

22 December 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the
Smooth Transition of the LDCs**

Distinguished delegates,

The General Assembly has just adopted resolution 66/213 recommended in the report of the Second Committee on the implementation of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Operative paragraph 16 of that resolution “requests the President of the General Assembly to establish, in consultation with Member States and the Secretary-General, an Ad Hoc Working Group to further study and strengthen the smooth transition process for the countries graduating from the least developed country category and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session with specific recommendations, consistent with the Istanbul Programme of Action”. As you would recall the Istanbul Programme adopted in May this year itself, in its paragraph 143, had invited the General Assembly to establish such an ad hoc working group.

To follow up on this mandate and in line with resolution 66/213, I have undertaken extensive consultations with member-states, in particular with the major groups that are involved closely in this matter namely, the LDCs Group, the Group of 77 and China, the European Union and the Friends of the LDCs which represent a variety of member-states including key development partners as well as with the Secretary-General. The decision before you contained in document A/66/L.30 is the product of those consultations and has been submitted to you by me in my capacity as the President of the General Assembly for adoption.

Here I would like to propose an oral revision in order to insert a reference to resolution 66/213. The first and second lines of the draft decision would read, “The General Assembly, recalling its resolutions 65/280 of 17 June 2011, 65/286 of 29 June 2011 and 66/ 213 of 22 December 2011...”

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the oral statement that was made in the Second Committee by the secretariat relating to the programme budget implications of operative paragraph 16 of resolution 66/213 stating that there would be no programme budget implications for the biennium programme budget 2012-2013.

I would emphasize that the proposed Ad Hoc Working Group would undertake an important responsibility towards achieving one of the key objectives of the Istanbul Programme with regard to the graduation of LDCs and the needed smooth transition process for those graduating. To be in a position to complete its work and submit its report to the 67th session of the Assembly in time, the Ad Hoc Working Group needs to commence its work very early in 2012. I suggest that the Group convenes its

first meeting mid-January to organize its work and prepare a roadmap for its substantive work for completion by early September 2012.

Here I would underscore the need for the UN secretariat to attach high priority to the work of this Working Group and extend their full support in all possible manners. In this regard, I would particularly emphasize the support to be provided by the UN-OHRLLS as the secretariat of the Group as well as by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of the UN and its secretariat.

I will be following closely the progress in the work of this Group. As I have reiterated time and again, the Least Developed Countries and their Programme of Action should be a top priority for the international community as a whole. I would call for the whole-hearted engagement of the UN system and its leadership, of its Member-States and of all other development partners in the full and effective implementation of the LDCs Programme.

The Working Group is open-ended and any Member-State which wants to contribute substantively to its work would be able to do so. The relevant non-state-partners, including the think-tanks, research bodies, development institutions, private sector and civil society representatives could be invited for their contribution by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Group members. In view of the substantial overlap in the composition of the Group of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) with the list of LDCs, I would strongly recommend that the Chairs of SIDS and LLDCs, at least, should regularly participate in the work of the Working Group in addition to individual members of their groups who would decide to participate.

I would take this opportunity to announce that I have decided to appoint Ambassador Jan Grauls, the Permanent Representative of Belgium and Ambassador Brian Bowler, the Permanent Representative of Malawi as the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group. I wish them all success in their work.

I thank you.