

6 September 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of September**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of August: Republic of South Africa (African States), Republic of Viet Nam (Asian States), Czech Republic (Eastern European States), Guyana (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Greece (Western European and other States).

UNGASS ON CHILDREN, 19-21 SEPTEMBER

1. Arrangements for Round Tables

It was noted that co-chairs have been endorsed and pairing of co-chairpersons has been decided. Participants in the roundtables

The President noted that the lists have been almost completed as far as Member States are concerned, and we are now looking at the allocation of different UN entities.

Representatives of children

According to resolution 55/276 two children may participate in each round table to give an introductory statement. The President of the General Assembly was requested to select these child delegates, in consultation with the co-chairpersons of the round tables and with the Member States, by 31 August.

The President noted that his Office has received all names of candidates only by 31 August, all together names of 20 children have been put forward. He noted that there will be a meeting today with the co-chairs to hear their views after which I will submit a list of 6 children for the consideration of Member States as soon as possible.

The list will be prepared in accordance with the criteria established by the resolution and taking into account the criteria that was submitted to regional chairs of August, i.e.:

- regional representation/languages;
- gender balance;
- under the age of 18 (balance within this age group, e.g. 11-14/15-17);

- nominee should have been actively involved, or participated in the preparatory process at national and/or regional/international level;
- nominee may have experience or expertise on one of the topics of the special session;
- it would be an advantage, if a nominee has previously demonstrated some confidence to address a formal meeting and a large audience.

The President thanked the Chairpersons for their co-operation in all the issues he has mentioned.

2. Participation of NGOs in the plenary of the special session

In connection with the participation of civil society actors in the debate in the plenary the paragraph (c) of General Assembly decision 55/459 of 14 February 2001, stated that given availability of time, a limited number of representatives of non-governmental organisations accredited to the special session may make statements in the debate of the plenary of the special session.

It was noted that on August 30 a list of selected accredited non-governmental organisations for participation in the debate of the plenary of the special session was circulated and in the absence of any comment by 2 p.m. on Friday, 7 September 2001, this list will be considered approved in accordance with paragraph (c) of decision 55/459.

3. Presentation of the outcome of the Children's Forum at the special session

The Prep.Com recommended last June that at least two child delegates to the Children's Forum will present the outcome of the Forum to the special session. The Children's Forum will take place from 16 to 18 September.

These child delegates will be identified by the children's Forum, in consultation with the President of the 56th General Assembly, namely the Republic of Korea, and Member States.

OTHER UPCOMING ISSUES

It was noted that plenary on Friday will take up several pending issues, including the Resolution 93 on Revitalization of the GA. The President expressed his thanks, through the Chairpersons, to all Member states for their co-operation in the reform process.

The President informed the Chairpersons that as part of the reform efforts he had asked the members of the General Committee to express their views and suggestions their experiences of the work of the General Committee in order to facilitate the incoming committee in their work. He noted that his intention is to forward these suggestions for the consideration of the incoming General Committee as provided in resolution 51/241, paragraph 34.

On Monday September 10 is the closing session of the 55th Session of the GA, all other pending issues will be taken up then. These include the report of the open ended working group on Security Council Reform.

Finally, the President noted that on Monday, in his closing statement he will also brief Member States on the responses from the Minister for foreign affairs that he has received to his letter of May 24 concerning the Security Council reform.

1 August 2001

General Assembly
Fifty fifth session
Agenda item; 61 Strengthening of the United Nations System
and 62 Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Decision

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolutions 51/241, 48/264, 47/233 and other relevant resolutions;

1. Decides to adopt the text contained in the annex to the present implementing decision;
2. Decides to continue its consideration of agenda items Strengthening of the United Nations System and Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly during the 56th Session

ANNEX

Purpose

This process focuses on the implementation existing resolutions and decisions, in particular 51/241. Other resolutions such as 48/264 and 47/233 have also been taken into account. The improvement of procedures and working methods of the Assembly is only a first step towards more substantive improvements and revitalization of the Assembly. The goal of this continued exercise is to enable the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the UN to play its role effectively.

1. THE AGENDA

The rationalization and streamlining of the agenda should continue in order to enable the Assembly to focus its work on priority issues. Any change or suggestion concerning the agenda is done with the understanding that Member States can propose any issue or item to be brought to the attention and consideration of the Assembly at any time.

a) Clustering and biennialization

Co-operation item:

All co-operation items will be clustered under the item 'Co-operation between the United Nations and regional and other organisations', and individual co-operation items will become sub-items of this item.

Practical adjustment measures to implement the clustering will be taken in September 2001 by the Assembly in conjunction with the adoption of the agenda for the 56th Session.

This item will be biennialized, starting from 57th session, so that the co-operation item will henceforth appear in the agenda on odd numbers of the Assembly session.

Based on this decision the biennialization would have to be reflected also in each resolution in conjunction of their adoption already during the 56th Session when applicable.

There will be a joint debate under this item, during which all or some co-operation aspects and organisations may be addressed.

The resolutions, if any, under each sub-item will remain separate.

Item: Co-operation between the UN and regional and other organisations:

- a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States
- b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee
- c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community
- d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference
- e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab State
- f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity
- h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization
- i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe
- k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
- l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

- m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation
- o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organisation of la Francophonie
- p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

b) Items for biennialization

The following items will be considered in the 56th Session and thereafter biennially:

- United Nations Reform and revitalization
- Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social; and related fields
- Support of the U.N. for new or restored democracies
- The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti
- Zone of peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic

The following item is already considered biennially, every odd year.

- Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

c) Items for committee level consideration

The following item will be considered in the 3rd Committee starting in 56th Session.

- Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the Special Session of the General Assembly in this regard

2. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

a) Implementation of specific paragraphs

- Emphasises the importance of fulfilling the mandates as set out in Section II, in particular, in paragraphs 5, 6 and 9 in the Annex of Resolution 51/241.
- Implementation of paragraph 7 in the Annex of resolution 51/241.
- The President, after consideration of the report by the General Assembly, shall inform the General Assembly of his assessment of the debate in order for the Assembly to determine the need for further action as provided in resolution 51/241, paragraph 7.

b) Efforts towards more concise reports, issued and submitted on time

Member States need to take concrete actions to implement paragraph 32 of 51/241, inter alia, by requesting more integrated reports.

The General Assembly secretariat, in consultation with the substantive departments, should look for synergies and integration of reports while preparing the implementation memo for resolutions. Member States, United Nations agencies and departments should make a serious effort to submit their replies and inputs within given deadlines.

The Secretariat should provide further suggestions on what actions could be taken to speed up the preparations of reports and scheduling of meetings.

The secretariat should keep the President and the General Committee informed on this issue on a regular basis throughout the sessions.

3. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

In order to implement paragraph 28 of Resolution 51/241 fully, greater use of facilitators, where appropriate, by the President is encouraged.

4. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

In order to enhance the capacity of the General Committee to assist the President in the conduct of the business of the General Assembly and to improve the continuity between different sessions of the Assembly the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly should designate at the outset of each Assembly Session a liaison person for the duration of the whole Assembly Session. This designation could be done informally, without an amendment to Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure, through a letter to the President of the General Assembly.

5. ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

a) Consultations

In order to make more useful the regular consultations, provided in 51/241, paragraph 43, inter alia between the President of the Assembly and the Presidents of Security Council and ECOSOC these meetings should be provided with the support of the secretariat, as appropriate, including providing information in writing to Member States through regional chairs,

b) Strengthening the office of the president

Additional measures are required to implement paragraph 44 of Resolution 51/241, particularly in the area of substantive support for the President. Therefore, adequate support should be made available to the office of the President in the substantive areas of work of the General Assembly. To this end the Secretary General is requested to take appropriate measures and submit proposals to for the consideration of the relevant committees during the 56th Session.

6. ENHANCING THE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

There is a need to enhance the use of modern technology and information technology within the Organisation, including in the negotiating process of the United Nations.

Taking into account the general support in this regard the Secretary General is requested to present proposals for consideration by the General Assembly:

- for introduction of a system to enable an electronic reading of ballot papers taking due account of the security requirements in this regard,
- for wiring of the main conference rooms of the United Nations to provide delegations and the secretariat with access the to the Optical Disc System and other databases of the Organization and the internet with the capability to access texts of statements and reports electronically and in the case of reports, in all official languages, simultaneously,
- on other areas of the work of the General Assembly in which the use of modern and information technology would contribute to enhancing efficiency in its working methods.

United Nations  Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

30 July 2001

**Letter from Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
to All Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the
United Nations, New York**

Excellency,

With a view to the informals/informals tomorrow, 31 July, and as a follow-up to the informal/informals of the Plenary, on July 26, on the revitalization of the General Assembly; improving the efficiency of the General Assembly, please find attached a summary on the status of negotiations at this stage in a form of a draft decision of the General Assembly.

Given the opinions expressed by many delegations I believe that the most appropriate way to bring this exercise into a conclusion is to adopt a decision of the General Assembly. Therefore, I have presented the agreements reached so far in the informals/informals in this format. You will note that issues where there is no agreement yet, have also been included in the draft, but with appropriate explanations.

In most of the issues there is already an agreement and consensus to move forward. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that we can reach the final agreements and compromises based on this draft, so that the decision could be adopted before the session of the Assembly is over.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Harri Holkeri

11 July 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of July**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of July: Rwanda (African States), Qatar (Asian States), Bulgaria (Eastern European States), Grenada (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Finland (Western European and other States). Representative of the Republic of Korea also attended the meeting.

1. DEMISE OF H.E. MR HUMAYUN RASHEED CHOUDHURY

The President commenced the meeting on a sad note. The President noted that last night his Office was informed by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh of the demise, earlier yesterday in Dhaka, of H.E. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament. He was seventy-two. Mr. Choudhury served as the Foreign Minister of his country from 1985 to 1988. He was also the President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-first session (1986-1987). The passing away of H.E. Mr. Choudhury will be observed at the beginning of tomorrow morning's plenary meeting. It was noted that in that connection, in line with past practice, regional groups as well as the host country are invited to make short statements.

2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

The President informed the Chairpersons that negotiations on the outcome document "A world fit for children" have made a lot of progress. Two-thirds of the text has been approved. Negotiations will resume during the last week of August with a view to finalizing the document. The President thanked the Chairpersons for this constructive atmosphere and appealed to the Delegations to continue in this spirit, in the best interest of children.

It was further noted that the speaking lots have been distributed by the drawing of lots last month. Any changes will have to be made through voluntary arrangements between Member States. Following the decision taken by Member States at the second substantive session in January 2001, we are still going to distribute two speaking lots per each plenary meeting, with the exception of the first and last ones, for participants other than Member States, the Holy See, Switzerland and Palestine, provided that those participants are represented at the highest level.

Organizational arrangements for round tables will require an active role from the regional groups. The President told that he has already drawn attention to various details in my letter of 3 of July to the regional chairs. There will be three roundtables. Each roundtable will have two co-chairs. One co-chair shall be the head of the country of the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The other five co-chairs shall be chosen by the regional groups. The President reminded that he invited in his letter the regional chairs to consider expeditiously, within their respective groups, the selection of these five co-chairs in order to meet the July 31 deadline.

The General Assembly resolution from last month also requested the regional groups to determine which of its members will participate in each round table, following the geographical representation decided by the resolution. The President noted that he trusts the Chairpersons to start consultations early on also in this regard, taking into account the fact that during the month of August, many Delegations will be harder to reach than normal.

The President then drew the attention to the fact that the President of the General Assembly has been requested to select, in consultation with the co-chairpersons of round tables and Member States, two child delegates for each round table, by 31 August.

Any further consultations, if needed, shall be carried out by the Bureau under Ambassador Durrant. The President noted that she has his full support.

3. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

The President briefly reminded Chairpersons on the consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea. Its second official meeting was held in May. The report of the meeting A/55/121 includes a number of proposals for the consideration of the General Assembly during the 56th session. In this regard, the President said that he wishes that the regional chairs could start, as early as possible, informal consultations to consider the co-chairmanship of the process, also in the light of the availability of the current co-chairs, Ambassador Slade and Mr. Simcock.

4. REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The President noted that as the Chairpersons are aware, he has conducted, together with Ambassador J. Gabriel Valdés of Chile, further consultations with Member States, as a follow up to the informals of the plenary on May 16 and 17.

It was further noted that in the meantime the President has circulated a new non-paper (dated June 15) to encourage discussions and consultations amongst Member States.

The consultations will continue and the next round of plenary informals will be held on July 26.

The President asked once again - through the Chairpersons - cooperation of all Member States in order to bring the process forward so that results can be achieved before the conclusion of this Session.

5. AFRICA WORKING GROUP

It was noted that the next meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa will be held from 30 July to August 3, 2001.

Many delegations have brought up the need to review the effectiveness of the working group as a tool to monitor the Secretary-General's recommendations, given the experience gained during the last two years in the working group, and to look for possible alternative ways to carry out the monitoring.

The President noted that he believes that the Working Group, in addition to preparing its report to the GA, needs to take sufficient time to review its experiences and to look at possible other options on how to continue the monitoring.

This implies that in the July session no new issues will be taken in for consideration as was previously foreseen in the programme of work.

The President noted that he will be sending a letter and a note prepared by the Bureau on this issue in the coming days to Member States.

6. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

It was noted that the next substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group will be held next week (July 16 to 20). An announcement of the working schedule is already in the Journal.

The Bureau has prepared CRPs in view of preparing the report of the WG. These CRPs should be in the pigeonholes tomorrow.

The President concluded by saying that he is looking forward to active participation by Member States.

29 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Meeting between the Office of the President of the General
Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month
of May**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of May: Namibia (African States), Philippines (Asian States), Belarus (Eastern European States), Ecuador (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Denmark (Western European and other States).

Habitat + 5 Special Session

The President began the meeting by introducing the Chairperson of the prepcom of Habitat + 5, Ambassador Garcia-Duran, Ambassador of Colombia to Nairobi and Permanent Representative of Colombia to UNEP and Habitat.

It was noted that Ambassador Duran will brief the regional groups on

- 1) state of the art of preparing for the special session
- 2) on the suggested informals next week.

The President referred to his letter of 17 May 2001 and its enclosure, the letter of Ambassador Duran with suggestions on, how to complete the preparations for the special session.

HIV/AIDS special session

Round tables:

The President noted that he has met with the chairmen of regional groups since January on the issue of the special session on HIV/AIDS. The President further noted that the round tables, which will be organized during the special session, are of particular concern to him and to the Chairpersons as well.

According to resolution 55/242 the regional chairs are responsible for informing me on the nomination of

- 1) chairs of the round tables
- 2) distribution of members of their respective groups to the four round tables of the special session.

The President summed up that he has received nominations for the chairs of round tables:

- 1) Brazil (Treatment and Care of HIV/AIDS) (Head of State)

- 2) Poland (Human Rights & HIV/AIDS) (Minister)
- 3) Malaysia (Socio-economic Impact of HIV/AIDS) (Minister)
- 4) Tanzania (Resources) (Head of State)

The President noted that in his earlier meetings with regional chairs of the preceding months, he has indicated that he should like to receive the list of member states per round table from each respective group by the end of this month.

He stressed that receiving this information is necessary for being able to plan for the allocation the rest of the seats in each of the round tables to other than member states of major regional groups, namely Estonia, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Palau, and Observers (Switzerland, Holy See, Palestine), entities with a standing invitation to observe the work of General Assembly (pls. refer to A/INF/55/6), United Nations organizations, and the civil society actors (NGOs, people living with AIDS, and private sector pls. refer to 55/13 and 55/242).

Total number of seats, according to 55/242, is 65/table, minimum of member states 48 and maximum 54, leaving from 11 to 17 seats per table for others than member states - distribution of seats between the regional groups indicated in resolution 55/242:

Africa: 14 member states
 Asia: 14 member states
 Easter Europe: 6 member states
 Latin America & Caribbean states: 9 member states
 Wester Europe & Other states: 8 members

These limits should be observed. It is imperative to have this information.

Lists of civil society actors for round tables and speakers in the plenary (pls see. 55/242):

It was noted that the substantive office, UNAIDS, has been requested to provide us with the list of civil society actors who would participate in the round tables and who are suggested to speak in the plenary. These lists will be submitted to the member states for their consideration as soon as we have them (in accordance with 55/242).

Negotiations on declaration of commitment:

The President noted that negotiations are going on, and the efforts by everyone are appreciated. He went on to express his hope to conclude them by the end of this week.

Revitalization of the General Assembly; Improving the working methods of the Assembly

The President noted that discussions on May 16 and 17 had been very good and constructive. In his opinion this shows that there is willingness to move forward in this process.

There was an overall support to the approach taken in the non-paper and the support for the urgent implementation of existing resolutions in particular 51/241. Due note of all comments and suggestions was taken.

The President mentioned that he continues consultations together with Ambassador Valdes.

The President then asked for co-operation from Member States in order to facilitate their task in the following manner:

Concerning the streamlining the agenda he invited Member States to take an other look at the Plenary agenda and come forward in the coming days with possible suggestions to him and Ambassador Valdes on where we could make progress in this regard.

The President asked in particular the main sponsors, be they countries or groups of countries, to indicate whether any of those items that had been listed in the non-paper for possible biennialization or triennialization or clustering could be considered in this context. He further asked whether there are some other items that could be considered in this regard.

Once again the President assured Member States through the Chairpersons that he will continue to work in full transparency and openness in order to keep the whole membership involved.

17 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at a Informal/informals of the Plenary on revitalization of the
General Assembly - Improving the efficiency of the General Assembly**

We have had a very good and constructive discussion and I would like to thank all delegations for their contribution. This shows that there is willingness to move forward in this process.

I was very pleased to note that there is an overall support to the approach taken in the non-paper and the support for the urgent implementation of existing resolutions in particular 51/242. We have taken due note of all comments and the very useful suggestions made for its improvement.

It is my intention to continue consultations together with Ambassador Valdés. The discussion has been very useful in showing where we need to have more intensive consultations and interaction with Member states.

In order to facilitate our task I would like to ask for your co-operation in the following manner:

Concerning the streamlining the agenda I would like to invite delegations to take a serious look at the agenda and come forward in the coming days with possible suggestions to me and Ambassador Valdés on where we could make progress in this regard.

In particular I would like to ask the main sponsors, be they countries or groups of countries to indicate to us whether any of those items that had been listed in the non-paper for possible biennialization or triennialization or clustering could be considered in this context. Or whether there are some other items that could be considered in this regard.

I should add that we would of course appreciate all other suggestions on how we could move forward on this issue.

Together with Ambassador Valdés we will try to improve the non-paper so that next time when we meet we can start to look at the areas where we might take concrete action in revitalizing and making the General Assembly more efficient.

Once again I would like to assure Member States that I will continue to work in full transparency and openness in order to keep the whole membership involved.

Finally let me end with a positive note that I have sensed in our discussions: we all share the common goal - to enable the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and

representative body of the UN to play its role effectively. You have showed that there is political will to move toward this goal.

16 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at Informal/informals of the Plenary on revitalization of the General
Assembly - Improving the efficiency of the General Assembly**

I call to order the 1st Open-ended informal/informals of the Plenary on revitalization of the General Assembly; improving the efficiency of the General Assembly.

The non-paper, including an Annex, prepared with the assistance of the facilitator, Permanent Representative of Chile, H.E. Mr. J. Gabriel Valdés, dated April 20, 2001 was distributed to all delegations over three weeks ago and is also available, as well as an updated version of the Annex which shows the present frequency of the items, on the side of the Council.

In our previous discussions and consultations many delegations expressed the need to center this process on the implementation of those provisions of existing resolutions, which have not been fully implemented so far. We were also urged to focus the process for the time being on the Plenary of the General Assembly.

When preparing the non-paper we have kept this in mind. We have taken as a basis Resolution 51/241, that was the outcome of the Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening on the United Nations System. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to take this text as a basis and use the other resolutions as needed. The current non-paper will focus on number of issues that require more specific measures to improve their implementation.

There is a broad and urgent recognition by Member States that the General Assembly needs to be revitalized and the working methods need to be improved.

I would suggest that in order to bring this process forward we discuss the non-paper issue by issue - rather than having an other general exchange of views. The first item that I would like to invite you to comment is therefore item 2 in the non-paper, the Agenda. We have tried to give you some approaches in the non-paper and its annex on how we could consider this issue.

Before I give the floor to the first speaker I should like to make a few technical clarifications on the non-paper. There is a spelling mistake in the non-paper: the words "biennialization" and "triennialization" should be spelled with an "e" (rather than "a", after all I think we do not intend to have the agenda items considered 2 or 3 times a year, but rather once in two or three years!).

Concerning Annex 1, which is a grouping of agenda items for illustrative purposes, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the Annex was prepared on the basis of document A/55/252 entitled "Allocation of agenda items for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly adopted

by the General Assembly at its 9th plenary meeting on 11 September 2000". The section of the document which was used to prepare the Annex is its first section, which lists the items considered directly in plenary. As indicated on the chapeau of the Annex 1, Addenda 1, 2, 4 and 5 were also used as additional items were allocated to the plenary after 11 September of last year. These documents do not include all agenda items. All the items included on the agenda of the fifty-fifth session on 11 September are listed in document A/55/251. As members may recall the General Assembly decided to include for example item 64 (Question of Cyprus) in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session; at the same meeting the Assembly also decided to allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session. This has not happened yet, so Question of Cyprus is not part of Annex 1, but logically it would fall under E: Peace and Security.

Finally, I should like to stress that we all need to work hard to find common ground to move forward in a concrete manner in implementing decisions made towards improving the working methods of the Assembly.

Any reform requires compromises by all parties at a very practical level. Unless governments acknowledge and agree that to achieve the common good they need to let go some of their own individual priorities, nothing will move. I hope to count on the active participation of all and I look forward to a fruitful and productive discussion.

3 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of May**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of May: Namibia (African States), Philippines (Asian States), Belarus (Eastern European States), Ecuador (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Denmark (Western European and other States).

**1. PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The President noted that he has received a letter from H.E. Jørgen Bøjer, Permanent Representative of Denmark, in which the President was informed that his tour of duty in New York is coming to an end and that he will therefore resign as Co-chair of the Preparatory Committee. Ambassador Bøjer also intends to recommend to the PrepCom that it elect Ambassador Ruth Jacoby of Sweden as the new Co-chair and that the new Danish Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Ellen M. Løj, be elected to the Bureau.

The President also noted that he has been informed that the election of Ambassadors Jacoby and Løj would be supported by the Western European and Other States Group. Therefore he asked the Chairs of the other four groups to conduct, on an urgent basis, appropriate consultations to ascertain whether these groups can support the election of the two Ambassadors.

As the currently ongoing PrepCom is coming to an end on Tuesday, 8 May, the President asked the Chairs to inform his Office no later than Monday morning, 7 May, by 10 a.m., if they are not able to support the two candidatures endorsed by WEOG. It was noted that unless the President hears any objections by then, he will inform Ambassador Bøjer accordingly, and the Prepcom can then proceed to the election at the end of its session.

The President told that H.E. Asda Jayanama, Permanent Representative of Thailand, has informed him that he also intends to resign as Co-chair of the Preparatory Committee during the summer, as his tour of duty will be coming to an end. The President noted that he would therefore ask Member States, through the regional groups, to undertake informal consultations, so as to facilitate the election of a successor/successors to Ambassador Jayanama as member of the Bureau and Co-chair. The President told that he has been further informed that there may be a short intersessional meeting (half-day) of the PrepCom in the course of the summer to elect Ambassador Jayanama's successor.

The President used the opportunity to express, in his belief on behalf of the whole Membership, his sincerest gratitude to both Ambassador Bøjer, whose departure from New York is imminent, as well as to Ambassador Jayanama, who will be leaving later on in the summer. He noted that their work has been invaluable for this very important process.

2. SPECIAL SESSION ON HIV/AIDS

The President once again urged regional groups to come up with decisions with regard to the selection of Roundtable Chairs.

It was noted that the endorsement by the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) of the candidature of Brazil to the Chairmanship of Roundtable No. 1 entitled "Prevention and Care" has been communicated to him. Also, the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Poland to the Chairmanship of Roundtable No. 2 entitled "HIV/AIDS and Human Rights". The President asked the two remaining groups, Africa and Asia, to take note of these endorsements and to communicate, as soon as possible their respective candidatures.

3. IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The President referred to his non-paper on the revitalization of the General Assembly, prepared with the superb assistance of Ambassador Valdes of Chile. It was noted that the paper has been sent to all Permanent Missions on 23 April.

In this connection, the President informed the Chairs that the Plenary informal/informals on this subject, originally slated for May 10 and May 11, will be postponed until the following week, due to scheduling problems. It was noted that an announcement to this effect will appear in the Journal.

The President concluded with saying that he looks forward to seeing Member States take an active part in the discussion in two weeks' time.

24 April 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of April**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of April: Mozambique (African States), Papua New Guinea (Asian States), Azerbaijan (Eastern European States), Dominican Republic (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Canada (Western European and other States).

1. SPECIAL SESSION ON HIV/AIDS

Regarding the upcoming General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS the President reminded of the need to come up with nominations for roundtable chairs; only the African group has indicated their nomination in writing as yet.

The President requested the regional chairs to provide him with information on the possible participation of Heads of State and Government, as well as other high-level participation from their region. He informed that he will also consult those Member States, which are not members of any regional group.

The President also reminded of the need to agree on the distribution of members of regional groups in the four roundtables.

He informed that UNAIDS and co-sponsoring agencies are preparing background notes for each of the roundtables to be distributed in advance to Member States so as to facilitate a focused discussion.

It was noted that the first informal informals on the draft declaration were held from 18 to 20 April. The two facilitators will now compile a new version, to be submitted to Member States around 11 May. This version will be negotiated during the week of open-ended informals of the plenary, starting 21 May.

The President also noted that possibly during this week one meeting will be used for consulting Member States on the organization and state-of-the-art of preparing the roundtables. He also expresses hope that the declaration of commitment will be finalized during that week. Delegations should come well prepared to those consultations.

The President informed regional chairs of his trip to Abuja.

Another thing the President wanted to draw the attention was the second list of civil society actors, totalling 227 organizations (including a number of private sector companies) which was submitted to Member States last Friday (20 April) as HIV/AIDS.CRP.2. Add.1. It was noted that possible responses are awaited during the first week of May, after which it goes to the Plenary. It was further noted that the President of the General Assembly will also consult with Member States on the list of civil society actors, which will participate in the roundtables, as well as on those which will speak in the Plenary. Work will be done in consultation with the substantive office and its non-governmental organization (NGO) coordination committee in Geneva.

The President noted that he has also sent a letter to the President of the World Bank and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to draw their attention, during the Spring Meetings of the Boards of Directors (end of this week), to the special session on HIV/AIDS.

2) RIO + 10

Concerning the preparations for the Rio + 10 Summit the President informed that after consultations with various parties through the CSD-9 chair and the CSD secretariat, and his office, an agreement has now been reached on the dates of the Rio+10 Summit. A resolution to this effect will be submitted to the General Assembly shortly. The dates of the Conference should then be confirmed to be from 2 to 11 September 2002, with a high-level segment from 9 to 11 September.

3) IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The President noted that the non-paper, which was prepared after consultations together with Ambassador Valdes, was circulated to Member States yesterday. This non-paper, as indicated before, focuses on implementing existing decisions. The President has scheduled informal informals of the Plenary for May 10 and 11 (afternoons). The President expressed his hope that Member States will attend these informals and be ready to discuss the different points raised in the paper so that the process can be get moving.

4) SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

It was noted that the next substantive session of the open-ended working group will be held in two weeks time (May 7 to 11, with morning sessions on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and an afternoon session on Tuesday). At the next meeting under Cluster I the issue of the expansion of the Security Council will be discussed. To guide the discussions the Bureau has again prepared new conference room papers (CRP's), which will be coming out during this week. The Introductory Paper (CRP.4) came out already yesterday. Under Cluster II the working group will continue to go through the CRP.3, which was prepared for the March meeting. The President said that he is looking forward to an active participation by Member States.

5) AFRICA WORKING GROUP

(the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa)

Concerning the Africa Working Group the President told that together with the Secretariat they are currently busy preparing for the May session (29 May to 1 June). They are trying to make this meeting as operative and practical as possible for the monitoring purposes. They have invited key speakers and representatives of the United Nations system to make presentations on the implementation of two important themes. The first one is prevention and post-conflict peace building. The second theme is education. The President added that he urges Member States to participate actively in the May meeting.

6) FOLLOW-UP TO THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

The President stressed that he continues to follow up the implementation of Resolution 162/55. That involves working with those in charge of preparations for major upcoming events, so as to ensure the inclusion of the aspect of the summit follow-up in these processes. Also in this connection, the President informed that he will be attending the Abuja African Summit this week. He further noted that he may also participate in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) conference in Brussels in May.

20 April 2001

**Office of the President of the Millennium Assembly
55th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Non-paper by the President of the General Assembly
Revitalization of the General Assembly
Improving the Efficiency of the General Assembly**

Note attached to the non-paper:

Please find enclosed my non-paper, including an Annex, prepared with the assistance of the facilitator, Permanent Representative of Chile, H.E. Mr. J. Gabriel Valdes on revitalization of the General Assembly; improving the efficiency of the General Assembly, dated April 20, 2001.

The first round of informal/informals of the Plenary is scheduled to take place on May 10 and May 11 (both days afternoon sessions in Trusteeship Council).

The aim of this exercise is to better enable the UN to fulfill the purposes and principles of the Charter and to meet the aspirations of its Members. It should focus on improving the capacity of the General Assembly to discharge effectively its functions to carry out effectively and efficiently the mandates of intergovernmental processes with the necessary transparency and accountability.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

Harri Holkeri
President of the General Assembly

1. INTRODUCTION

As a follow-up to the informal brainstorming meeting of the General Committee on the improvement of the working methods of the General Assembly open to the participation of all interested parties held on February 13 the facilitator, the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdes carried out informal consultations with a view to moving the process forward.

When discussing how to proceed, some delegations pointed out that a conceptual distinction had to be made between improvements of procedures and working methods ("reform") and substantive improvements in its role and impact ("revitalization"). A number of delegations called for a precise determination of the objective and scope of the current exercise. Several

mentioned the need for a realistic and practical list of priorities to guarantee manageable and action-oriented implementation.

The general contention among Member States was that General Assembly (GA) working methods have not improved, as verified by the increase in the number and/or length of agenda items, resolutions, plenary items, Reports of the Secretary-General, and speakers' interventions. This had led to fatigue with the GA's work, overtaxing of small delegations, empty halls, non-punctual and non-interactive sessions, rubber-stamping of resolutions, marginalisation, lack of responsiveness, lack of representation, and encroachment by the Security Council and other organs on the GA's domain.

Thus, many delegations expressed the need to center this process on the implementation of those provisions contained in existing resolutions, which has not been done, and to focus it for the time being on the Plenary of the General Assembly.

Resolution 51/241, that was the outcome of the Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening on the United Nations System, is the most complete. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to take this text as a basis and use the others resolutions as needed.

Resolution 51/241 raises a number of issues that require more specific measures to improve their implementation. The current non-paper will focus on the following:

- Agenda;
- Consideration of reports by the General Assembly;
- The General Committee;
- Strengthening the office of the President;
- Enhancing the use of modern technology

2. THE AGENDA

How to implement provisions of 51/241 regarding the agenda has emerged as one of the more complicated aspects of this process. While the majority of delegations are in agreement with the need to streamline, cluster, biannualize and triannualize items, a clear criteria as to how to do this has not emerged from the informal consultations.

Therefore what is contained in this paper should taken as examples of possible approaches for consideration by delegations rather than specific proposals from the President and the facilitator. Thus, the mandate of 51/241 regarding the agenda could be addressed in the following manner (based on items allocated to Plenary for the 55th session of the General Assembly):

-On grouping of items see Annex 1.

For biannualization or triannualization: here are some examples to be considered:

- i) Cooperation between the U.N. and other observer institutions (items 21 to 29,65,69) ;
- ii) United Nations Reform (item 60a; 61; 62)
- iii) Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social; and related fields (item 63)
- iv) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (item 20a)
- v) Support of the U.N. for new or restored democracies (item 39);
- vi) The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global order (item 174)
- vii) The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti (item 48)
- viii) Zone of peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (Item 38)
- ix) Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion (item 31 - already biannual);

ITEMS THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED AT THE COMMITTEE LEVEL COULD INCLUDE:

- Item 47:Assistance in mine action.(3rd. Committee)
- Item 37: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the Special Session of the General Assembly in this regard (3rd. Committee);
- Items 52 and 53:Reports of the International Tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia. (3rd. Committee);
- Item 58: Launching of Global Negotiations on international economic cooperation for development (2nd. Committee)

3. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

One issue that was considered to be very important by many delegations is the more structured consideration of reports by the General Assembly, in particular the Report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization and the Report of the Security Council, as contained in Resolution 51/241, paragraphs 7 and 12.

Paragraph 7 states:

"The report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization shall be considered in Plenary meetings of the General Assembly immediately after the general debate. The President of the Assembly should assess the debate on this item. In the light of that assessment, informal consultations shall be held, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss action that may be required by the Assembly on the basis of the debate on the report".

Paragraph 12 states:

"The President of the General Assembly shall assess the debate on this item and consider the need for further consideration of the report of the Security Council. In the light of the assessment, informal consultations shall be held after the debate in Plenary meetings under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss the need and content of any action by the Assembly based on the debates".

The President, after consideration of the reports by the General Assembly, shall inform the General Assembly of his assessment of the debate in order to determine the need for further action.

Also, he should remit his assessment of the debate to the Secretary General and the President of the Security Council, as appropriate, for their consideration and feedback.

4. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Paragraph 28 of Resolution 51/241 addresses the issue of action to be taken on items considered directly in plenary. This shall be done on the basis of an assessment by the President of discussions of the particular item and after informal consultations by the President or a Vice-President on the need for action. The implementation of this provision may require some additional measures.

5. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

Some delegations suggested a review of the role and composition of the General Committee (GC) in order to enhance its capacity to assist the President in the conduct of the General Assembly and to improve the continuity between different sessions of the GA. The composition of the General Committee, which combines individuals (Committee Chairpersons) and countries may not be conducive to facilitating the role of the GC as a Bureau to the President.

6. STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

To contribute in a meaningful and consistent manner to many of the tasks discussed above as well as in other parts of the 51/241 it is essential that the office of the President will be strengthened. This provision of Resolution 51/241 has been partially implemented but requires additional measures, particularly in the area of substantive support for the President. In this regard, at least two professional level posts on a permanent basis should be established in the office of the President without delay. This would also enhance the capacity of the Office to liaise with the Member States and to coordinate better with the different divisions of the Organization the substantive work of the Presidency.

7. ENHANCING THE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The need to increase the use of modern technology and information technology within the UN, including in the negotiating process of the United Nations has been mentioned by many delegations. In this regard, it has been suggested that the main meeting rooms of the UN should be wired to provide delegations and the secretariat with access to the Optical Disc System and other databases of the Organization and the internet.

ANNEX 1

AGENDA ITEMS ALLOCATED TO THE PLENARY OF THE 55TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Source: A/55/252 & Add.1, 2, 4, 5)

NOTE: The items allocated to the Plenary of the General Assembly at its 55th regular session have been grouped under the following headings solely for the purpose of providing a better sense of the substantive contents of the agenda of the Plenary.

A: ORGANIZATIONAL

Item	Freq.
1. Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Namibia (item 1).	
2. Minute of silent prayer or meditation (item 2).	
3. Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly (item 3): (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee; (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.	
7. Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations (item 7).	
8. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee (item 8).	
19. Admission of new Members to the United Nations (item 19).	

B: ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

Item	Freq.
4. Election of the President of the General Assembly (item 4).	
5. Election of the officers of the Main Committees (item 5).	
6. Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly (rule 31).	
15. Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs: (a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council (rule 142; decision 55/305 of 10 October 2000); (b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council (rule 145; decisions 55/306 A of 12 October 2000 and 55/306 B of 1 November 2000).	
16. Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections (item 16): (a) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination;	

(b) Election of seventeen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law;	
(c) Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.	
17. Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (item 17):	
(h) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences;	
(i) Appointment of the members of the Consultative Committee on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;	
(j) Approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.	
64. Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (item 166).	
77. Election of judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (item 185).	

C: GENERAL DEBATE & REPORTS

Item	Freq.
9. General debate.	
10. Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (item 10).	
11. Report of the Security Council (item 11).	
12. Report of the Economic and Social Council [chaps. I-VI, VII (sects. A-C), VIII and IX] (item 12).	
13. Report of the International Court of Justice (item 13).	
14. Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (item 14).	

D: SYSTEMIC

Item	Freq.
18. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (item 18).	
32. United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (item 32).	
33. Culture of peace (item 33).	
36. Bethlehem 2000 (item 36).	
39. Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies (item 39).	

57. Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations (item 57).	
59. Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters (item 59).	
60. United Nations reform: measures and proposals (item 60): (a) United Nations reform: measures and proposals; (b) The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.	
61. Strengthening of the United Nations system (item 61).	
62. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (item 62).	
66. Towards global partnerships (item 173).	
67. The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order (item 174).	
75. Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit (item 182).	

E: PEACE & SECURITY

Item	Freq.
38. Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic (item 38).	
45. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (item 45).	
46. The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (item 46).	
47. Assistance in mine action (item 47).	
49. The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence (item 49).	
51. Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (item 51).	
68. The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict (item 175).	
76. Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula (item 183).	

F: ECONOMIC & SOCIAL

Item	Freq.
31. Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion (item 31).	
37. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the special session of the General Assembly in this regard (item 37).	
42. Special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children (item 42).59. The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti.	
48. The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti.	
58. Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development	

(item 58).	
63. Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (item 63).	
71. Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects (item 179).	

G: LEGAL

Item	Freq.
34. Oceans and the law of the sea (item 34): (a) Consideration of elements relating to oceans and seas, including improvement of coordination and cooperation; (b) Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments.	
52. Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.	
53. Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (item 53).	
73. Crime prevention and criminal justice (item 105).	

H: COOPERATION

Item	Freq.
21. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (item 21).	
22. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (item 22).	
23. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (item 23).	
24. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (item 24).	
25. Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (item 25).	
26. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (item 26).	
27. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (item 27).	
28. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization	

(item 28).	
29. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (item 29).	
65. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe (item 170).	
69. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (item 177).	
72. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (item 180).	
74. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (item 181).	

I: HUMANITARIAN

Item	Freq.
20. Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance (item 20): (a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations; (b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions; (c) Assistance to the Palestinian people; (d) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan.	
47. Assistance in mine action (item 47).	

J: AFRICA

Item	Freq.
30. Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review (item 30).	
50. Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (item 50).	
54. Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986 (item 54).	
70. Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo (item 178).	
78. 2001-2010 Decade: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Africa (item 186).	

K: MIDDLE EAST

Item	Freq.
40. The situation in the Middle East (item 40).	
41. Question of Palestine (item 41).	
55. Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security (item 55).	
56. Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait (item 56).	

L: LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Item	Freq.
35. Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (item 35).	
43. The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development (item 43).	
48. The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti (item 48).	

9 April 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century
at the United Nations Association of China**

I should like thank you for this opportunity to share my views as President of the UN General Assembly on the Role of United Nations in this Century. As you may be aware it is the first time that Finland holds the Presidency of the Assembly, an honour that occurs about once in 200 hundred years for any Member of the United Nations. As President I endeavour to do my best to advance the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter, in order to promote peace and security, greater social equality, democracy and human rights, sustainable human development, the alleviation of poverty and combating global environmental threats.

It gives me a great pleasure to start my official visit in China with a seminar at the United Nations Association of China and it fits very well with my priorities as President. Throughout my Presidency, I have stressed the important role civil society and organizations such as the UN Associations play in making the UN more relevant to the world outside. I was impressed when I learned before coming here about the variety of activities, that the UNA China has been involved during the past year, including disseminating information about UN and making international contacts. I was also glad to note that you have had the opportunity to visit my own country Finland. I encourage you to continue your efforts.

The topic given to me is not easy, and I will not even attempt to answer it in full. But I will try to outline some observations that I have made during my time in office.

But let me add that while difficult the topic is indeed very timely in light of the follow-up to the historic Millennium Summit that took place last September. In fact the Summit presented us with the role for the UN in the 21st Century: the Declaration adopted at the end of the Summit lays down the global agenda for the United Nations for the years to come. I could simply refer you to the Declaration and end my address here. But as you might guess, based on the mere amount of paper I have with me, and remembering that I am a former politician I am tempted to expand a little more on this issue. And if you allow me, I will continue another bit.

The Summit was the largest gathering ever of Heads of State and Government and it agreed on a set of values, principles and goals for the entire international community in the 21st century. Member States reaffirmed that the Organization is not meant to serve only Member States, but also the peoples of the world, in particular the most vulnerable. It laid down the fundamental values that guide our work: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The Summit stressed the inter-linkages between development, peace and security as well as the need to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for everyone.

Furthermore, the Summit provided a momentum which will reinforce the implementation of the global agenda and its development targets, as defined in the global conferences of the 1990's .

One of the issues where the Summit stressed the importance of the UN is globalization. The Organisation can play a critical role in making sure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all and offers benefits in a more equal manner. I should add that a key issue in globalization is how information and knowledge could be made available to all. This is of course a relevant question also in China. The United Nations has been active in this field for sometime through its specialized agencies and funds and programmes and the Economic and Social Council. The focus has been on the issue of bridging the so-called "digital divide", and making knowledge available and accessible to all.

The Summit also reaffirmed the key role that the UN plays in maintaining peace and security. The nature of conflicts has made this task even more complex and the question of improving the UN's capacity to respond more effectively to crises was one of the Summit's themes. The so-called Brahimi report contained specific recommendations to enhance the UN's capacity to conduct peace operations more effectively. In short it proposed that the UN be given the resources and tools it needs to carry out peace operations. The proposed reform is a comprehensive package, including additional resources, organizational and management changes as well as changes in the way the Security Council works. As President of the Assembly I urged Member States to consider the recommendations urgently. Member States saw this as an opportunity for the UN and its Member States to show that they were serious about enabling the Organisation to do the job it has been mandated by the Charter, namely that of maintaining international peace and security. The first emergency package of reforms was adopted last fall which was encouraging, but the work needs to continue.

Development and poverty eradication will have to remain high on the agenda of the UN for years to come. Many of the forthcoming conferences and Special Sessions, such as the Conference on Least Developed Countries and Special Session on HIV/AIDS, will address these issues and I am hopeful that governments will adhere to their commitments made at the Summit and that we will see concrete results emerging from these and other events.

In light of the above the challenge, I believe, is to identify and develop the core strengths of the UN. This means also that the Organization needs to adapt constantly in order to respond to the new priorities established by its Membership.

Moreover, I believe that strengthening and revitalizing the Organization is in fact a prerequisite to achieving the priorities agreed in the Summit Declaration and to enabling the UN to carry out the tasks entrusted to it. Consequently, the pledge by Member States to spare no effort to make the UN a more effective instrument and to strengthen, it becomes very important and urgent.

In this connection I should like to take up briefly some of the relevant issues in strengthening the UN.

One particular area of reform where Member States resolved at the Summit to intensify their efforts is Security Council reform. The point that is repeatedly stressed in reform discussions is the need for the Council's composition to reflect the realities of today, compared to those of 55 years ago, to make it more representative and more legitimate.

Discussions on Security Council reform have been going on now for over 7 years. This reflects the fact that the issues at stake are at the very core of the United Nation's structure and functioning. Some improvements in the working methods of the Security Council have been accomplished, but the main issues still remain open. The need for reform is still very much a current matter.

The Millennium Summit outcome indicated that there is a renewed willingness by the membership to move forward on reform. But concrete results regarding expansion of the membership of the Council, decision making, including the veto, working methods and transparency are still awaited. The aim is a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

On the more general question of strengthening the UN I have as President tried to lead and keep the process of reform moving forward. To achieve concrete results on the reform and revitalization of the UN, it is of utmost importance to have the whole Membership on board.

Many important decisions were already taken last fall to strengthen the UN. The Assembly was able to agree on new scales of assessments both for the regular budget and for UN peacekeeping. This was a longstanding and complex issue, but in the end the Assembly reached consensus.

I already mentioned the decision adopting emergency measures to reinforce the Department of Peacekeeping Operations thus strengthening one of the core functions of the Organization. Decisions were also taken to improve the security and safety of UN personnel, to move towards results-based budgeting and on other issues that will contribute to strengthening the UN.

As President of the Assembly I have made an effort to guide its work in a more effective manner. But there is an overwhelming consensus that a concerted effort needs to be made in improving the working methods of the Assembly. Many decisions have been taken over the years to improve the work of the Assembly. But it is striking to note how few have been implemented. So I have put this issue now to Member States and they have responded positively to my call. Consultations have started to find common ground to move forward in a concrete manner in implementing decisions made towards improving the working methods of the Assembly.

Any reform requires compromises by all parties at a very practical level. Unless governments at the highest political level acknowledge and agree that to achieve the common good they need to let go some of their own individual priorities, nothing will move.

To conclude I should like go back to where I started: the role of civil society. In the Summit Declaration a call was made for enhanced partnership and co-operation with civil society, including the private sector. I have emphasized that we need to explore innovative ways to enable civil society to contribute to the work of the UN system. I will continue to keep this issue on my agenda and support all efforts to implement this commitment.

I thank you for your attention.

3 April 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at a Luncheon at the United Nations University**

It is a pleasure to join you at this luncheon and to share some thoughts and observations about the UN and its work from the head quarter's perspective.

We have just opened the United Nations Gallery at the United Nations House. For me that was a very symbolic event of opening the doors of the UN to the outside world. One of my priorities as President of the Assembly has been to reach out to civil society in order to fully benefit from its expertise and to ensure its involvement in the work of the UN. I consider it is also to be a necessary means to strengthening the Organization. In this era of globalization, the UN and national governments cannot do their work alone.

As part of the implementation of the Summit Declaration, a call was made for enhanced partnership and co-operation with civil society, including the private sector. I myself have emphasized that we need to explore innovative ways to enable civil society to contribute to the work of the UN system. The input from the academic community and research institutions is of particular importance. In this respect the United Nations University provides the UN with a great opportunity to build new linkages and broaden the old ones. It is important that the whole UN system takes full benefit from the work and research activities of the University. And I welcome the University's efforts to strengthen its working links with the UN organizations. It is crucial to further intensify this cooperation, by all parties, so that the University can implement its role as a think-tank for the UN system.

The Summit last September gave the UN family a huge task. Although the main responsibility to implement the commitments made rests with governments, the UN has a key role to play in assisting Member States in this process. Declaration. It is important that in its research activities the University contributes to the implementation of these recommendations.

Since I have this unique opportunity to meet representatives from so many different UN organizations and programmes I feel compelled to say a few words about the role of the UN system in general. Let me start by saluting UN personnel in the field - for your dedication, commitment and hard work. You provide the backbone of the work of the Organisation.

The Millennium Summit laid the agenda for our work. The main challenge now is to implement the Summit Declaration. In my view, the Declaration is one of the most important documents of recent time. If we are able to achieve its targets, it will have an enormous impact globally.

Your contribution to the follow-up and implementation of the Summit Declaration will be vital. The implementation mechanism within the UN system lies basically on the existing structures. This requires that the whole UN system will have to make an extra effort and work together towards the common goals set in the Declaration. Co-ordination is needed not only amongst the different players in the field, but also between the field offices and headquarters.

International and multilateral actors, such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and various regional organizations, are becoming increasingly important in harnessing the positive powers of globalization. I have tried myself to further strengthen the bridges with the international financial institutions to foster co-operation and coherent policies on such important issues as financing for development.

Throughout my tenure as President an important concern of mine has been to find ways to improve the functioning of the General Assembly itself. I have tried to work in an open and transparent way with my colleagues and to foster a collaborative spirit. I have instituted some changes such as amending the rules to establish the dates for the opening of the Assembly's session each year. Consultation on this issue will continue when I return to New York.

One observation that I have made during my tenure has to do with the resources of the Organization. The United Nations is clearly under funded and in desperate need of adequate and dependable resources. Years of zero-nominal growth have taken their toll. It is a policy that has come to the end of its usefulness.

Let me conclude by expressing a word of thanks to the United Nations University for organizing this luncheon. This a sign of the good co-operation that will help us achieve the goals set in the Declaration. I trust that the spirit of teamwork will help us resolve the challenges ahead.

I would like to wish you all a very happy Sakura season and I hope that you will also have the opportunity to take some time and celebrate this time of the year with OHANAMI.

21 March 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of March**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of March: Mauritius (African States), Pakistan (Asian States), Armenia (Eastern European States), Cuba (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Belgium (Western European and other States).

1. SPECIAL SESSION ON HIV/AIDS

The major issue the President highlighted regarding the special session was the nomination of the chairs of the round tables. The President mentioned that he has taken this matter up also with the predecessors of the current chairs in January and February this year.

It was noted that there has been a letter of invitation to the special session by the Secretary General of the UN. In this letter Member States were invited to participate at the highest level, preferably at the Head of State or Government.

Accordingly, the President noted that the regional chairs might wish to convey to their members, that consideration should be given to the fact that heads of states might be among the participants in the round tables, which would place certain requirements also on the chairs and their ranking.

It was also noted that the resolution 55/13 decided that the Special Session will consist of plenary meetings and four round tables. The chairs will represent all other regional groups except the Western European and other States Group, which group is not required to nominate a chair.

Resolution 55/242, which was adopted in February this year on the organizational issues of the Special Session and the preparatory process, decided on the themes of each round table. The President noted that he hopes this decision will facilitate the selection of the chairs.

Another issue to which the President wanted to draw the attention of the regional chairs for the month of March, was the participation of member states in the round tables.

Resolution 55/242 gives guidance as for how many member states from each geographic group will be able to be included in each of the round tables. This request concerns now also the Western European and other states group.

Resolution 55/242 decided that the round tables shall compose of a mix of member states and United Nations organizations and civil society actors.

2. IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The President informed the chairs that the chairpersons of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) Ambassador Kumalo and Ambassador Asadi had briefed him on the outcome of the JCC meeting. Their message was that there is an overwhelming consensus to improve the working methods of the Assembly and revitalize it and the JCC is supportive to the process.

In order to allow sufficient time for consultations for the time being the President said that he will continue, together with Ambassador Valdes, to consult Member States and major groups.

The President informed that he will prepare a non-paper focusing on implementing existing decisions and circulate it to Member States early April. This paper is meant to facilitate the discussions at the informal/informals of the Plenary to be arranged sometime late April.

3. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

The President referred to the first substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group which was held the previous week. At the meeting the discussions focused on the veto as a voting instrument and the working methods of the Council. The veto is one of the questions that needs to be addressed in order to reach general agreement on the reform.

The papers submitted by the Vice-chairs and the President guided the discussions and participation was active and constructive. The aim is a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Discussions will continue in May, and as the President hoped the chairs will understand it would be premature to make any comments now on possible outcomes.

4. AFRICA WORKING GROUP

(the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa)

The President noted that at the organisational session held 20 March the two themes on which the Group will focus its monitoring at its meeting in May were agreed upon They are prevention and post-conflict peace building and education. The Group had also agreed that at the meeting in July/August, the Group will make a short review or wrap up of the outcomes for Africa of the major events which will have taken place up to that time this year.

It was further noted that the meeting heard a statement by Under-Secretary-General Gambari, the main co-ordinator in the Secretariat side for this issue. He pledged the full and co-ordinated support form the Secretariat side, which was very encouraging.

The President had urged Member States to participate actively in the next meeting in May.

5. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT FOLLOW UP

The President told that he continues to follow up the implementation of Resolution 162/55. He has continued to follow up the preparations for major upcoming events to ensure follow up aspect in these processes.

In this connection the President had hosted a luncheon for members of the Bureau of the Small Arms Conference to discuss how that conference can be used as a tool in the implementation of the Summit Declaration. Participants had briefed the President about the progress made, including in the question of non-governmental organization (NGO) participation.

6. VISIT TO JAPAN AND CHINA

The President also informed the chairs that he will be travelling to Japan and China at the end of March at the invitation of the Governments of these countries. As before this trip takes place under the overall umbrella of the Millennium Summit follow up.

In Japan the President will be meeting with the Foreign Minister Kono and in China with Premier Zhu and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Tang.

19 March 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
“Towards a Stronger United Nations” at the American Scandinavian
Society**

It is a great pleasure for me to address the American Scandinavia Society. I should like to thank you for this opportunity to share my views as President of the UN General Assembly on strengthening the United Nations. It is the first time that Finland holds the Presidency of the Assembly, an honour that occurs about once in 200 hundred years for any Member of the United Nations.

The topic for this evening could not be more timely - nor the audience for it more appropriate. The Nordics have a long history in the UN and a reputation as forerunners for reform. I believe that we are also regarded as 'runners' in the real sense relative to the slow pace of the UN. The Nordic proposals for the reform of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies in the early 90's were instrumental in bringing that process forward. So it should have come as no surprise that as President I have taken reform as one of my priorities.

The topic is also especially timely in the light of the ongoing follow-up to the historic Millennium Summit that took place last September.

At the Summit, the largest gathering ever of Heads of State and Government, a set of values, principles and goals for the entire international community in the early 21st century was agreed. The Summit provided a momentum which will reinforce the implementation of the global agenda and its development targets, as defined in the global conferences of the 1990's .

At the Summit Member States also reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. They reaffirmed that the Organization is not meant to serve only Member States, but also the peoples of the world, in particular the most vulnerable. The Summit stressed the inter-linkages between development, peace and security as well as the need to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for everyone.

Furthermore, Member States pledged to strengthen the UN, the only truly global organization today. I believe that strengthening and revitalizing the organization is a prerequisite to achieving all the priorities agreed in the Summit Declaration and to enable the UN to carry out the tasks entrusted to it.

One particular area of reform where Member States resolved to intensify their efforts at the Summit is Security Council reform. The point that is repeatedly stressed in reform discussions is the need for the Council's composition to reflect the realities of today, compared to those of 55 years ago, to make it more representative and more legitimate.

Just last week I was chairing the first round of discussions this year on the reform of the Security Council. I am fortunate to have my fellow Nordic, Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingolfsson of Iceland, as one of the Vice-Chairpersons to assist me in this challenging task. This shows that the Nordic co-operation and reform tradition is still very much alive at the UN.

Discussions on Security Council reform have been going on now for over 7 years and this seems like a long time, which it is. But one has to remember that the issues at stake are at the very core of the United Nation's structure and functioning. Some improvements in the working methods of the Security Council have been accomplished, but the main issues still remain open. The need for reform is still very much a current matter.

Our discussions of last week focused on the veto as a voting instrument and the working methods of the Council. There is no doubt that the veto is one of the questions that needs to be addressed in order to reach general agreement on the reform. The papers submitted by the Vice-chairs and me guided the discussions and participation was active and constructive.

The Millennium Summit outcome indicated that there is a renewed willingness by the membership to move forward on reform. But concrete results regarding expansion of the membership of the Council, decision making, including the veto, working methods and transparency are still awaited. The aim is a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Discussions will continue in May, and as you will understand it would be premature to make any comments now on possible outcomes.

On the more general question of strengthening the UN I have as President tried to lead and keep the process of reform moving forward. To achieve concrete results on the reform and revitalization of the UN, it is of the utmost importance to have the whole Membership on board. I have urged Member States to engage in discussions, to implement decisions taken and make new initiatives to further the reform.

During the fall session of the Assembly I was very pleased to see how promptly Member States responded to the challenge. The implementation of the Summit Declaration was launched in December by consensus.

The Assembly rose to the challenge in other important ways to strengthen the UN. Firstly, it was able to agree on new scales of assessments both for the regular budget and for UN peacekeeping. This was a longstanding and complex issue that had generated a lot of heated discussion. Despite the complexities, the Assembly reached consensus.

The agreement will soon lead to the payment of a substantial portion of arrears owed to the UN by the United States. The goal must be a payment of all remaining arrears by the US. Putting the arrears question behind us will not only strengthen the relationship between the US and the UN but also help advance the American agenda in the UN.

Last fall, the Assembly also adopted a package of emergency measures to reinforce the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, an important step towards strengthening one of the core functions of the Organization. This is necessary in order to close the gap between the peace keeping tasks given to the UN, and the resources Member States make available to it. Decisions were also taken to improve the security and safety of UN personnel, and to move towards results-based budgeting and on other issues that will contribute to strengthening the UN.

Reform has been underway for the past few years under the able leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. But it needs to continue throughout the Organization in order to make the UN stronger and more effective.

As President of the Assembly I have started, if I may put it, in my own 'backyard', that is, the General Assembly. I have made an effort to guide its work in a more effective manner.

Many decisions have been taken over the years to improve the work of the Assembly. But it is striking to note how many of these decisions have not been implemented. So I have put this issue now to Member States and they have responded positively to my call. Consultations have started to find common ground to move forward in a concrete manner in implementing decisions made towards improving the working methods of the Assembly.

My own experience is that it is often the practical and small things that count and ultimately add up to meaningful change.

One of these issues is reviewing the agenda of the Assembly. Despite some successes in the rationalization and streamlining of the agenda, the overall workload has not been reduced. The fact is that the total number of items on the agenda has been increasing over the years. The same goes for the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. What is needed is an agenda that enables the Assembly to focus its work more on current priorities and not on those of years gone by.

The division of labor between the Plenary session of the Assembly and its six Main Committees has become blurred. Whilst the Plenary should be the place where issues of high importance are debated in the presence of all Member States, it often discusses issues of a more routine character and, I dare say, often with only a half full audience. Some have also suggested that the Assembly's annual general debate could be working sessions and real debates on issues of current and global importance, rather than reading aloud pre-written statements covering the whole agenda.

The lack of continuity in the work of successive Assemblies is an issue that I have personally experienced. To provide some continuity, the model of a 'troika', used in other organizations, has been suggested. The 'GA troika' would include the present, previous and incoming Presidents of the General Assembly or representatives of these States, to be involved in major discussions of reform and of planning the work of the General Assembly. Another suggestion that has been made to the same effect is to strengthen the office of the President by providing on a continuous

basis substantial backup from the secretariat designated to support the office of the President as an institution.

Let me now turn to the issue of opening the UN to the outside world, another means to strengthening the Organization. Better governance requires better and wider participation. In the era of globalization, the UN and national governments cannot do their work alone. Therefore, one of my priorities as President of the Assembly has been to reach out to civil society in order to fully benefit from its expertise and to ensure its involvement in our work.

In the resolution on the implementation of the Summit Declaration, a call was made for enhanced partnership and co-operation with civil society, including the private sector. To fulfill this commitment, I have emphasized that we need to explore innovative ways to enable civil society to contribute to the work of the UN system. I will continue to keep this issue on my agenda and support all efforts to implement this commitment.

In addition, international and multilateral actors, such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and various regional organizations are becoming increasingly important in harnessing the positive powers of globalization. It is my intention to further strengthen the bridges to foster co-operation and coherent policies with the international financial institutions on such important issues as financing for development. This issue will be the topic of an International Conference next year in Mexico. In my view, the participation by the international financial institutions and by the national finance ministries of the donor countries is vital for this event to be a success.

To conclude, I should like to stress that the challenge is to identify and develop the core strengths of the UN. The Organization needs to adapt constantly in order to respond to the new priorities established by its Membership.

This requires compromises by all parties at a very practical level. Unless governments at the highest political level acknowledge and agree that to achieve the common good they need to let go some of their own individual priorities, nothing will move. I thank you for your attention.

26 February 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of February**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of February: Mali (African States), Nepal (Asian States), Albania (Eastern European States), Costa Rica (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Austria (Western European and other States).

1. IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The President noted that he has addressed the question of improving the working methods of the Assembly several times at these meetings with regional chairs. The membership had a very good exchange of views on 13 and 14 February at the open-ended brainstorming session of the General Committee. He added that he intends to arrange an informal informal of the Plenary some time in March.

In the meantime, together with Ambassador Valdes, the President will continue to consult Member States and major groups in order to prepare for that meeting. He will also, with the assistance of Ambassador Valdes, prepare a non-paper to facilitate discussions at the meeting. The President told that his goal, which he believes is shared by all, is to enable the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the UN to play its role effectively. He added that the focus is on implementing existing decisions.

2. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

The responsibility to bring this process forward lies with the Member States. The President assured that he will do his best to facilitate the process.

The first substantive meeting will be from March 12 to 16 and the President said that he hopes to be able to focus the discussion so that progress can be made. All issues, including the veto, need to be discussed. It is important that Member States speak out in the working group and that capitals are linked to this process so as to engage the vital political will to move ahead - after 7 years.

3. AFRICA WORKING GROUP

Concerning the work of the Working Group, the President noted that he has just today sent a letter to inform Member States about the dates scheduled for the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa:

20 March 2001 (organisational session)
29 May through 1 June 2001; and
30 July through 3 August 2001.

The President added that it is his hope that all delegations will take an active part in these meetings in order to make the work of the Working Group a success. At the moment the bureau is consulting on the forthcoming work, including the possible themes to be monitored by the group. The need to try to focus the discussion on themes that have not been dealt sufficiently in the Working Group was noted. The question of conflict prevention and peace building has been mentioned, and the President said that he agrees that it is indeed important.

The President told that he looks forward co-operating also with the President of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Ambassador Belinga Eboutou, to follow up the recommendation of establishing an ad hoc advisory group on countries emerging from conflict. At the meeting of the Heads of Regional Organizations (February 5), the President had invited them to enhance their input to the work of the group, and he added that he hopes they take act upon his invitation.

4. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT FOLLOW UP

The President said that he continues to follow up the implementation of Resolution 162/55. There is a need to clarify the ideas about how and when the road map should come out and what is the procedure for the annual reports. In that context, the President noted that he recently hosted a luncheon for major groupings where the Secretariat briefed about the progress in preparing the road map and about cooperation within the Secretariat on the follow up. The Secretariat's intentions are to produce the road map, after considerable joint efforts (including through the ACC) within the Secretariat, not before this coming summer.

It was also noted that the President has attended systematically the preparations for major upcoming events to ensure follow up aspect in these processes. Furthermore, the monthly meetings with coordinators of these upcoming events have continued, during which reporting requirements and non-governmental organisation (NGO) participation have been discussed.

5. HIV/AIDS SPECIAL SESSION

The President reminded the Chairpersons of his letter of 20 February 2001, in which he requested their assistance in nominating the chairs of the roundtables in the special session on HIV/AIDS, which will be held on 25 to 27 June. The President added that he trusts that they will communicate to him the nominations from their groups soon.

In the same connection, the President also noted that the WEOG group would not need to react, as the Presidency of the session is with this group. Identification of the chairs of the roundtables - of which the President said that he is sure about - will facilitate further organizational issues, including participation of Member States in the round tables.

22 February 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
"Towards a stronger UN" at New England Center for International
and Regional Studies Bridgeport University**

It is an honor to join you tonight and to continue the tradition established by the University of Bridgeport to invite the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations to address your academic community. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my views on strengthening the United Nations. It is a timely and opportune topic, especially in the light of the ongoing work of the historic Millennium Assembly.

For me personally, tonight's address is of particular importance because I have underlined the need for the UN to open up to the civil society at large. This includes continued and enhanced dialogue with the academic community, with which the UN already has a history of partnership.

Last September's Millennium Summit gave Member States an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The Summit reaffirmed that the Organization is not meant to serve only Member States, but also the peoples of the world, in particular the most vulnerable. The Summit stressed the inter-linkages between development, peace and security as well as the need to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for everyone. At the Summit Member States also pledged to strengthen the Organization, which is essential if we are to achieve the goals outlined in the Summit Declaration.

We all acknowledge that since the establishment of the United Nations, its achievements have been impressive in many areas of development, peace and security. The mandate given to us by the Summit reflects our global agenda for this coming century and as such is very ambitious. In my mind there is no doubt that the United Nations system needs to be strengthened and reformed in order to enable it to carry out the tasks entrusted to it.

One of the main challenges is to identify and develop the core strengths of the Organization. The UN needs to constantly adapt in order to respond to the new priorities established by its Membership. Furthermore, the UN needs to open up to the outside world. This requires political will and compromises by all parties at a very practical level. Unless Member States acknowledge and agree that to achieve the common good they need to let go some of their own individual priorities, nothing will move.

In my discussions with Member States and in listening to their statements, I sense that there is a renewed recognition and emerging consensus that we need to reinforce our efforts and equip the Organization with appropriate tools to achieve the goals we have set.

During the fall session of the Assembly I was very pleased to see how promptly Member States responded to the challenge. The implementation of the Summit Declaration was launched in December by consensus and with co-operation from all sides. Subsequently the Secretary General, for his part, responded by appointing a panel to advise on the world's development financing needs.

The Assembly rose to the challenge in other important ways to strengthen the UN. Firstly, it was able to agree on new scales of assessments both for the regular budget and for UN peacekeeping. This was an unusually complex and difficult issue that had generated a lot of heated discussion. Despite the complexities, the Assembly, just hours before the start of its holiday recess, reached consensus. In my view, this historic agreement has the potential of greatly improving the spirit of our work.

In addition, the agreement will soon lead to the payment of a substantial portion of the arrears owed to the UN by the United States. Ultimately, the goal must be a payment of all remaining arrears by the US. Putting the arrears question behind us will not only strengthen the relationship between the US and the UN but also help advance the American agenda in the UN.

Last fall, the Assembly also adopted a package of emergency measures to reinforce the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a step towards strengthening one of the core functions of the Organization. This is necessary so as to close the gap between the tasks we ask the UN to carry out, and the resources we make available to it. Decisions were also taken to improve the security and safety of UN personnel, to move towards results-based budgeting and on other issues that will contribute to strengthening the UN.

Reform has been underway for the past couple of years under the able leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. But it needs to continue throughout the Organization in order to make the UN stronger and more effective. In fact, strengthening the Organization is a prerequisite to achieve all the priorities agreed in the Summit Declaration.

For my part, I have tried to lead and keep this process moving forward. To have concrete results on the reform and revitalization of the UN, it is of utmost importance to have the whole Membership on board. I have urged Member States to engage in discussions, to implement decisions taken and make new initiatives to further the reform.

As President of the Assembly I have started with my own 'backyard', if I may put it that way, the Assembly. I have made an effort to guide its work in a more effective manner.

In this regard, it is striking how many decisions Member States have already taken over the years, to improve the work of the Assembly. But it is perhaps even more striking to find out how many of these decisions have not been implemented. So how to move forwards on this issue? My experience is that it is often the practical and small things that count and ultimately add up to change.

One of these issues might be reviewing the agenda of the Assembly. Despite some successes in the rationalization and streamlining of the agenda, the overall workload has not been reduced. The fact is that the total number of items on the agenda has been increasing over the years. The same goes for the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. I believe that we should now make a serious attempt to review the agenda of the General Assembly. This is essential if we are to focus our work more on current priorities and not on those of years gone by.

One possible way to do this might be greater use of clustering, biennializing or triennializing the consideration of agenda items. Agenda items of closely related substance could be merged within a single agenda title or could be incorporated as sub-items.

Moreover, the division of labor between the Plenary and the Main Committees has become blurred. To make the Assembly matter on issues of critical importance to Governments, we need to address this issue. Whilst the Plenary should be the place where issues of high importance are debated in the presence of all Member States, it is in fact, often discussing issues of a routine character and, I dare say, often with only a half full audience.

One concern that has been raised is the lack of continuity in the work of successive Assemblies. To provide some continuity, the model of a 'troika', used in other organizations, has been suggested. The 'GA troika' would include the present, previous and incoming Presidents of the General Assembly or representatives of these States, to be involved in major discussions of reform and of planning the work of the General Assembly. Another suggestion that has been made to the same effect is to make more effective use of the General Committee, the bureau of the General Assembly, which is comprised of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the Chairpersons of its Main Committees.

I should also add that the experience of the round tables at the Summit has inspired some to suggest that maybe the Assembly's annual general debate could be made more interactive and focus on issues of particular importance each year rather than cover the whole of the global agenda.

In addition to enhancing the effectiveness of the General Assembly, work is under way - and has been for more than seven years - to reform the Security Council. The Millennium Summit Declaration called for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. There were several calls - both in the Summit and during the last fall's debates - for the Council's composition to reflect the realities of today, in order to make it "more representative and more legitimate". I hope that the statements made indicate a willingness by the membership to move forward on this issue as we continue to consider it in the coming weeks and months.

Let me now turn briefly to the issue of opening the UN to the outside world, a key means to strengthen the Organization. Better governance requires better and wider participation. In the era of globalization, the UN and national governments cannot do their work alone. Therefore, one of

my priorities as President of the Assembly has been to reach out to civil society in order to fully benefit from its expertise and to ensure its involvement in our work.

In the resolution on the implementation of the Summit Declaration, a call was made for enhanced partnership and co-operation with civil society, including the private sector. To fulfill this commitment, we need to explore innovative ways to enable civil society to contribute to the work of the UN system. I will continue to keep this issue on my agenda and support all efforts to implement this commitment.

In addition to civil society, international and multilateral actors, such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and various regional organizations are becoming increasingly important in harnessing the positive powers of globalization. It is my intention to try and build bridges with the international financial institutions - IFI's - on such important issues as financing for development. This issue will be the topic of a high-level meeting next year and in my view, the best way for the event to be a success is through participation by the IFI's and also by the national finance ministries of the donor countries.

In concluding I would like to reiterate my firm belief: Reform and strengthening of the United Nations is not an option, but a necessity.

14 February 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Committee informal brainstorming session**

I think we have had a very good exchange of views and I would like to thank all delegations for their contribution. I have taken due note of all comments made.

As I mentioned yesterday this discussion served as launching the process and it is my intention now to continue consultations together with Ambassador Valdes.

I intent to arrange an informal meeting of the Plenary some time in March and in the meantime we will continue to consult Member States and major groups in order to prepare for that meeting. I will also, with the assistance of Ambassador Valdes, prepare a non-paper to facilitate our discussions at the meeting.

I would like to assure Member States that I will continue to work in full transparency and openness in order to keep the whole membership involved.

Finally let me stress that although we might differ in details, this should not hamper our work to achieve our common goal to enable the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the UN to play its role effectively.

13 February 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Committee informal brainstorming session**

I declare open the informal brainstorming session on improving the working methods of the General Assembly.

I would like to point out that as this is an informal meeting, no records are being kept. This should enable a constructive and open discussion. However, we have full interpretation to allow for a full exchange of views on this very important issue.

I should also like to point out that at the back of the room there are additional copies of a non-paper called 'talking points', prepared with the assistance of Ambassador Valdes from Chile, who has kindly accepted to assist as facilitator in this process.

Some of you might have wondered why I have launched this issue in the General Committee. Well, after all this is a Committee to assist the President in conducting the work of the Assembly, as stated in the rules of procedure. Furthermore, I see it also as my 'bureau', similar to that of other bodies such as the ECOSOC bureau which regularly discusses issues related to reform. But in order to avoid any doubts that Member States may have, I decided to initiate this "brainstorming" discussion in an informal session open to all members.

Since I took up my office last September, I have addressed the question of improving the working methods of the Assembly on many occasions. I have taken up the issue several times with the chairs of the regional groups and asked them to inform their respective members about my ideas on how to continue this process.

I have addressed this issue also in some of my statements, including one at the Forum of Small States on 15 November 2000 and in a speech in Indonesia on 17 January.

The response I have received has been encouraging, so I have continued my efforts to bring this process forward.

There was a broad recognition by Member States at the Millennium Summit and in the general debate that the UN needs to be strengthened.

As President of the General Assembly, I feel it is my duty to continue the process of reform and this is also in accordance with the mandate given by the Summit. I think that one way to do this is to start by practical steps, as we did in adopting resolution 55/14 on November 3, 2000, when we

agreed on the opening and closing dates of regular sessions. It was a small step, but in my view it added clarity and predictability to our work.

In approaching the issue of reform and strengthening of the UN, I believe we need to start by looking at how well we have implemented the resolutions already adopted.

So I would suggest to you that we start by focusing on reviewing the implementation of already existing General Assembly resolutions in this regard, such as 51/241 and 48/264 and their annexes. Considerable progress has been done since the adoption of these resolutions in 1994 and 1997, and we should continue our efforts.

This does not mean in any way that we should not discuss and explore new ideas on how to strengthen the UN system and in particular the General Assembly as the chief policy-making and deliberative body of the UN. And I welcome any comments or suggestions in this regard.

Once again I would like to invite Member States to discuss the issue of how to improve General Assembly working methods. This is the reason why I have convened this informal 'brainstorming' session of the General Committee open to all delegations.

After this brainstorming session I would propose that the issue be discussed in the informals of the plenary.

The aim of this exercise is to better enable the UN to fulfill the purposes and principles of the Charter and to meet the aspirations of its Members.

It should focus on improving the capacity of the General Assembly to discharge effectively its functions, role and powers and that of the Secretariat to carry out effectively and efficiently the mandates of intergovernmental processes with the necessary transparency and accountability.

I look forward to a fruitful and lively discussion.

13 February 2001

**Office of the President of the Millennium Assembly
55th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Improving the working methods of the General Assembly
talking points for the informal brainstorming meeting of the General
Committee**

I INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting is to launch a discussion on the ways and means to improve the working methods of the General Assembly, so that it can be more efficient in its use of resources and more effective in its outcomes.

These Talking Points serve the purpose of assisting that initial exchange of views and should serve as an input for further exchanges of views on this matter. It must be recalled that the last time the General Assembly addressed these issues was during the 51st. session and the time before was during the 48th.session. On both occasions significant resolutions were adopted.

Most recently, The Millennium Declaration stated in paragraph 30 that the General Assembly is "the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations", Thus, the time may have come again to assess how the General Assembly is performing its duties.

In order to focus the exchange of views, resolutions 48/264, Annex I and 51/241 and its Annex adopted by the General Assembly on its working methods, have been circulated and are used as a basis for these talking points. Other ideas and suggestions that could be useful are also included.

II RESOLUTIONS 48/264 and ANNEX I and -RESOLUTION 51/241 ANNEX

Agenda:

Paragraph 1 (48/264/Annex I) states " the Plenary meetings of the General Assembly should constitute a forum for high-level policy statements as well as for the consideration, inter alia, of agenda items of special political importance and/or urgency.

Paragraph 3 (48/264/Annex I) states "Substantive items initially allocated directly to a Plenary meeting of the General Assembly could be reviewed for allocation to a Main Committee, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Assembly, in particular, with Assembly decision 34/401, which is reproduced in Annex 6 to the rules of procedure.

Paragraph 4 (48/264/Annex I) states " there shall be periodic reviews of the agenda, taking into account the views of concerned Member-States, in order to ascertain whether it is possible to delete any item on which no resolution or decision has been adopted for a period of time.

Paragraph 24 (51/241 Annex) states "The General Assembly shall take further steps to rationalise and streamline the agenda, based on the Guidelines on the Rationalisation of the Agenda of the General Assembly agreed to by the Assembly in Annex 1 to its Resolution 48/264 of 29, July 1994, and in particular, shall make greater use of clustering, biennialization or triennialization of agenda items."

Paragraph 27 (51/241 Annex) states that consideration of items shall be reserved to for urgent issues or issues of major political importance.

As can be seen, there are a variety of already agreed measures to improve the working methods of the General Assembly. Therefore, the question arises as to what procedures should be put in place to implement these agreed matters.

- For example, how could we agree to cluster biannualize and triannualize items on the agenda? Could we agree on criteria how to do this?
- Could items for example referring to cooperation of the United Nations and different agencies and organisation be clustered, so that time wise they could all be discussed jointly ('co-operation days/week')
- Is this the manner how the Plenary can focus on items of especial political importance and/or urgency, or can additional practical measures be set up?
- Could the General Committee be entrusted with a general review of the agenda, say every five years , and submit recommendations for action to the General Assembly?

Reports:

Paras 4 and 5 of resolution 48/264 refer to efforts to make reporting more useful to Member States.

Para 32 of resolution resolution 51/241 states that the number of reports requested shall be rationalized where possible so as to permit more focused discussion consideration of issues. The consideration to integrating reports was also agreed.

- How could we make more rigorous the procedures in practice to request the preparation of reports and integrating them where appropriate?

General Committee

Chapter XI of resolution 51/241 suggests ways on how the General Committee could be helpful in improving the work of the Assembly

- How could the Committee fulfil these tasks in practice in a more coherent and systematic way? Such as the mandate it has to give suggestions prior to the closure of the Session and suggestions in streamlining its work?
- How could we benefit more of the experiences of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees, as members of the General Committee, in relation to the committee work, And how could we forward these experiences in a useful for the future chairpersons?

Role of the President of the General Assembly (refer Chapter XIV of 52/241)

- How could we make the consultations among the President of the General Assembly and the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council more useful and productive?
- And what would be the best way to inform the Membership of their outcome? Using the channel of regional groups does not always seem to work as desired.

III OTHER IDEAS

General Debate

The question on how to focus and make our discussions more interactive has been raised. Also the issue of repetition and duplication has been mentioned.

How could these ideas and problems be explored and implemented in relation to

- i) General Debate
- ii) Report of the Secretary General ,and
- iii) Report of the Security Council.
- iv) Any Other debates, such general debates in the Main Committees?

Organisation of Work

- Is the time-frame allocated to the General Assembly an adequate one?

- Can the substantive relationship between the Main Committees and the Plenary be improved?
- How can the relationship between the Assembly and its Special Sessions and UN conferences be improved?

The full text of resolution 51/241

A/RES/51/241
 105th plenary meeting
 31 July 1997

51/241. Strengthening of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 49/252 of 14 September 1995, by which it established the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System,

Recalling in particular paragraph 2 of resolution 49/252,

Taking note of the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System,

1. Adopts the text contained in the annex to the present resolution for implementation effective from 1 January 1998;
2. Calls upon the relevant intergovernmental bodies to implement fully the measures specified in the text to strengthen the work of the United Nations system, in particular of the General Assembly and the Secretariat;
3. Requests the Secretary-General, as part of his ongoing efforts to improve the functioning of the Organization, to implement fully those measures specified in the text that are within his competence;
4. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution;
5. Invites other principal organs, the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system to implement the measures for strengthening the system that are specified in the text and that are within their respective areas of competence, as appropriate;
6. Decides that the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has completed its work as mandated in resolution 49/252.

The full text of Annex of resolution 51/241

105th plenary meeting 31 July 1997

ANNEX I.

PURPOSE

1. The Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has undertaken its work in accordance with the perspective that its mandate for strengthening the United Nations system, derived from General Assembly resolution 49/252 of 14 September 1995, is to better enable the Organization to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to meet the aspirations of its Members. It has focused on improving the capacity of the General Assembly to discharge effectively its functions, role and powers and that of the Secretariat to carry out effectively and efficiently the mandates of intergovernmental processes with the necessary transparency and accountability.

2. The Working Group has proceeded on the assumption that adequate resources will be provided to support the United Nations system. It has not seen its mandate as responding to the current financial crisis, which is being considered by the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations. It has also proceeded on the assumption that any Secretariat resources that are freed up as a result of strengthening measures proposed by the Working Group shall be reallocated according to priorities set by the General Assembly, in particular to the economic and social areas.

II. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

3. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization should be available not later than thirty days prior to the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly in all official languages of the Organization so as to permit due consideration.

4. The introduction to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization should be in the nature of an executive summary highlighting main issues.

5. The main body of the report shall be comprehensive, informative and analytical in a way that will allow Member States to examine and assess, inter alia, through the debate on the report, the extent to which mandates given by the General Assembly have been fulfilled, as well as to set priorities in the context of the major political, economic and social, administrative and financial issues on its agenda.

6. The Secretary-General shall incorporate a new forward-looking section in his report on the work of the Organization. It shall describe the specific goals for the Secretariat

in the year ahead in the context of the work plan for the Organization in the coming year, taking into account the medium-term plan and the fact that the responsibility for establishing priorities rests with the Member States.

7. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization shall be considered in plenary meetings of the General Assembly immediately after the general debate. The President of the Assembly should assess the debate on this item. In the light of that assessment, informal consultations shall be held, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss action that may be required by the Assembly on the basis of the debate on the report.

8. The General Assembly in plenary meeting may refer sections of the report for more detailed consideration by the Main Committees.

9. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization shall, *inter alia*, contain an analytical and concise annex elaborating the costs by major programmes and activities of all bodies of the United Nations system, located both in and outside New York, according to their mandates, so as to improve Member States' overview of system-wide issues.

10. The Secretary-General is requested to introduce the report orally at an appropriate time under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization".

III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

11. The agenda item entitled "Report of the Security Council" shall continue to be considered in plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

12. The President of the General Assembly shall assess the debate on this item and consider the need for further consideration of the report of the Security Council. In the light of that assessment, informal consultations shall be held after the debate in plenary meetings, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss the need and content of any action by the Assembly based on the debate.

13. The agenda item shall not be closed but shall remain open to enable further discussion as necessary during the year, bearing in mind, *inter alia*, the submission of additional reports as and when necessary.

14. The monthly forecast of the programme of work of the Security Council shall be circulated for the information of members of the General Assembly.

IV. GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

15. The report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly shall be prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996. The report shall also contain an evaluation of the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, taking into account the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

V. GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

16. The report of the International Court of Justice shall continue to be considered in plenary meetings of the General Assembly. The Assembly shall continue to support the role of the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the Organization, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Assembly shall also continue to encourage the progressive development and codification of international law.

VI. TIMING OF THE PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17. The plenary meetings of the General Assembly shall be formally opened every year on the first Tuesday following 1 September, with the election of the President, Vice-Presidents and Chairmen of the Main Committees (the General Committee). The General Committee shall then meet as soon as possible after its election and shall present its report to the General Assembly before the commencement of the general debate.

18. The plenary meetings of the General Assembly shall reconvene in mid-September to consider the report of the General Committee.

VII. THE GENERAL DEBATE

19. There shall continue to be only one general debate each year, beginning in the third week of September.

20. The preparation of the list of speakers for the general debate shall be based on the following principles:

- (a) The general debate shall be organized over a period of two weeks so as to maximize possibilities for interministerial contacts;
- (b) Member States shall be invited to indicate three preferences for speaking times;
- (c) Member States wishing to organize or participate in group meetings during the general debate period shall be encouraged to coordinate their responses to the request for preferences and to indicate this transparently in their responses;
- (d) The Secretariat shall be requested to prepare a list of speakers based on existing

traditions and expressions of preference to best accommodate Members' needs;

(e) The list of speakers for each day shall be completed and no speakers will be rolled over to the next day, notwithstanding the implications for hours of work.

VIII. TIME LIMITS

21. There shall be no time limits or specified themes for the general debate but the General Assembly will indicate a voluntary guideline of up to twenty minutes for each statement.

22. Outside the general debate there shall be a fifteen-minute time limit in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees.

IX. THE AGENDA

23. Bearing in mind rule 81 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the requirements for reopening debate on an agenda item which the Assembly had decided was completed will continue to be as at present and should be made clear to delegations through a statement from the President of the Assembly. A delegation wishing to reopen debate on an agenda item should send a written request to the President of the Assembly. The President will then undertake soundings to ascertain whether the request enjoys wide support. In the light of these soundings, the President shall announce in the Journal of the United Nations the date of the meeting of the Assembly to consider the question of reopening debate on the item, bearing in mind the requirements of rule 81.

24. The General Assembly shall take further steps to rationalize and streamline the agenda, based on the Guidelines on the Rationalization of the Agenda of the General Assembly agreed to by the Assembly in annex I to its resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994, and in particular shall make greater use of clustering, biennialization or triennialization of agenda items. Items that could be considered at a later session shall be identified, taking into account the priorities set by the medium-term plan.

25. As a general rule, agenda items that could be considered in the Main Committees shall be referred to the Main Committees rather than the General Assembly in plenary meetings.

26. The Main Committees shall give specific attention to rationalizing their future agenda and shall consider recommending any possible clustering, biennialization or triennialization of items.

X. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

27. The General Assembly is the highest political body with universal membership of the Organization. Consideration of agenda items directly in plenary meetings shall be reserved for urgent issues or issues of major political importance, bearing in mind

paragraphs 1 and 2 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 48/264.

28. The President of the General Assembly, with a view to ensuring that there is a systematic and transparent process for participation by delegations in discussions on action to be taken on items considered directly in plenary meetings, shall assess the debate in plenary meetings and, where appropriate, organize open-ended informal consultations, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss the need for and content of any action.

29. The Secretariat shall ensure, in consultation with the President, that priority is accorded to the availability of a meeting room and services to facilitate these consultations.

30. All Main Committees shall hold brief organizational sessions once the General Assembly has taken decisions on the agenda, before the commencement of the general debate. Bureaux of the Main Committees shall meet earlier to draw up recommendations on the organization and programme of work.

31. The Main Committees shall meet in substantive session only after the end of the general debate.

32. The number of reports requested shall be rationalized where possible so as to permit more focused consideration of issues. All bodies shall exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports and should consider integrating, biennializing or triennializing the presentation of reports, bearing in mind paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 50/206 C of 23 December 1995.

XI. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

33. The General Committee shall use its authority and competence, taking into account rule 43 of the rules of procedure, by allowing Member States that are not represented on the General Committee to participate in its discussions. The process of decision-making will continue to be as at present.

34. The General Committee may, each year, prior to the closure of the session, prepare suggestions based on its experience for the consideration of the incoming General Committee.

35. The General Committee is requested to consider and recommend to the General Assembly methods and procedures for streamlining and rationalizing the Committee's work. The General Committee shall, in this context, in relation to each agenda item proposed, consider its rejection or its inclusion in the provisional agenda, taking into account previous recommendations of the General Committee and previous relevant decisions of the Assembly.

XII. SUBORDINATE MACHINERY

36. The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly. This arrangement shall not apply if it affects their respective identities, programmes of work and effective consideration of their agendas.

37. The Disarmament Commission should continue to consider ways to organize its work better, including rationalizing the duration of its sessions.

38. The General Assembly should invite the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization to consider the functions and role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and to submit a recommendation to the Assembly at its fifty-third session. Meanwhile, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be asked to submit its report to the International Atomic Energy Agency and World Health Organization as well as to the General Assembly. The Assembly would discuss the report along with any International Atomic Energy Agency and World Health Organization evaluation of the report.

39. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s shall conduct its final review and appraisal during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

XIII. THE BUDGET PROCESS AND FULFILMENT OF MANDATES

40. To ensure better transparency and accountability, the medium-term plan shall be the framework for the budget process.

41. The budget process shall be carried out in accordance with relevant General Assembly budget resolutions, in particular resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, and the relevant provisions of the Financial Rules and Regulations. The importance of continuous and appropriate dialogue on the improvement of current administrative and budgetary practices and procedures is recognized.

42. The Secretary-General shall continue to have flexibility, without prejudice to the fulfilment of mandates, to redeploy, as necessary, within the limits prescribed by the General Assembly budget resolutions and the Financial Rules and Regulations, the human and financial resources necessary to fulfil mandates.

XIV. ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

43. The President of the General Assembly shall be encouraged to take appropriate opportunities to utilize the potential of the office of the President, consistent with the Charter and the mandates of the Assembly, to advance the purposes and principles of the Organization, including regular consultations between the President of the Assembly and the presidents of other organs, particularly the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

44. In order to assist the President in the discharge of his responsibilities, the General Assembly shall request the Secretary-General, after consultation with the President, to include in the next programme budget a proposal for adequate resources to be made available to the President, including, if necessary, through enhanced administrative and personnel support to the office of the President.

XV. TECHNOLOGY

45. The Secretary-General is requested to pursue an information technology plan with a range of options to provide all permanent missions to the United Nations and the wider public with on-line access to documents and relevant United Nations information. Unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, hard copies of documents shall continue to be distributed to permanent missions in accordance with their needs. While welcoming the progress made by the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics of the Economic and Social Council, further efforts in this direction could be pursued within a specified time-frame to harmonize and improve United Nations information systems. All countries, in particular developing countries, shall be assisted in making full use of this potential access. Adequate provision should be made for training delegates. Facilities for such access by delegations within the United Nations premises shall also be expanded as much as possible. Availability of information in this manner should be ensured in all official languages of the United Nations.

46. The Secretary-General is encouraged to include information on the impact of technological improvements in his report on the implementation of mandates, by means of comparing outputs with objectives.

XVI. SYSTEM-WIDE COORDINATION

47. The Secretary-General is requested to elaborate further ways to strengthen system-wide coordination and to report thereon to the General Assembly.

XVII. OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE SECRETARIAT: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MECHANISMS

48. The Secretariat shall be held strictly accountable for implementing mandates within allocated budgets.

49. For the Secretariat to operate efficiently in fulfilling mandates, micromanagement of the Secretariat by the General Assembly should be avoided.

50. The Secretary-General is encouraged to submit proposals to the General Assembly to improve the presentation of the programme performance report so as to enable the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Main Committees of the General Assembly, without prejudice to the provisions of section VI of resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, as reaffirmed in resolution 51/221 of 18 December 1996, to consider the portions of the report related to their substantive work with reference to

the medium-term plan, with a view to facilitating the consideration of the programme performance report by the Fifth Committee.

51. There shall be a more detailed and structured examination in the Main Committees of the relevant reports of the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Office of Internal Oversight Services in relation to the substantive work of these Committees.

52. Accountability and intergovernmental oversight shall be improved by periodic coordination meetings between the Board of Auditors, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Joint Inspection Unit, with appropriate input from the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

53. "Question time" in all Main Committees would enable a dynamic and candid interchange with responsible Secretariat officials to facilitate the work of the Main Committees in their assessment of fulfilment of mandates, productivity and related issues.

54. Every effort should be made to ensure that the measures referred to above take into account and are mutually reinforcing of the programme evaluation activities carried out by other competent intergovernmental bodies.

XVIII. AREAS FOR MORE INTENSIVE WORK BY OVERSIGHT MACHINERY

55. The relevant bodies should request the external and internal oversight machinery to give early attention to, among others, the following areas and to report thereon periodically to the General Assembly:

- (a) Practice and procedures in the employment of consultants;
- (b) Practice and procedures in short-term contract employment;
- (c) Practice and procedures with respect to recruitment;
- (d) Productivity gains actually achieved from investment in technology and the impact of the postponement/deferral of upgrading technological systems on the long-term functioning of the Organization;
- (e) Practice and procedures for appointments at the senior level;
- (f) Practice and procedures for procurement and the award of contracts;
- (g) An evaluation of conflict of interest issues, in particular for personnel dealing with employment decisions and the award of procurement and contracts;
- (h) Practice and procedures in the establishment and use of trust funds;

(i) Practice and procedures with regard to personnel on loan;

(j) Any other issue recommended by the General Assembly.

XIX. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

56. The process of selection of the Secretary-General shall be made more transparent.

57. The General Assembly shall make full use of the power of appointment enshrined in the Charter in the process of the appointment of the Secretary-General and the agenda item entitled "Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations".

58. The duration of the term or terms of appointment, including the option of a single term, shall be considered before the appointment of the next Secretary-General.

59. In the course of the identification and appointment of the best candidate for the post of Secretary-General, due regard shall continue to be given to regional rotation and shall also be given to gender equality.

60. Without prejudice to the prerogatives of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly may consult with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by a Member State and, upon informing all Member States of the results, may forward those results to the Security Council.

61. In order to ensure a smooth and efficient transition, the Secretary-General should be appointed as early as possible, preferably no later than one month before the date on which the term of the incumbent expires.

XX. SENIOR MANAGEMENT

62. The senior management structure should be considered in the context of the overall structure of the Organization, desired lines of authority and decision-making.

63. The Organization shall have a clear pyramid structure. To that end, the functions and number of under-secretaries-general, special representatives of the Secretary-General and assistant secretaries-general should be reviewed and streamlined by the Secretary-General, and lines of authority and decision-making made transparent.

64. Member States note the Secretary-General's decision to establish a Policy Coordination Group as a means to enhance coordination in the terms explained by him to Member States.

65. The principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance shall be reflected in appointments to senior positions, including heads of programmes, funds and other United Nations bodies.

66. The principle enshrined in General Assembly resolution 46/232 of 2 March 1992 that there should be no monopoly on senior posts by nationals of any State or group of States should be strictly observed and implemented. The Secretary-General should keep the Assembly regularly informed of his/her actions on those matters.

67. The Secretary-General is encouraged to consider uniform terms and term limits in his appointments to senior management posts.

XXI. HEADS OF PROGRAMMES, FUNDS AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES

68. Affirming the role of the General Assembly in approving appointments and extension of terms, uniform terms of office of four years, renewable once, should be introduced for the executive heads of programmes, funds and other bodies of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

69. The specialized agencies are also encouraged to consider uniform terms and term limits for their executive heads.

XXII. GENERAL STAFFING ISSUES

70. It is essential for the successful functioning of the Organization that it has a career international civil service for its core functions. There is also an important role for term contracts for various categories of staff.

71. The Secretary-General shall be encouraged, in accordance with legislative mandates, to ensure a judicious mix of career and fixed-term appointments, so as to have an appropriate balance between institutional memory, long-term commitment and independence and the ability to bring in fresh insights and expertise, and to dismiss non-performing staff.

72. Short-term appointments should not be used as an entry to career positions. A review should be undertaken of staff on short-term appointments.

73. Staff development and training shall be encouraged along with a cost-effective common training system to be developed for personnel of the Secretariat, funds and programmes.

74. The provisions of the Charter giving due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible shall be implemented. In this regard, the principle of gender balance shall be observed within the Organization. In achieving gender balance, the principle of equitable geographical distribution shall be respected.

75. The quality of the language services shall be enhanced, including through the provision of effective management practices, bearing in mind that all official languages of the United Nations are of equal importance in this regard.

XXIII. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

76. The system of in-career promotion shall be made more transparent.

77. A planned rotation among different departments as well as between Headquarters and the field level, as appropriate, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/222 A of 23 December 1994, as one way of enhancing experience and skills, should be developed and submitted to the Assembly.

78. The performance appraisal system shall be subject to periodic review and audit and comparative statistics should be maintained for review by the General Assembly.

XXIV. SECRETARIAT REMUNERATION

79. The General Assembly shall request the International Civil Service Commission to prepare proposals for a possible system of performance-based remuneration for its consideration.

80. The General Assembly shall reiterate that topping up of remuneration of their nationals in any way by Member States is not acceptable and shall request the Secretary-General to report on the matter.

XXV. INDEPENDENCE OF THE SECRETARIAT

81. Further efforts shall be made, consistent with Article 101 of the Charter to pay due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

82. Compliance with Article 100 (2) of the Charter is of fundamental importance and it would be timely to call upon Member States scrupulously to observe Article 100 (2) and to request the Secretary-General to prepare guidelines on what constitutes acceptable representations to him and his staff on appointments.

83. Consistent with Article 101 of the Charter, Secretariat guidelines for staff members on financial interests shall include a requirement at all levels of senior management for specified financial disclosures at the time of appointment and on a regular basis. These financial statements shall be dealt with on a basis of confidentiality.

The full text of resolution 48/264 and its Annexes

A/RES/48/264
 102nd plenary meeting
 29 July 1994

48/264. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2837 (XXVI) of 17 December 1971, 33/138 of 19 December 1978, 39/88 of 13 December 1984, 45/45 of 28 November 1990, 46/77 of 12 December 1991, 46/140 of 17 December 1991, 46/220 of 20 December 1991 and 47/233 of 17 August 1993,

Reiterating the importance of the objectives and principles relevant to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as set out in resolution 47/233,

Desiring to enhance its capacity to exercise the functions and powers assigned to it under the Charter of the United Nations so that it can play a more effective role within the Organization,

Recognizing the usefulness of improving its working methods to enable it to perform its functions more effectively, efficiently and in a comprehensive manner,

1. Stresses the importance of enhanced cooperation and an effective relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs, particularly the Security Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations;
2. Decides, in accordance with and subject to the relevant provisions of the Charter, to continue to use the existing machinery and, when necessary, to consider the creation of new bodies to facilitate the discussion of any question or any matter within the scope of the Charter and, as appropriate, the making of recommendations on it to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both;
3. Welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Security Council to improve its working methods, and in that context encourages the Council, in the submission of reports to the Assembly, to provide in a timely manner a clear and informative account of its work, including its resolutions and other decisions, inclusive of measures taken under Chapter VII of the Charter;

4. Invites the President of the General Assembly, following consultations, to propose appropriate ways and means to facilitate an in-depth discussion by the Assembly of matters contained in the reports submitted to it by the Security Council;

5. Encourages Member States to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the desirability of reducing the number of such reports;

6. Emphasizes that reports requested of the Secretary-General should be made available in all official languages in a timely manner in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the annexes thereto with a view to enabling delegations to consider the substance of such reports more thoroughly in advance of meetings;

7. Commends the valuable work undertaken by the Main Committees to review their respective agendas, and encourages the Committees to continue this work, taking into account the present resolution;

8. Reaffirms the right of Member States to propose, in accordance with the rules of procedure, items for inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly;

9. Adopts the Guidelines on the Rationalization of the Agenda of the General Assembly set forth in annex I to the present resolution, which shall be embodied as an annex to the rules of procedure of the Assembly;

10. Decides to replace paragraph 4 of the annex to its resolution 33/138 with the text contained in annex II to the present resolution concerning the pattern of election of the six Chairmen of the Main Committees;

11. Decides also that the arrangement concerning the pattern of election of the six Chairmen of the Main Committees shall take effect at its forty-ninth session;

12. Decides further to review the arrangement concerning the pattern of election of the six Chairmen of the Main Committees at its fifty-third session;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution after having ascertained the views and experience of the Presidents of the Assembly at its forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions;

14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly".

ANNEX I

Guidelines on the Rationalization of the Agenda of the General Assembly

1. The plenary meetings of the General Assembly should constitute a forum for high-level policy statements, as well as for the consideration, inter alia, of agenda items of special political importance and/or urgency.
2. Agenda items which are of a nature that relates to more than one Main Committee or which do not come within the purview of any Main Committee should be considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting, taking into account the recommendations of the General Committee.
3. Substantive items initially allocated directly to a plenary meeting of the General Assembly could be reviewed for allocation to a Main Committee in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Assembly, in particular with Assembly decision 34/401, which is reproduced in annex VI to the rules of procedure.
4. There shall be periodic reviews of the agenda, taking into account the views of concerned Member States, in order to ascertain whether it is possible to delete any item on which no resolution or decision has been adopted for a period of time.
5. The Main Committees should be encouraged to continue with the review of their respective agendas, taking into account, inter alia, the following:
 - (a) Agenda items concerning issues of closely related substance could be merged within a single agenda title or be incorporated as sub-items where this is possible without loss of focus on the items/sub-items concerned;
 - (b) Items that cover related matters or issues could be considered in agreed clusters;
 - (c) Biennialization and triennialization of items on the agenda of the Main Committees could be considered in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(d) The existing broad division of work among the Main Committees should be maintained.

ANNEX II

Text to replace paragraph 4 of the annex to resolution 33/138

4. The six Chairmen of the Main Committees shall be elected according to the following pattern:

- (a) One representative from an African State;
- (b) One representative from an Asian State;
- (c) One representative from an Eastern European State;
- (d) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
- (e) One representative from a Western European or other State;
- (f) The sixth chairmanship shall rotate over a period of twenty sessions according to the following pattern:
 - (i) One representative from an African State;
 - (ii) One representative from an Asian State;
 - (iii) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
 - (iv) One representative from an African State;
 - (v) One representative from an Asian State;
 - (vi) One representative from an African State;
 - (vii) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
 - (viii) One representative from an Asian State;
 - (ix) One representative from an African State;
 - (x) One representative from an Asian State;

- (xi) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
- (xii) One representative from an African State;
- (xiii) One representative from an Asian State;
- (xiv) One representative from an African State;
- (xv) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
- (xvi) One representative from an Asian State;
- (xvii) One representative from an African State;
- (xviii) One representative from an Asian State;
- (xix) One representative from a Latin American or Caribbean State;
- (xx) One representative from an African State.

23 January 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the Nomination of Facilitator for the process of Reform of the
General Assembly**

I have spoken of the need for reform of the General Assembly and its working methods on many occasions, including at the Forum of Small States on 15 November last year and most recently in an address I gave on 17 January to the Indonesian Council on World Affairs in Jakarta.

I have invited Member States to discuss the issue of how to improve the Assembly's working methods, focusing on the implementation of already existing GA resolutions such as 51/241 and 48/264.

In a meeting with the Chairs of the Regional Groups on 12 December, I indicated that I would nominate a facilitator to assist me in this process.

I am very pleased to nominate H.E. Sr. J. Gabriel Valdes, Permanent Representative of Chile, to act as facilitator.

I have invited Ambassador Valdes to assist me in organizing a 'brainstorming' meeting of the General Committee and in preparing a "non-paper" for discussion at the meeting.

Later, the issue will be discussed with the whole membership of the General Assembly and I have invited Ambassador Valdes to chair these meetings.

With the support and cooperation of Member States, I hope to achieve some concrete results during this session to make the General Assembly more effective.

23 December 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the conclusion of the first part of the 55th Session**

It has been a very busy three and half months for all of us and I believe we should be quite satisfied with the results achieved. The Assembly has taken action on many important issues. I do not intend to go through them all of them here. I will post a short summary on the work of the Committees and the plenary on my web page for this purpose.

For now, I would like to share some observations on the work done so far and thoughts on how we might want to go about the business next year.

The Millennium Summit was the seminal event of this General Assembly and laid the agenda for our work. The main challenge for the Millennium Assembly was how to implement the Summit Declaration.

In my view, the Declaration is one of the most important documents of recent time. If we are able to achieve its targets, it will have an enormous impact globally.

I am therefore very pleased that with the co-operation and support of all Delegations we managed to establish a follow-up mechanism to the Millennium Summit as an integral part of the on-going work of the United Nations in resolution 55/162.

It is also clear to me that in order to implement these goals the United Nations needs to open up. We need to enhance international co-operation, build bridges between societies and improve global governance. We need to reach out to other international and multilateral actors, such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and various regional organizations as well as civil society as a whole. As I have stressed many times, the significance and relevance of the United Nations in the future will depend on our ability to involve our partners and civil society in our work.

In the past few weeks two major items on the Assembly's agenda have dominated our discussions: what will the Assembly decide concerning the implementation of the Brahimi report and will it agree to a new scale of assessments.

As far as the Brahimi report is concerned, the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a high-level panel and the report presented by this panel was welcome and timely. The report is a valuable contribution to the efforts to strengthen one of the UN's core functions - the maintenance of international peace and security.

As the President of the General Assembly I encouraged the Assembly to consider this extensive report in a speedy manner and together with Member States we managed to reach agreement in the very short time of one month. Given the complexity of this issue and the time pressure, I think we can be quite satisfied with the results. Much-needed additional resources will be made available to the Secretariat. However, work will have to continue in the New Year and I trust that the political will is there to complete the effort.

During the past couple of weeks we had extremely difficult and complex negotiations on the scale of assessments. I made several appeals myself to Delegations to come up with a substantive negotiated agreement - by consensus - on the two scales of assessments. That a compromise was finally reached shows that Delegations put the interests of the Organization above everything else and understood the seriousness of the consequences to the Organization of a failure to reach consensus on this critical issue. I commend the Delegations for the outcome reached today.

Throughout this session an important concern of mine has been to find ways to improve the functioning of the General Assembly itself. I have tried to work in an open and transparent way with my colleagues and to foster a collaborative spirit. I have instituted some changes such as amending the rules to establish the dates for the opening of the Assembly's session each year. I am looking at ways to streamline the Assembly's huge agenda and I will be working on this and other proposals next year.

In order to guide this process and to give it some focus I intend to convene an informal 'brainstorming' session of the General Committee sometime in February. I will also prepare a non-paper in connection with the above-mentioned brainstorming session. I believe that several small steps can actually have a big impact together.

Looking ahead to next year, we will have a full calendar of meetings and conferences. For my part, I will keep the momentum going through the special sessions of the General Assembly on human settlements and HIV/AIDS and the other activities of the General Assembly. Concerning the special session on HIV/AIDS, my office and I, with the help of two able facilitators, will have a central role in the preparatory process. I will also chair two working groups that will start meeting next year: on Security Council reform and concerning Africa's special needs.

One observation that I have made during my tenure - having come to the UN from the outside - has to do with the resources of the Organization. The United Nations is clearly underfunded and in desperate need of more adequate resources. Years of zero-nominal growth have taken their toll. It is a policy that has clearly come to the end of its usefulness.

All in all, we have all worked hard and I am sure you are looking forward to a well-deserved break. Before we take that break, let me express a word of thanks. First of all I should like to thank all Ambassadors and delegates for their co-operation. Special thanks go to the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, as well as to the Chairpersons and bureaus of the Main Committees and working groups, not least to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal who chaired a historic

session of the Fifth Committee, for their valuable co-operation and leadership in bringing our work to conclusion. You have shown that the Millennium Summit has indeed created a Momentum and a new spirit of political will that will help us achieve the goals set in the Declaration. I trust that this kind of consensus building and teamwork will help us resolve the challenges ahead.

I should also like to extend my thanks to the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan and to the Secretariat as a whole. In particular, I wish to thank the hard-working staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services under the able leadership of Under-Secretary-General Yongjian Jin. Special thanks go to the teams of Mr. Vadim Perfiliev and Mr. Özdinch Mustafa, as well as to our interpreters, conference room officers and documentation officers. Without them, our meetings would not have been possible. My team and I are deeply grateful to all of them.

Finally, I wish to thank the media, which has followed our agenda this session. Through them, I hope, we have been able to convey a more open and more easily understandable picture of the work of the General Assembly to the general public.

I would like to wish you a very happy holiday and I look forward to working with you in the New Year.

12 December 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of December**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of December: Madagascar (African States), Mongolia (Asian States), Ukraine (Eastern European States), Chile (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Andorra (Western European and other States).

The President stressed that although some important issues are still pending the 55th session of the General Assembly has been successful and several substantive results have been achieved.

The President reminded that he has taken up the question of the reform of the Assembly and its working methods in many occasions and statements, including at the Forum of Small States on November 15, 2000. He encouraged to visit his web site where all statements can be found.

He repeated his invitation to the Member States to discuss the issue on how to improve the Assembly working methods, focusing on the implementation of already existing General Assembly resolutions, such as resolutions 51/241 and 48/264.

The President told that he intends to convene an informal 'brainstorming' session of the General Committee to discuss how to improve the working methods of the General Assembly sometime in February 2001. The President will take it upon himself to prepare a non-paper (food for thought) sometime in the year 2001, in connection with the above mentioned brainstorming session of the General Committee. The President welcomes suggestions and ideas already beforehand, in order to have an idea where the priorities of the Member States lie on this issue.

The President intends to nominate a facilitator to assist him in the process and the issue will be discussed with the whole membership, most probably in the informals of the plenary.

22 November 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees**

I would like to begin by thanking you all for attending this luncheon. It is our last lunch in this framework and I for my part would like to express my appreciation and thanks for the tireless work you all have done during this session.

I would also like to thank you for the co-operation that you have extended to my office and me so far. It has been crucial for us in order to be able to follow the work of the committees.

As I have said before, I have sensed a kind of team spirit throughout the session and I am very grateful for that.

Let me now run briefly through some of the current issues on my working programme:

1. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

As you are aware the follow-up process is on its way. Yesterday we had another good round of discussions based on my elements paper.

I am now preparing a draft resolution to be circulated to the membership in the near future.

I should also like to thank you and through you the Committees for acting upon my request reflect the Millennium Declaration in the work of the Committees.

2. BRAHIMI REPORT

As I have mentioned many times, the Summit called for expeditious consideration of the report's recommendations.

The consideration has been complex and difficult. But it is my understanding that the political will and momentum is there and that progress to reach concrete results has been made.

- I would appreciate if the Vice-Chairperson of the 4th Committee would brief us on this issue.
- I would also like to invite the Chairs of the 5th Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) to brief us on the consideration of the Brahimi report and the implementation report on their side, including the timetable.

3. REFORM OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Last time we briefly discussed the reform of the GA. I would like to inform that I have consulted Member States and there is an eagerness to take further steps.

- I have urged member states to discuss this issue and come up with ideas and suggestions.
- I should also like to note that a statement I made at the Forum of Small States (Nov. 15) on this issue is available on my web site.

4. OUTREACH

As part of my outreach efforts I participated in the General Assembly of CONGO (the coalition of non-governmental organizations in liaison with the United Nations). The Assembly was held in Vienna, where I also met with the Director General of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and representatives of the host government, Austria.

I also visited Washington, D.C. for meetings at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I have understood that I was the first GA President ever to visit these institutions in their headquarters. Both visits were positive. In IMF I could, in particular, advance the cause of the Financing for Development process, and hopefully improve the prospects of IMF's full participation in it. I also had the opportunity of introducing the Millennium Summit follow-up process to the management of both institutions. I may inform you that I will participate in the opening of the Fourth Session of the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, which will be held in Bonn, starting the 11th of December.

5. RIO+10

Of issues which have taken place here in New York, may I mention that we still have the Rio + 10 host issue unsolved. I have therefore made a mediating proposal to Indonesia and South Africa and also liaised with the regional groups of Africa and Asia, as it is these groups, which ultimately must also consider my proposal. I am optimistic and hope to solve this issue before the end of the month.

6. HIV/AIDS SPECIAL SESSION

Preparations of a non-paper on organizational matters and on the form of non-governmental organization (NGO) participation are going on. The first informal consultations of the plenary are foreseen for 15 December 2000 so as to allow delegations the Christmas break to study the proposals. I intend to announce the two co-facilitators no later than the first week of December. We will also distribute the non-paper on organizational matters and on NGO participation at that time.

7. UNITED NATIONS INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON THE OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (UNICPOLOS)

On the Oceans and the Law of the Sea Informal Process, my office has conducted consultations on the selection of the two co-chairs. I expect to be able to announce the results of these consultations soon.

Now, I'd like to run through the Main Committees one by one. May I once again thank all Chairs for their good work.

1st COMMITTEE

1st Committee has successfully finished its work and we have taken action on the reports of the Committee in the Plenary last Monday.

If there are some points you might want to raise or information you might want to share or lessons learnt at this stage, I invite you to do so.

2nd COMMITTEE

I understand there are delays, which might prevent the Committee from completing its work by December 1st.

I am raising this issue, because there are Member States that have asked me to intervene to expedite matters.

I would invite the Chair of the Committee to brief us on the situation, and give an estimate on the completion of the Committee's work.

This being said, I do understand that there are many difficult issues on the table, not alone Rio+10, but also Financing for Development.

On the latter issue, I have understood that the dates of the final event are being changed to the first quarter of 2002. Still, yesterday the discussions on the resolution were going on.

3rd COMMITTEE

In my count, there were a total of 67 resolutions, 14 of them without a vote. This is a slight decrease as compared with last year.

I would like to welcome an analysis on this session of the Committee from the chair.

4th COMMITTEE

The Committee has practically taken finished its work, except for the consideration of the report it is expecting from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping. I have already invited the Vice Chairperson to brief us on this.

5th COMMITTEE

I have just received a letter from the Committee requesting an extension of its work until 20 December. While I am fully aware of the complexities of the Fifth Committee's work, it might be better to try to finish somewhat earlier, for example by 15 December. This would still allow for some "wiggle room" should things become deadlocked.

I am also somewhat concerned about the lack of results so far in the Committee's work, be it on small or on big issues. I understand the Committee has met for long hours in an informal setting on issues such as procurement reform and pattern of conferences, and that the debate has repeated itself.

I would appreciate the Chairman's appraisal as to when Resolutions on pending issues are expected.

6TH COMMITTEE

I understand that the 6th Committee will be probably finishing its work today, but I would like to invite the chair to brief us on this.

21 November 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for
the month of November**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of November: Mauritania (African States), Kyrgyzstan (Asian States), Slovenia (Eastern European States), Brazil (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Germany (Western European and other States).

1. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP

The President noted that the follow-up process for the Millennium Summit is on its way and this afternoon there will be another round of consultations on the basis of his elements paper (A/55/CRP.1).

He also informed the Chairpersons that his office had a meeting on November 10 with coordinators of next year's high-level meetings in order to discuss how best to use these events in the implementation of the Millennium Summit outcome. The meeting proved to be very useful, as the need for co-ordination is evident. It was also noted that a short note on this meeting is posted on President's website.

2. BRAHIMI REPORT

The President reminded that the Millennium Summit called for expeditious consideration of the Report's recommendations. He added that although the consideration has been fairly complex and difficult, it is his understanding that the political will and momentum is there and should be used to reach concrete results.

The President noted that the report is a valuable contribution to the efforts of strengthening the United Nations in one of its core functions; that is, in the maintenance of international peace and security. He added that it is important to maintain the discussion at a high political level and bring the matter back to the General Assembly for decisions.

3. REFORM OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Many decisions have been taken over the years to improve the work of the General Assembly. The President noted that as the President of the General Assembly, that obviously is of great

importance to him. He added that the real challenge is how to implement these decisions so as to make the General Assembly more focused in its work.

The President noted that he has already started with small practical steps, such as punctuality and the recent decision on the starting date of the General Assembly session. He added that he has consulted Member States and there is an eagerness to take further steps. The President has urged Member States to discuss this issue and come up with ideas and suggestions. He noted that he is willing to provide leadership, but that he will need the initiative and support of Member States. It was also noted that a statement made by the President at the Forum of Small States on 15 November on this issue is available on his website.

4. APPOINTMENTS

4.1 Open-Ended Working Group on Africa and Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

The President told that he is still consulting Member States on the appointment of the two vice-chairmen to these open-ended working groups. His intention is to make the formal announcements no later than early December.

4.2 Oceans and the Law of the Sea; Informal Consultative Process (agenda item 34.a.)

Extensive consultations have been carried out, and will continue until the end of this month with regard to the two co-chairs of the Informal Consultative Process on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS).

So far, there has been wide support for the two current chairs to continue; however, some reservations have been expressed about one of them. Announcement on the results of these consultations is expected not later than 1st week of December.

4.3. Consultative Committee on United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (agenda item 17.i.)

There is still one regional group (Asia), which has not nominated its candidate.

The others are: Africa: Namibia, Eastern Europe: Croatia, GRULAC: Jamaica (nomination received after last meeting with regional chairs), WEOG: The Netherlands.

It was noted that the missing nomination should be done expeditiously so that this item can be scheduled for consideration.

5. HIV/AIDS SPECIAL SESSION (Agenda item 179)

Regarding the special session it was noted that a "Non-paper road-map" on the tentative schedule of the preparatory process was distributed to all delegations on 9 November 2000. The first internal planning meeting of all concerned secretariats (UNAIDS and its co-sponsoring organizations, General Assembly Presidency and Secretariat) was held on Monday, 20 November 2000.

Consultations on the selection of the two co-facilitators have been carried out; an announcement on that issue is expected no later than the first week of December. Otherwise work progresses according to the "road-map".

It was further noted that the first general briefing on the HIV/AIDS special session by the President is expected on 15 December 2000 (Friday), from 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.; non-papers on organizational matters and on the format of Non-Governmental Organizations participation will be distributed to delegations; informal discussions on these non-papers are expected to start in mid-January 2001.

6. OUTREACH

The President stressed that as indicated in his acceptance speech, one of the goals of this Presidency of the General Assembly is to reach out to other stakeholders of development.

6.1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

He noted that he participated as the first General Assembly President in the General Assembly of CONGO (Coalition of NGOs with accreditation to the United Nations), which was held in Vienna on 6 November 2000.

6.2. Bretton Woods Institutions

Last week (14 November 2000), the President visited Washington D.C. This was the first time that the General Assembly President has visited the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The visit must be seen as part of outreach and partnership building. In development, and in particular development financing, the Bretton Woods Institutions are essential partners. Now, the United Nations should ponder how to recognize this partnership in a more visible way.

In the World Bank, the President met briefly with the Board of Directors, and the Millennium Summit was discussed. He noted that there was good interest among the Board members in the United Nations issues.

In the World Bank, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was much in focus. It may be mentioned that one of the two Managing Directors of the World Bank will participate on 13 December 2000 in an informal panel dialogue of the General Assembly Plenary meeting on

"ICT in Development". The President will chair the panel, which is organized in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Secretariat and the President of ECOSOC.

In International Monetary Fund (IMF), its participation in the Financing for Development process was the particular focus. The President told that he had held discussions with Mr. Köhler and senior members of his management. The visit was welcomed by IMF and there are hopes for more active participation of IMF to the Financing For Development in the future.

6.3. Conventions

The President also noted that he will open the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Desertification convention in Bonn on 11 December 2000.

7. RIO+10

The issue of the Rio+10 Summit's host (venue) has not yet been solved. The President told that he has consulted various parties and urged the regional groups concerned to find a solution.

Further consultations with regional groups (chairs) and the concerned parties will be carried out soon, to find a suitable solution. It would still be preferable if the G-77, in particular the African and Asian groups could find a solution. The President added that he has also been in contact with the G-77 Chairman on this.

For the sake of the preparatory process, the venue needs to be decided upon during this session of the General Assembly.

15 November 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Forum of Small States (FOSS) The Role of the General
Assembly President In reforming and revitalizing the United Nations**

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Forum of Small States today. Coming from a relatively small state myself I can well understand the rationale for this Forum in the United Nations context. It is also fitting that I should discuss the revitalization and reform of the UN with this group of countries, given that it is many times the smaller delegations that bear the larger burden if things do not function effectively.

Throughout my Presidency I have emphasized that the Millennium Summit provided a momentum for the strengthening of the United Nations. It generated a high measure of collective political will in support of the central role of the United Nations to tackle the new challenges of the 21st Century. The Millennium Declaration constitutes an authoritative mandate for our work and for my Presidency. The Declaration reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. Furthermore, at the Summit the Member States resolved to enable the General Assembly to play this role effectively. It is in this context that I would like to share with you some thoughts on how I see the role of the President in revitalizing and reforming the United Nations with particular attention to the work of the General Assembly.

In my acceptance speech I stressed that in order to add value and make a difference, the General Assembly must address, in a focused, meaningful and timely manner, the challenges of rapid change and globalisation. In doing so, it must respond to the current priorities of its Member States. This requires courage, by the Member States, to look back at the original legislative intent of the General Assembly. But it will require more than courage to decide on how this could be best reflected in the practical work of the Organisation today. This will need political will and compromises by all parties. Unless Member States accept that to achieve the so-called common good they need to let go some of their own individual priorities, nothing will move.

In my discussions with Member States and in listening to the statements made so far, I sense that there is a renewed acknowledgement that we need to reinforce our efforts and equip the Organisation with appropriate tools to achieve the goals we have set.

I have from my part tried to give some impetus to this process in my earlier statements. On my web page I have posted a lay out on 'progress so far in the reform of the work of the General Assembly'.

When one goes through the work done so far, it is striking how many decisions have been already taken by the General Assembly to improve the work of the Assembly and that of its main Committees. The real challenge for the Member States is in implementing these decisions.

My office and I have discussed with several delegations the effectiveness of the work of the GA on many occasions. During these discussions some new ideas have been expressed on how the implementation of these decisions could start.

Many have stressed that despite some successes in the rationalization and streamlining of the agenda, the General Assembly has not achieved a reduction of its overall workload. The fact remains that the total number of items on the agenda increased from 164 at the forty-ninth session to 183 at the present session. Furthermore, the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly has increased, from 328 at the forty-ninth session to 341 at the fifty-fourth session.

I am pleased to note that work has already been undertaken by the Main Committees to review their respective agendas, and this should continue. Some have suggested that we should focus now on the review of the agenda of the General Assembly. If the Assembly and the Main Committees are to take further steps to rationalize and streamline their agenda, it has been suggested by many that greater use of clustering, biennialization or triennialization of agenda items should be made. Agenda items of closely related substance could be merged within a single agenda title or be incorporated as sub-items. Items that cover related matters or issues could be considered in clusters.

Furthermore, it has been proposed that to rationalize the agenda we could try to apply a system similar to that of the Security Council, that is 'active and non-active' agenda items. The practice has shown in the Security Council that some items can, indeed, be removed from the agenda through this system (refer S/1996/603* and S/1996/704, latest note A/55/366).

Many have pointed out that the division of labour between the Plenary and the Main Committees has been blurred. Whilst the Plenary should be the place where issues of high importance are debated in the presence of all Member States, it is in fact often discussing issues of a routine character, often with only a half full audience. Surely, this is not what was foreseen as the role of the Plenary.

One of the important issues is the continuity of the work of the General Assembly. Some delegations have suggested a form of 'GA troika' with the present, previous and next Presidents of the General Assembly, or at least representatives of those States from which the President came/comes/would come, to be involved in major issues of reform and of planning the work of the General Assembly. Another suggestion that has been made to the same effect is to arrange joint meetings of successive General Committees.

How to move ahead? It has been suggested that the General Committee could be used as a 'business committee' to oversee the smooth and effective functioning of the General Assembly. This of course is an idea that the Member States need to consider and discuss. I intend to call an

informal 'brain storming' session of the General Committee to discuss this idea with the Committee members.

The experience of the round tables at the Summit has inspired some to suggest that maybe we should make the annual general debate more interactive and focus on issues of particular importance each year rather than cover the whole of the global agenda.

My own experience in life is that it is often the practical and small things which count and ultimately add up to a change in any process. One such small step that I have introduced is to always start the plenary meetings of the Assembly on time. Another small step that I have introduced was the amendment to the Rules of Procedure to allow for certainty as far as the closing and opening dates of the main sessions of the General Assembly are concerned.

So now you might ask, what is the role of the President in this process? As I have said, I see the role of the President, as one of a facilitator, conciliator and consensus-builder. He must lead, but without the Membership on board, that leadership will fail. In the reform and revitalization of the General Assembly this is of utmost importance. It is for this very reason that I have 'thrown the ball' to you as the Member States and I have urged you to engage in discussions to implement decisions taken and make new initiatives to further the reform.

I will in turn be very happy to support and implement initiatives emerging from discussions amongst Member States. It is my firm belief that reform of the United Nations is not an option, but a necessity.

Improving the efficiency of the General Assembly

The President wishes to draw attention to the following decisions already taken by the General Assembly to improve its work and that of its main Committees, as contained in resolutions 51/241 plus Annex of 22 August 1997 and resolution 48/264 plus Annex of 29 July 1994.

Agenda:

· Despite some successes in the rationalization and streamlining of its agenda, the General Assembly has not achieved a reduction of its overall workload. The total number of items on the agenda increased from 164 at the forty-ninth session to 179 at the beginning of the present session.

· The number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly has increased, from 328 at the forty-ninth session to 341 at the fifty-fourth session.

· Work has already been undertaken by the Main Committees to review their respective agendas, and this should continue.

The General Assembly should take further steps to rationalize and streamline its agenda and in particular should make greater use of clustering, biennialization or triennialization of agenda items. (see the Annex to resolution 51/241)

There should be periodic reviews of the agenda in order to ascertain whether it is possible to delete any item on which no action has been taken for a period of time. (see the Annex to resolution 48/264)

The Main Committees are encouraged to continue with the review of their respective agendas, taking into account the following:

(a) Agenda items concerning issues of closely related substance could be merged within a single agenda title or be incorporated as sub-items where this is possible without loss of focus on the items/sub-items concerned;

(b) Items that cover related matters or issues could be considered in clusters;

(c) Biennialization and triennialization of items on the agenda of the Main Committees could be considered in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(d) The existing broad division of work among the Main Committees should be maintained.

Reports:

· Although the number of reports requested of the Secretary-General has decreased slightly, from 283 at the forty-ninth session to 272 at the fifty-fourth session five years later, work must continue to streamline the reports and rationalize their issuance.

The number of reports requested should be rationalized where possible to permit more focused consideration of issues, bearing in mind the desirability of reducing the number of reports. All bodies shall exercise restraint in making requests for new reports and should consider integrating, biennializing or triennializing the presentation of reports. (see resolutions 51/241 and 48/264 and their Annexes)

Reports should be made available in all official languages in a timely manner in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly so delegations can consider the substance of the reports more thoroughly in advance of meetings. (see resolution 48/264)

Secretariat

For the Secretariat to operate efficiently in fulfilling mandates, micromanagement of the Secretariat by the General Assembly should be avoided. (see Annex of resolution 51/241)