

2 April 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the High-level Meeting on Well-being and Happiness: Defining a  
New Economic Paradigm**

Your Excellency Jigmi Y. Thinley, Honourable Prime Minister of Bhutan,  
Your Excellency Laura Chinchilla, President of the Republic of Costa Rica,  
Your Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of The United Nations,  
Your Excellency Miloš Koterec, President, United Nations Economic and Social Council,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to attend today's High-level meeting on Well-being and happiness: Defining a new economic paradigm.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Bhutan, Ambassador Lhatu Wangchuk, for inviting me to address this meeting.

I would also like to commend Bhutan for having the foresight and wisdom to propose the theme of "Wellbeing and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm" as the principle theme for this high-level meeting.

As Member States reaffirmed in resolution 65/309, happiness is a fundamental human goal.

Striving for its attainment is a universal aspiration we all share.

Today's unprecedented ecological, economic and social challenges have, however, made the achievement of happiness and well-being an unachievable goal for many.

I would submit, therefore, that it is imperative that we build a new, creative guiding vision for sustainability and our future.

One that will bring a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach that will promote sustainability, eradicate poverty, and enhance well-being and happiness.

In particular, as the theme of today's meeting suggests, a sustainability-based economic paradigm is needed.

A paradigm that takes into consideration economic growth and environmental protection, and tangibly leads to greater well-being and happiness.

I would therefore encourage Member States to consider adopting practical steps towards policy shifts that will enable a sustainability-based economic paradigm.

Our host today, the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan, has developed a unique Bhutanese model for measuring happiness.

Gross National Happiness aims to achieve harmony between the economy, the environment, and spiritual and cultural values.

It is considered far more important than Gross National Product, as it strives for more than material progress and the accumulation of wealth alone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome this important meeting.

I am pleased to note that a report from today's meeting will be submitted to the Secretary-General and subsequently shared with Member States.

I would end by noting that the far-reaching work of the United Nations aims to improve the lives of men, women and children.

Sustainable development is precisely about balancing economic, environmental, social and spiritual values.

This perfect harmony is what I personally consider brings happiness, well-being and prosperity.

As we are starting our week with this important theme, I simply wish you all happiness.

Thank you.