

16 May 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Opening of the Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on  
Security in Central America as a Regional and Global Challenge:  
How to Improve and Implement the Central American Security  
Strategy**

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,  
Your Excellency Ms. Paola Severino, Minister of Justice of Italy,  
Your Excellency Mr. Arturo Corrales Alvarez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Honduras, President pro  
tempore of the Central American Integration System (SICA),  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on: “Security in Central America as a  
Regional and Global Challenge: How to Improve and Implement the Central American Security  
Strategy.”

I thank the Government of Italy, the Central American Integration System [SICA] countries, and the  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their cooperation in organizing this thematic debate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is an urgency to today’s discussion.

Countries in Central America face a tide of violence, born of transnational organized crime and drug  
trafficking.

Human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and kidnapping have also attached themselves to the under-  
bellies of Central American societies.

Highly sophisticated criminal threats in the region are eroding economic development, corrupting legal  
and political processes, and undermining public confidence.

In a word, these threats risk un-raveling gains made in development in the region, and leading to social  
and political upheaval.

This is a matter of great concern for the General Assembly.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, Member States expressed “grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by transnational crime, including the smuggling of and trafficking in human beings, the world narcotic drug problem and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.”

The General Assembly has recently reiterated this concern and noted the increasing vulnerability of States to such crime.

The Assembly has also recognized that, “despite continuing increased efforts by States, relevant organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the world drug problem continues to constitute a threat to...security”.

Today, there is a crucial debate taking place about the way forward in addressing issues of security in Central America.

This debate is engaging leaders, the media, and civil society.

At the centre of the debate is the question of how best to achieve security.

The “Regional Security Strategy for Central America” is a comprehensive step forward in efforts to answer this question.

Adopted at the meeting of the Heads of State of Central America in June of last year, the strategy seeks to create a region that is, “safe, in peace, with freedom, democracy and development”.

The strategy has received broad endorsement from the Group of Friends of the Conference, including UNODC, UNDP, the World Bank and other international organizations.

The Central American Integration System has a vital role within the strategy.

I hope that, based on initiatives such as the UN Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, the United Nations will be able to help further enhance regional security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am convening today’s high-level debate because security in Central America is a concern not only for the Central American region.

Security in Central America is a concern for the many countries and regions outside of Central America that are also affected - directly or indirectly- by regional events.

Holding this meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York symbolizes the scale of this threat.

This meeting also reflects my belief that good working solutions can be found through partnerships among nations.

I would implore Member States and the United Nations to continue to work towards fostering greater unity and political commitment to tackling security challenges in Central America.

We must keep our focus and determination on this issue if we are to have a real impact.

That is why I will also convene on the 26th of June, the “Thematic Debate on Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development”, on the occasion of the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our duty is to help tear down the complex web of crime in Central America, and to achieve security - one of the keystones of democracy - for the region, and for the world.

I thank you.