

26 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on
Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development**

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive-Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to this informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on “Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development”.

The UN membership has designated today, the 26th of June, as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

In coming together on this day, we reaffirm our determination to achieve an international society free of drug abuse.

We also gather together in a shared concern.

In the last decade, the growth of drugs and crime has undermined sustainable development and shaken political stability.

Peace and security are coming under increasing threat, rocked by drug trafficking and criminal activity.

Criminal networks are fueling violence, conflict and terrorism.

No country is immune.

Worldwide, we observe drugs and crime eroding the rule of law, human rights and development.

Drugs and crime are destroying the trusted relationship between the people and the State. They are undermining democracy, as well as public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Drugs and organized crime are particularly destructive in weak and fragile countries, where they disrupt and damage progress in development, create gaps in income, and also promote violence.

They further jeopardize the important progress being made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs.

Recently, the powerful blow dealt to development because of drugs and crime has captured the attention of the international community.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, Member States expressed grave concern about the negative effects that illicit trades have on development, peace, security and human rights.

Most recently, during this session, the General Assembly reiterated this concern, and noted the increasing vulnerability of States to such crime.

The Assembly recognized that the global drug problem undermines socio-economic and political stability, as well as sustainable development.

The Assembly has also adopted a number of important international conventions on drug control.

The UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the UN Convention on Transnational Crime, and its protocols, and the UN Convention Against Corruption constitute the key framework for a global, strategic response.

The UN system also continues to play an important role in this regard.

Today, I welcome the release by UNODC of its World Drug Report 2012, and I thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC, for being with us to share the report.

This report provides an in-depth review of the tidal movements and flows of illicit drugs across the globe.

It is very useful in helping us understand the complete picture regarding the international drug problem.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Confronting organized crime, drug trafficking and corruption calls for urgent, joint action.

Ending the serious problem of drugs and crime is our shared responsibility.

It requires practical, efficient and comprehensive responses at all levels.

We need to produce global solutions based on collaboration and coordination.

As address the problems of drugs and crime, we must also factor in the relevant decisions of the recent UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, to ensure that we continue to design initiatives that will lift millions of people out of poverty.

In coming together today, we aim to highlight the value of comprehensive approaches and inclusive international partnerships for combating the effect of organized crime and drugs on development.

Today's debate will lay the foundation for on-going discussions on how we can enable sustainable development to flourish, while at the same time rooting out the criminal networks that do so much damage.

The outcome of this debate will include a President's Summary, which will be transmitted to the Thirteenth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Doha, in 2015.

I am personally pleased that my nation, the State of Qatar, will be playing host to this Crime Congress.

I am certain that discussions here today will be most useful for the 2015 Congress, considering the theme, which is: "Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges, and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation."

To conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Development and the fight against crime are long term processes that require our full and persistent attention.

It is only by making this fight against crime a central pillar in the development agenda that we can promote a sustainable and effective response.

At the same time, sustainable development needs to be an integral part of our anti-crime strategies.

As we look forward to the 13th UN Crime Congress in 2015 in Doha, let us begin to set in motion our integrated efforts, and generate the momentum to eradicate these crimes once and for all.

Let us work together to eliminate this serious problem, so we may ensure that all the world's people can live safe, peaceful and prosperous lives.

Thank you.