

23 April 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,  
President of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and  
Criminal Justice**

*Remarks delivered by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mutlaq M. Al-Qahtani, Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly*

Your Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, Chairperson of the 21st Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,  
Your Excellency Mr. Miloš Koterec, President of ECOSOC,  
Mr. Yury Fedetov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime,  
Chairpersons of regional groups,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I join to you today at the opening of the 21st Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, I have the honour to make the following remarks.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Peace.

Safety.

Security.

Prosperity.

These are words we hear often at the United Nations.

Their realization is, in fact, central to our mission.

Unfortunately, transnational organized crime is, today, undermining our ability to realize these critical objectives.

Worldwide, we are witnessing the scourge of transnational organized crime undermining the rule of law, economic development, and human rights worldwide.

Indeed, I would submit that transnational organized crime has become a major global issue of our time.

Therefore, it is not simply the problem of certain communities or law enforcement agencies.

It has evolved into a far wider, and more sophisticated challenge.

Over time, criminal arteries around the world have hardened into permanent networks in countries and regions that pursue a variety of interconnected crimes.

Whether corruption, illicit drugs, human trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering, piracy – crimes are an impediment to the social and economic development of countries in the 21st Century.

When combined, these crimes generate enormous profits every year: not in the millions, not in the billions, but in the trillions of dollars.

The profits wash through the world's financial systems, undermining legitimate economies through the corruption of political processes and law enforcement agencies.

And who pays the price for this injustice?

The price is paid by individuals, families and communities, in countries that are already fragile and vulnerable.

Countries whose education systems are weakened.

Whose hospitals cannot provide relief or care to their desperate patients.

Whose un-developed transport systems can augment unemployment and economic loss.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Crime is an infection.

While it spreads to weak and strong alike, it is fragile or vulnerable states that lack the strength to fight off the contamination.

Today, our collective challenge is to find solutions.

We can no longer afford to think in terms of the local and the regional. Crime transcends these borders and spans the planet, and so must our responses.

We must focus our efforts to promote security and justice, the rule of law and public institutions that are fully functioning.

Knowledge must become our touchstone.

Crime is fast moving, intelligent and interconnected.

To stop it, we need to share information in real time, and to build a truly united global partnership.

We cannot afford to do otherwise.

At the centre of our efforts to address this critical issue is the Task Force on Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, jointly chaired by UNODC and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

The Task Force's purpose is to ensure that, when addressing these transnational issues, the UN system crafts an effective and efficient response.

Our foundation for these activities include three related UN conventions:

The UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the UN Convention on Transnational Crime, and its protocols, and the UN Convention Against Corruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Under my Presidency, the General Assembly has dedicated considerable time and energy to the discussion of transnational organized crime.

During the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions on crime.

From combating the harmful effects of illicit financial flows resulting from criminal activities, to strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to protect cultural property, especially with regard to its trafficking.

From the rule of law at the national and international levels, to strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular, its technical cooperation capacity.

We need to create a seamless thread connecting these resolutions to the work carried out by the Crime Commission, and to the activities of the United Nations and Member States on the ground.

I would also take this opportunity to highlight three related events that I intend to organize in the coming months.

On 16 May, I will convene a General Assembly thematic debate in New York on:

"Security in Central America as a Regional and Global Challenge: How to Promote and Implement the Central American Security Strategy".

Discussions will focus on the challenges that transnational organized crime and drug trafficking pose to the security and stability of Central America, within a context of growing violence, financial and fiscal constraints, and institutional weaknesses.

On 26 June, I will convene a thematic debate of the General Assembly on drugs and crime as a threat to development.

And on 27 June, I will hold a seminar on dialogue, understanding and countering the appeal of terrorism.

More details on these two latter events will come in due course.

The decision to hold these events reflects my own personal determination to ensure that this subject receives the due attention of Member States.

I hope these meetings will grant greater visibility to this issue, and encourage renewed political commitment in the UN agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our success against transnational organized crime will not come today, tomorrow, or the day after.

But it will come.

As we look forward to the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice hosted by Qatar in 2015, we must begin to set in motion our integrated efforts, and to build the momentum to eradicate these crimes once and for all.

My Presidency stands ready to support your efforts in any way possible.

Thank you all for your attention and I wish you very successful deliberations this session.