

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.