

General Assembly chief highlights ‘momentous’ year at helm of UN body



Outgoing President of the 66th session of the General Assembly Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser addresses his final press conference. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

14 September 2012 – The past twelve months have been “momentous, historic and challenging” for the United Nations General Assembly, its outgoing President said today, maintaining that on the global issues of peace and security and sustainable development, the UN body had accomplished a great deal.

“We have achieved quite a lot,” Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser told the press during his final news conference before his term ends next Tuesday. “The UN General Assembly has been working hard, to deal promptly and responsibly with these global demands in a strong, active and truly responsive fashion.”

Presenting a list of achievements reached by the Assembly's 66th session, Mr. Al-Nasser pointed out that the wave of democratic protests which engulfed the Middle East and North Africa during the Arab Spring took place during his Presidency and that the Assembly had worked together in support of the Arab people's aspirations.

On that note, he also acknowledged the ongoing turmoil in Syria underlining the Assembly's commitments to the Syrian people.

"The Member States chose not to be silent but active and responsive over the deadly crisis in Syria," he said, noting that the General Assembly had held "a number of timely meetings to support efforts to help the people of Syria resolve the appalling crisis."

In the most recent instance of Syria-related action, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the increasing use of heavy weapons by authorities and urging all sides to immediately cease armed violence.

The resolution, presented by the Arab Group, was adopted by a vote of 133 in favour to 12 against with 31 abstentions, and comes two weeks after the Security Council failed to agree on collective action to help stop the bloodshed.

On Security Council reform, Mr. Al-Nasser recalled that the Eighth round of Intergovernmental negotiations had taken place during his tenure and said that Member States had acknowledged that new momentum and engagement had been made on the issue.

"Only Member States can drive and achieve success in these efforts, with the guiding principle of gaining the broadest possible acceptance," he stated, while voicing the hope that the momentum for reform would continue during the next Assembly session.

Turning to sustainable development and global prosperity, the President emphasized the Assembly's "full support" for the recent [Rio+20](#) Summit in Brazil as well as its continued work for the promotion of UN Women's mandate and the fight to end violence against women.

"I thank Member States for rallying to my support in addressing the topical issues that came our way," Mr. Al-Nasser concluded, while also citing his close working relationship and collaboration with [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon.

Mr. Al-Nasser, from Qatar, will be succeeded later this month by Vuk Jeremic of Serbia as President of the 67th General Assembly.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Sudan: UN calls for immediate end to reported army bombing of civilians](#)