

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.