

31 October 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,  
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,  
regarding the discussion of the General Assembly  
on the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development  
and of the special session of the General Assembly in this regard**

Last summer we completed the 5-year review of the World Summit for Social Development. The Political Declaration and the 5-year review document of the Special session of the General Assembly underline the need to focus our attention and efforts to achieve more equitable, socially just and people-centred societies.

There are about forty substantial initiatives or new international agreements for action in the Declaration. One of the most important ones is the call for a rigorous analysis of advantages, disadvantages and other implications of proposals for developing new and innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for social development and poverty eradication programmes. A study into the new sources of revenue, including a currency transaction tax, Tobin tax, and others alike, might lead the way to better or more effective global public management of the international financial system. In the decisions made by the 5-year review of the World Summit for Social Development, there was a strong call for a need to reduce the volatility of international finances and of managing the crises better, to protect the social services during crises. This topic may also be further elaborated in the forthcoming Financing for Development event next year.

Another initiative called for all United Nations agencies to integrate health policies more effectively into their programmes, including action through trade agreements and increased incentives for research to improve access of developing countries to affordable and effective pharmaceuticals, as well as action to strengthen workers rights and social protection of the most vulnerable of our society. There was an agreement to the target of access to basic education for all by 2015 and an agreement on the importance of positive and affirmative action to achieve gender equality. The concept of corporate social responsibility was added to the international agenda for the first time in the 5-year review of the World Social Summit, last summer.

Furthermore, there was an agreement on the global target for poverty reduction, of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. There are about 1.2 billion people among us today living with less than a dollar a day. A decision to start a more integrated global campaign to reduce poverty was taken. Subsequently, preparations for an international employment strategy, with ILO in the lead, are being undertaken, with plans to hold a global employment forum next year.

My short introductory note to this agenda item cannot encompass the entirety of the debate and all the results of the special session. I may only say that in the follow-up to the 5-year review,

there are urgent actions to be undertaken for all constituencies of our society, at international, regional and national levels, and to all players of the society, including the governments and the civil society actors.

Finally, I would like to quote from the Political Declaration of Geneva, "At the dawn of the new millennium, aware of our responsibilities towards future generations, we are strongly committed to social development, including social justice for all in a globalising world. We invite all people in all countries and in all walks of life, as well as the international community, to join in a renewed dedication to our shared vision for a more just and equitable world".

May these words guide our debate today.