

6 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Special Cultural Event “Celebrating the 66th Session of the
General Assembly and Supporting UN Women”**

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon,
Mrs. Ban Soon-taek,
Ms. Michele Bachelet,
Excellencies,
Eminent guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am so pleased to welcome you to the United Nations General Assembly Hall this evening, to support UN Women and to celebrate my Presidency of the General Assembly.

What a glamorous gathering of guests!

If only all our meetings in this Hall could be so beautiful!

Tonight is not just a celebration - it is much more than that.

We come together tonight because we share a deep conviction.

A conviction that women are the key to unlocking peace and development worldwide.

A conviction that we cannot create a more peaceful world when gender discrimination and violence against women are rife in our communities.

It is with such a conviction that UN Women was established by the General Assembly in 2010.

Tonight is a show of solidarity for UN Women, and for their critical work towards gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

Tonight's event is also dedicated to supporting one of the flagship funds managed by UN Women, to end violence against women.

The Trust Fund is already working to give women a stronger voice, to empower those who are especially at risk, and to support women's quest for a violence-free life.

This Fund demonstrates what we can achieve and deliver when we come together to address the terrible crime of violence against women and girls.

Yet we can, and we must, do more.

Member States of the United Nations have collectively committed to raise 100 million US dollars for the Fund by 2015.

Let us join hands to advance this commitment, so that more women and girls all over the world can receive the assistance they urgently need.

I am very pleased to announce that, already in 2012, generous donations have been made by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, South Africa, and Switzerland.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of these nations for their contributions.

I am confident that other Governments are ready to join in this worthy cause.

Generous donations have also been received from the private sector, from civil society organizations and from individuals. For these, I am deeply grateful.

Every donation makes a difference.

A real, tangible, life-changing difference for a girl or woman somewhere in the world.

Dear friends,

Tonight's concert could not be taking place without the great support of the State of Qatar.

My deep thanks go to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar.

The Emir's vision of human capital as the most valuable commodity for a sustainable world, is a true inspiration.

I am profoundly grateful to the Qatar Foundation and to Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser.

The tireless efforts of Her Highness to empower women render her a true champion of women's rights.

Her commitment to education is unmatched and most admirable.

My sincere thanks go to my friend, His Excellency Ambassador Sheikh Meshal Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, and to the Permanent Mission of Qatar, for their assistance in supporting tonight's event.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend my dear friends and colleagues here at the United Nations.

Day in and day out, these colleagues continue to take up the causes of the people who are most in need in the world.

To the United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and his wife Mrs. Ban Soon-taek: thank you for your genuine and unwavering commitment to building a more peaceful world for all.

To the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Michele Bachelet: thank you for being a great example to us all, and for your tireless efforts for the rights of women.

To UN Goodwill Ambassador Mira Sorvino: we are delighted you could join us tonight. Thank you for your determination and dedication to ending human trafficking.

And to every UN staff member who worked so hard and so professionally behind the scenes to make this event possible: to each of you, I offer my sincere thanks and deep appreciation.

Tonight we are most privileged to have the magnificent Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra performing in this Hall.

The Qatar Philharmonic is the leading professional ensemble in the Middle East.

Much like the United Nations itself, the Orchestra serves as a bridge between the cultures of the world.

It is an honor to have them with us. I am also very pleased we could be joined by Ms. Haya Khalifa Al Nassr, Director of Communications at the Qatar Foundation, who facilitated the Orchestra's performance here this evening.

Dear friends,

I will conclude by paying tribute to the remarkable achievements of the United Nations Member States this session.

It has been my great honor to lead the Assembly at a crucial moment in world history.

Many times this year it has felt that the international community was being tested.

From the historic shifts taking place across the Middle East and North Africa, through a struggling global economic recovery, to an historic opportunity to build a more sustainable world - the UN and its General Assembly have been called upon to act urgently.

And in the face of shifting sands, the Assembly is standing strong, active and responsive.

It has built bridges where others may have seen only turbulent waters.

It has put aside politics and produced unity, to offer urgent help and hope to those most in need.

And the General Assembly has reaffirmed its place as the most legitimate, representative, universal body in the world.

I have endeavored, as President of this sixty-sixth session, to chart a clear course between idealism and realism.

I have sought to galvanize the support of Member States in building a truly united global partnership on all the important issues we have to address.

In the 3 months remaining of my term, I look forward to continuing to work with each of you, to ensure a bright and peaceful future for our children – especially our girls.

Their success will be our success.

Let me leave you with a wise saying:

"In a world of peace and love, music would be the universal language."

Please, enjoy. Thank you.