

2 July 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council**

Your Excellency Mr. Miloš Koterec, President of the UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC,
Your Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Ministers,
Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Sha Zukang
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address this opening of the High-level Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Every year, this Council holds its Ministerial Review to assess progress towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals.

In the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis and the resulting jobs crisis, it is most appropriate that this session of the Council should focus on productive capacity, employment and decent work.

These issues are of great importance to the well-being of our societies and to the stability of our political systems.

Unemployment, particularly of women, youth and disadvantaged groups, is one of the world's biggest challenges.

Forecasts from the International Labour Organization suggest a further increase in global unemployment to 200 million this year.

Of this number 75 million will be of young people and 84 million will be women.

With these urgent concerns on our minds, I have conducted a series of High Level debates, including on disaster risk reduction, commodity prices, the state of the world economy and the Road to Rio and beyond, to address these issues.

Among the key messages from these events, I wish to highlight the fact that both developed and developing countries remain adversely affected by these global challenges and we need to act collectively in a spirit of cooperation.

We can only make the much-needed transition to a more sustainable development paradigm when we work on delivering stable economies, decent jobs, well-managed environments and opportunities for all.

I would therefore urge all of us to work harder on continued close collaboration between the General Assembly and ECOSOC to tackle these pressing economic and financial issues effectively and urgently.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth – as well as full employment – are crucial elements for poverty eradication, achieving the MDGs, and maximizing long-term gains in real incomes.

But some questions remain:

How can nations best provide their citizens with effective social safety nets in times of need?
 How can countries deal with the effects of the global employment crisis?
 How can Member States make economic growth more sustainable, inclusive and equitable?
 How can such growth continue without exhausting our natural resources or disrupting biological cycles?

Ladies and gentlemen,

Participants in this year's Annual Ministerial Review will address these and other related issues, and propose concrete initiatives to combat unemployment and other labour market challenges.

For over 60 years, ECOSOC has served as an important forum where Member States could assemble to collectively address global development challenges.

The strength of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies has always lied in its broad representation and in its opportunity for countries large and small to voice their concerns and seek solutions to common global problems.

The importance of the Council's role in the discussion and formulation of development policies is not in doubt.

I commend the Members of the Council and its Bureau for their efforts to make ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies even more effective.

Excellencies,

Just last week, I participated in the historic UN Conference on Sustainable Development – Rio plus 20 – in Brazil.

In Rio, international consensus emerged and agreement was reached in important areas of sustainable development.

In the Outcome Document, titled, The Future We Want, Member States renewed their commitments and recognized the importance of their shared responsibility.

These agreements can – and must - inform our future actions.

Implementation of these agreements is very important if we are going to attain the future we want.

The real work begins now and we all have our parts to play for ultimate success.

Rio plus 20 has also set the stage for us to reflect on the UN development agenda after 2015 - the target date for achieving the MDGs.

In moving forward, the General Assembly, as the world’s most universal, legitimate and representative body, will continue to play a central role, to help define and establish universal sustainable development goals beyond 2015.

ECOSOC, with its given mandate from Chapter Ten of the UN Charter, provides an important forum for implementing the Outcome Document.

The Council is well placed to integrate the three main pillars of sustainable development.

ECOSOC is also best suited for building partnerships.

Building stronger partnerships with the private sector, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders can only re-inforce the Council’s important role in addressing these inter-linked issues.

In conclusion,

It is my sincere wish and hope that, at the end of this High-Level Segment, we could send out a strong message, especially in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration.

This message should be about our commitment to the creation of quality jobs and decent work, productivity development, and the strengthening of international coordination and cooperation, plus well-managed environment.

I wish you a most productive session.

Thank you.