

3 April 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
on World Autism Day**

You Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General,  
Your Excellency Dr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you to mark the fifth World Autism Awareness Day.

Let me thank His Excellency Dr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, for organizing today's important event.

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 62/139, declaring April 2 as the annual World Autism Awareness Day.

This event is particularly close to my heart.

Resolution 62/139 was tabled by the State of Qatar, at the time when I was Qatar's Ambassador to the United Nations.

We worked hard for this resolution, motivated by the strong belief that having an annual awareness day would shine a bright light on autism as a growing health concern.

The resolution's adoption by consensus demonstrated that autism is an issue that concerns us all – every nation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Resolution 62/139 is one of few health-specific United Nations days.

It encourages Member States to take measures to raise awareness about autism throughout society, and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention.

It further expresses a deep concern at the prevalence and high rate of autism in children in all regions of the world and the resulting developmental challenges.

Resolution 62/139 also recalls the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

These resolutions affirm that children with disabilities should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.

In celebrating today, each of us can help to increase and develop global understanding of the autism challenge.

We can also celebrate the unique talents and skills of persons with autism.

By bringing together Member States and autism organizations all around the world, we will give a voice to the millions of individuals worldwide who are un-diagnosed and looking for help.

Please join us in our effort to inspire compassion, inclusion and hope.

Thank you.