

31 March 2012

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

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your contribution to our retreat on Security Council reform.

I would like to add my voice to those expressed here, in extending appreciation to Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the UN, for his able moderation of this workshop.

Over the last 24 hours we have heard mind provoking, inspiring and concrete discussion.

Despite of the different approaches, you have unanimously reaffirmed the need to reform the Council.

Your sincere and active participation is a clear demonstration of Member States' interest in and commitment to achieving, meaningful reform of the Security Council, I just hope that this interest can expedite our work for timely milestone forward.

Through-out our retreat, your strong engagement and dedication to this process were clear.

We considered how this much-needed reform is affected by contemporary world realities.

What I appreciated most was your sincere quest for result-oriented, future-looking approach, that emerged through the discussions.

And we worked to answer two focused and important questions:

What progress can we achieve during the 66th Session in the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform?

And how can we achieve this progress?

Discussions reflected the need to agree on a well-defined way forward. We need to take our common endeavours to the next level , achieving a new mile stone of success is necessary now more than any time before.

It is true that we may not be able to conclude a challenging exercise, like Security Council Reform, during one General Assembly Session. However, we can achieve a step forward, capitalize further on it, retaining our momentum and keep going till we reach our goal.

We listened to different views on how to progress, both from within the UN and from outside.

I would like to acknowledge academics and think tanks who provided valuable insight and renewed impetus to our discussions, especially those who devoted their time and traveled long distances to participate in our deliberations.

On the beginning of the discussion on the current state of the reform, part of you have spoken in favour of Council Expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership , another part did not share the same view. While this brings no new developments to the positions that we already know over the years, I am very encouraged, by the emerging feeling of the need to move and proceed forward. Very interesting points and questions were raised , on whether we need further negotiations or decisions, other voices called for the need of innovation in the way we are approaching this important question.

I echo this sincere commitment which aims at reaching milestone of progress, regardless of the angle from it is coming, It is my duty to support and encourage forging your common emerging will, you Member States.

Having this divergence in views, on the way forward, should make no obstacle or interrupt progress.

It is our deep sense of responsibility that should guide us out of the status quo.

Because there is no question that Security Council reform is central to the process of UN reform. That's why I chose the "UN reform and Revitalization" as one of my focus areas this session.

Yet the stalemate of the process threatens the UN's ability and credibility to undertake its chartered mandate.

Leaving this room, each of us will likely be asked the question:

Was the retreat successful?

Personally I believe that only time will tell.

Success will come only in actual results.

We need to move forward.

Now as we are about to depart from Chatham house rules, Taking an overall look of our discussion, I believe this retreat, have contributed successfully, charging our momentum.

I do believe this retreat was a step in the right direction. It will always be useful to remember that, difference in views should cause no hard feelings.

I would end by reaffirming that the process of Security Council reform should always be a Member States driven process.

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

As we are concluding our retreat, I would like to share with you a word from the heart, status quo is not an option. As a president of the General Assembly, there came moments at the 66th session, that I recall , where the Assembly, had to react very promptly at times where status quo was no option.

Last month, the Assembly provided a venue for the international community to consider the latest developments in the human rights situation in Syria, which resulted in the adoption of resolution A/RES/66/253, on the 16th of February.

Such spirit of deep understanding for the prompt need of an action, will be very constructive , to guide our contributions to the exercise of Security Council Reform.

Finally, bearing in mind our cooperative approach, I hope that as we end today's session, we all feel stronger and better prepared to continue working towards achieving real progress this session.

I thank you.