

7 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
to the Annual Assembly of the Association of Former International  
Civil Servants**

Ms. Linda Saputelli, AFICS President,  
Assistant Secretary-General Michael Adlerstein, Executive Director, Capitol Master Plan,  
Mr. Parfait Onanga Anyanga, Director, Office of the UN Deputy Secretary-General,  
Mr. Andres Castellanos, President, Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants,  
Ms. Frances Zainoeddin, AFICS/NY 1st Vice-President,  
Mr. Denis Beissel, AFICS/NY 2nd Vice-President,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear colleagues and friends,

Before I begin, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, who just today was appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi.

You are still a long way from retirement, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, but I have no doubt you will have much to offer in this prestigious and important role. Congratulations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you at your annual assembly and to congratulate you — the members of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS)/New York — on the 42nd anniversary of your association.

It is most fitting that we honor this anniversary, to celebrate the service of associations like AFICS/New York, which has become such an effective asset to the United Nations.

I pay tribute to each of you - the many retirees who still continue to carry the torch for the United Nations.

Many of you volunteer your experience and time to support, promote and defend the ideals and principles of the United Nations.

For this, I commend you.

The United Nations is indeed fortunate that it was seen fit 42 years ago to create AFICS/New York, to support former international civil servants.

But I am even more pleased to see the evolution of this association, as an active partner in addressing the global issues that concern us all today.

That former international civil servants, after so many years of dedicated service, still continue to find ways to support the organization to which they devoted their working lives, is a measure not only of the strength of the United Nations, but also of the association itself.

Throughout the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, which I am honored to preside over, representatives of 193 Member States and observers have been dealing with many timely and complex issues.

I would like to touch on a few such issues which I believe are particularly important to you here today.

We know that by 2050, men and women age 60 or older will constitute more than 20 per cent of the world's population.

We also know that by 2050, countries in the developing world will see the greatest and most rapid increases in the number of older people.

It is for these reasons that the General Assembly, mindful of the consequences of world crises for older people, has been responsive to these demographic changes.

On 19 December 2011, the Assembly adopted resolution 66/127 on the “follow-up to the second world assembly on ageing”, which encourages governments and Member States to focus on older persons in all areas of society, addressing such issues as:

The integration of older persons, including older women, in social development;

The promotion of full and equal human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons;

Adequate health and long-term care for the elderly;

And the prevention of the neglect, violence and abuse of older persons.

Regarding the open-ended working group on ageing, a working group established by the General Assembly during the 65th session, I am keenly aware of the important role which members of AFICS/New York and of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants have played in that working group.

This participation is highly valued, and I hope and trust such contributions will continue.

I would also like to commend AFICS/New York for its involvement in the ongoing deliberations on violence against women of all ages, as well as on other issues such as human rights and health.

The General Assembly has also decided to designate the 15th of June as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, providing an excellent opportunity for AFICS/New York members and others who advocate for the elderly, to raise attention to the issue of abuse of older people worldwide.

From all of this, it is clear that the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly is committed to putting a spotlight on the question of older persons, and paying this critical issue the attention it deserves.

In concluding, let me wish you a very successful annual assembly.

I thank you for remaining such committed members of the United Nations family.

Each of you are as active and as concerned about the world around you, as you were when you served the United Nations as international civil servants.

Your true dedication and personal commitment to building a better world, is an inspiration to us all.

Thank you.