

11 October 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,  
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,  
on the occasion of International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction**

Nearly every day we learn through the media of natural calamities taking place in various corners of the world. Extreme natural events can cause severe setbacks to the development of entire nations, and have ramifications not only for their economic and social life, but also irreversibly on their environment.

That is why, on this International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, I want to congratulate the United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, for their valuable work and for launching in August this year the United Nations 2000 World Disaster Reduction Campaign.

The focus of this Campaign on disaster prevention, education and youth, is a very timely and far-sighted one. Youth beholds our future, and by promoting the culture of prevention among youth, through education and advocacy, we are investing in our future.

There is mounting scientific evidence that the frequency and severity of various natural disasters have increased during the last couple of decades. Therefore, we need better preparedness in all communities to reduce economic and human losses. I wish to acknowledge the work of the United Nations in advocating the need for better prevention against natural disasters and for educating decision-makers and communities.

Our common goal, is to prevent natural hazards - natural phenomenon we cannot prevent - from becoming natural disasters. In this work youth, indeed, represent allies for our future.