I have placed special attention on ensuring regular coordination with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

I am also working very closely and cooperatively with the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to bring together the Secretariat and the Assembly on issues of shared concerns to serve all member states.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In our quest to strengthen this august, principal body, let us be guided by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability.

Equal importance should be attached to the different elements of GA revitalization.

I am confident that you will provide the necessary political will to this process, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Susan and Ambassador Lomaia.

While we must charter our course between idealism and realism, your peoples, the citizens of the world, will judge our work by the real change they see and feel on the ground.

This is your responsibility, this is our common responsibility.

I wish you a productive meeting.

And I thank you.