

12 December 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the Appointments to Co-chairpersons of the Second
United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process and the
Law of the Sea Meeting**

Before we take up the items on the agenda for this morning, I should like to make an announcement concerning the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process and the Law of the Sea.

Members will recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 54/33 of 17 November 1999, decided to establish an open-ended informal consultative process, in order to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly of developments in ocean affairs by considering the Secretary-General's report on oceans and the law of the sea. It also decided that the meetings of this process would be coordinated by two co-chairpersons, who would be appointed by the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States and taking into account the need for representation from developed and developing countries.

In this regard, the first meeting of the Consultative Process was held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 May to 2 June 2000. The meeting was co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, His Excellency, Ambassador Tuiloma Slade, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom, appointed by my predecessor.

Members will further recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 55/10 of 30 October 2000, requests the Secretary-General to convene the second meeting of the Consultative Process, to be held in New York from 7 to 11 May 2001.

With regard to the co-chairpersonships of the second meeting of the Consultative Process next year, I have conducted extensive consultations, both through the chairs of regional groups and through a significant number of individual delegations, representing all regions. During these consultations wide support was expressed for the co-chairpersons of the first meeting of the Consultative Process. Both of them were highly praised for their excellence as mediators and consensus builders.

It is, therefore, my great pleasure to announce my decision to re-appoint His Excellency, Ambassador Tuiloma Slade of Samoa, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom, as the two co-chairpersons of the second meeting of the Consultative Process.

However, some Member States also expressed the view that there may be a need to consider rotating the co-chairpersonship of this process. Thus, I should like to urge interested Member States to consider the issue of rotation as early as possible and submit distinct nominations, through the appropriate channels, in regard of the co-chairpersons of the third meeting of the Consultative Process.