

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*



**President of the General Assembly  
His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**

**CLOSING Remarks  
Dialogue with Civil Society**

**New York, 10 September 2012**

Good afternoon, Friends and Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nice to be with you again.

I am **delighted** to see so many of you here today, as we consider our **unique** and remarkable *collaboration* during my presidency.

In our first meeting at the beginning of my Presidency, I shared with you the agenda of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly.

Civil Society **participation** is **a key component** of our efforts to deliver on the **core priorities** of the General Assembly, and also achieve the goals and objectives of the wider UN Agenda.

It has been **my firm commitment** to work closely with the NGO and Civil Society communities, especially in ***ensuring*** adequate space for *partnership* throughout my presidency.

**I believe, no dialogue is complete without the input of civil society.**

Civil Society will continue to serve as an **in-dispensable** partner to the UN Member States.

You play a ***fundamental*** role in your communities, to assist in the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development agenda. Your efforts and contributions are **valuable** and much appreciated.

The General Assembly, as you know, is the world's chief **deliberative** and most **representative legislative** body.

It represents all 193 Member States.

Each Member State has an equal voice under the UN Charter.

My primary job, as the President, has been to serve as **a mediator** and **a facilitator**, working closely

with all Member States to find a common understanding on various issues and challenges.

I have tried my best, with the support of Member States, to **revitalise** the General Assembly.

I have **endeavoured** to bring the work of the UN General Assembly closer to the people of the world and make it more **visible**.

I warmly welcome your participation and contributions in these efforts. I thank you for your **warm and dedicated support** to me and my team.

I am delighted to say that our partnership has grown and become stronger over the course of this 66<sup>th</sup> Session.

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Today, we come together to have an honest discussion about our **successes** and **accomplishments**.

We should also be **candid** in examining our challenges and what is left to be done.

For the General Debate, during my presidency, I proposed the theme **“the role of mediation in the peaceful resolution of disputes.”**

This topic is of extreme importance to us today.

And building on this, my successor, the next president of the General Assembly, His Excellency, Mr. Vuk Jeremic (vook yer-a-meech), has proposed **“the settlement of disputes by peaceful means”** as the theme for this September’s General Debate.

Civil Society has an important role to play in **advancing** the **objectives** of this theme.

Your presence and support must be **embedded**, wherever possible, in all *dimensions* of our work.

This is why Civil Society has been given many opportunities to engage in all discussions during a series of **preparatory** *retreats* organised by my Office.

The Preparations for the **Quadrennial Comprehensive** Policy Review (QCPR) of UN Operational Activities for development is one example.

My office, in cooperation with the **Friedrich Ebert Stiftung** Foundation and UNDESA, organized three retreats in which key negotiators and actors, including NGOs, came together to discuss three broad issues.

First, in February, you were key participants in our discussions on the subject of, **“Emerging Issues in UN Development Operations”**.

And secondly, in March, we continued together to discuss the issue of, **“Funding the UN Operational Activities for Development: What is meant by “critical mass” of core resources?”**

And then, in June, we engaged in discussions about **“the UN development system: looking to the future”**.

In all this, Civil Society has been playing its key role and enriched our discussions in a unique way.

The input of Civil Society will certainly be valuable in the final outcome of the QCPR.

This is just one of the many important retreats we held over the past year.

It opened some new doors to Civil Society.

I am pleased that these opportunities were made available during my presidency, and have created the **much-needed forums** for engagement.

Furthermore, your **involvement** has been constant, from **start to finish**.

For instance, my office worked in very close partnership with representatives of Civil Society organizations, including **the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN**, to organize a **ground-breaking** event on February 7<sup>th</sup>, to mark **World Inter-faith Harmony Week**.

In this context, we are **most grateful** to **the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** for bringing Resolution A/65/5 to **unanimous** acceptance by the General Assembly on the importance of this annual week.

This celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week gives all of us **a remarkable opportunity** to affirm

that, “**mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace.**”

**Inspiring** speakers from a wide-range of nationalities and religious traditions stood side by side and in harmony, with United Nations Officials, Missions, Agencies, and NGOs.

They demonstrated our shared commitment to finding a, “**Common Ground for the Common Good.**”

In the same spirit, they highlighted **imperative** efforts among people of different faiths in the areas of: the **Mediation of Conflict**, *Disaster Prevention and Response*, Sustainable Development, and **Revitalization of the United Nations.**

I hope that this significant **milestone** of cooperation among so many different sectors has planted a seed

of hope in the heart of the United Nations for a future of harmony and peace among all peoples.

This particular event has served as just one example of the many successful achievements we have enjoyed over the past year, where UN Officials and NGOs alike, came together to **strengthen** their commitment to **enhancing** our common goals.

Such events are **instrumental** in strengthening coordination between the UN General Assembly and Civil Society.

Dear Friends,

I am deeply aware that our world is undergoing a period of **uncertainty** and change.

From the **historic** shifts in the Middle East and Africa to the struggling global economy, the international community has been **tested** many times.

And during these times, our global partnership becomes particularly **pertinent** and of extreme importance.

Our partnership must be stronger than ever, in order to **withstand** and overcome these difficult times.

Our work during this past year **demonstrates** what we can achieve and **deliver** when we come together, with unity, strong commitment and determination, to address all challenging issues.

**Yet, we can - and must - do more.**

Our progress depends on the continuation of our strong **collaboration**.

In particular, I see a strong connection between our work and efforts to **foster** and promote **cross-cultural understanding**.

In the face of growing **intolerance** and **xenophobia**, the challenges that we all face in promoting respect for **diversity** and **pluralism** have become more **evident** than ever.

In this regard, I would like to draw more attention to the work of **the UN Alliance of Civilizations**.

This Alliance serves to strengthen and promote our efforts and highlights the UN's role in this respect.

The activities and objectives of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, which will occupy my current and future **endeavours**, will be most **relevant** to us all.

Our ability to *settle disputes peacefully* and to **re-inforce** the common **links that bind us all** should be supported by this valuable Alliance.

Civil society remains crucial in our efforts to achieve inclusive sustainable development, peace and

security and human rights, as well as **ensuring** public support for the UN's agenda.

Therefore, I have already **alerted** the relevant authorities that the capacity of the Office of the President of the General Assembly to **reach-out** to Civil Society should be continued and strengthened.

I am confident that His Excellency Vuk Jeremic will work with determination to continue to **build on the stronger alliance that we have built this year.**

Before I conclude, I would like to express my special gratitude to Mrs. Hanifa Mezoui, Special Coordinator for Civil Society for her **exceptional** and **outstanding** work.

I thank you for your attention today and I trust that the General Assembly and Civil Society will continue to work more closely together.

Thank you very much.

**END**