

2 July 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Strengthening of the Treaty Body System**

Your Excellency, Co-Facilitator, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the UN,

Your Excellency, Co-Facilitator, Ambassador Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN,

Ms. Maarit Kohonen Sheriff, Deputy Head, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, at the outset, to express my gratitude to the co-facilitators, for the productive consultations they have conducted and for the efforts they have made in fulfilling their mandate.

I would like also to express my appreciation to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay, for completing her report to the General Assembly in a timely fashion.

The report marks the conclusion of the nearly three-year-old process of reflection on strengthening the human rights treaty body system.

Ms Pillay consulted widely with all concerned actors and put in a lot of effort in delivering this report. She deserves our recognition and gratitude.

This report also represents an important reference document for our deliberations in the inter-governmental process. In order for the process to be successful we need to demonstrate genuine political will in building on its recommendations.

We must work together, and be ready to make compromises.

It is also important that the process must respect the principles contained in General Assembly resolution A/66/254.

I urge all parties to stay faithful to the letter and spirit of this resolution, and allow for a thorough and genuine discussion of all the recommendations contained in the report of the High Commissioner and the reports of the Secretary-General (A/66/344 and A/HRC/19/28).

In this multi-stakeholder process, the General Assembly and the Member States have their own legitimate roles to play. Treaty bodies are central to the promotion and protection of human rights, and they also have their own independent and legitimate roles to play as well.

I would like to emphasize the importance of the participation of civil society and national human rights institutions. This process will not be complete without their constructive input and participation.

I trust that all Member States share the collective objective of strengthening the Treaty Body system.

We should be optimistic and ambitious, but we must also be realistic and pragmatic.

Our overall objective must remain the same: to ensure that the process results in strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system.

By the end of this session, I intend to report to the General Assembly on the outcome of your deliberations.

In conclusion, I wish to draw your attention to one of the important challenges we face, and that is, forging consensus among Member States in successfully reforming the treaty body system.

The protection and promotion of human rights is a mission we all share.

And I believe that all stakeholders in this UN process will be bound by the common interest of making the best decisions for the treaty body system itself, and most importantly for the people we aim to protect.

I thank you.