

30 March 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the General Assembly Retreat on Security Council
Reform**

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

Welcome to Glen Clove.

I am honored that you are joining my General Assembly retreat on Security Council reform.

I am also very pleased that His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon is with us today, despite of his busy schedule.

Mr. Ban's presence illustrates his ongoing support to Member States on this important issue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Reforming the Security Council is critical to reforming and revitalizing the United Nations.

I am certain that we all came to Glen Cove with one goal in mind:

To achieve real progress on the track of Security Council Reform.

From the first day of my tenure as President of the General Assembly, I have been fully aware of the urgent need to move forward with this process.

UN reform is a comprehensive process, and Security Council reform lies at its core.

Consensus among the international community is undeniable on the need to align the Security Council with contemporary world realities - world realities that goes beyond those of May, 1945.

In recent years, we can all think of urgent, unfolding situations where the world has looked to the United Nations, and particularly to the Security Council, with hope.

With hope for a swift response, for the protection of rights, dignity, security and ultimately, lives.

This has been, and continues to be, the global response to many issues, from illegal settlements to the situation in Syria.

Sadly, in some cases , this global hope has not been equally matched by the Council’s actions.

Seven years ago, when the Outcome Document of the World Summit was adopted, our common will and determination were perfectly reflected in paragraph 153.

There, we stressed our support “for early reform of the Security Council - as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations - in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.”

I further quote from this same paragraph:

“We commit ourselves to continuing our efforts to achieve a decision to this end and request the General Assembly to review progress on the reform set out above by the end of 2005.”

As we consider these words, a number of questions arise, including:

What is the implication of the current status quo on our organization?

Could the failure of the Council to respond to specific challenges erode the credibility of the United Nations?

My honest answer is yes.

Sustaining the central role of the UN in the global arena demands serious progress with regard to Security Council reform.

Which leads to my next question:

When can we achieve this progress?

And again my answer will be in the spirit of the 2005 paragraph:

As soon as possible.

Yet, with the 10th anniversary of paragraph 153 upon us, the time is fast approaching when progress will be neither soon nor early.

Another question I would submit is:

What should a possible proposal for Security Council reform look like?

My answer would be:

A proposal that emerges from a Member State driven process, one that clearly garners the broadest possible acceptance by Member States, in the manner defined in the General Assembly Decision 62/557.

From the beginning of the 66th session of the General Assembly, I have continued to assert that this process must be led by you, Member States.

For this reason, I deemed it necessary to meet today, here at this retreat, to work and think innovatively together, and discuss how we can proceed with this important process.

I fully support Ambassador Tanin's endeavors as Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform, on my behalf and under my vigilant guidance.

For this reason, from the first day of my Presidency, I have emphasized my confidence in his leadership.

I look forward to your support to him as well.

And finally, I sincerely encourage you, distinguished guests, to fully engage in the relevant discussions with flexibility, effectiveness and openness.

Our endeavors should chart a course between realism and idealism.

I would support any approach that enjoys the widest political acceptance among the UN Membership.

I wish you success deliberations.

I encourage all of you, Member States, Academics, Civil Society, to spice up this discussion, with your innovative ideas, frank opinions and most importantly, constructive contributions.

Thank you.