

29 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Meeting between the Office of the President of the General
Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month
of May**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of May: Namibia (African States), Philippines (Asian States), Belarus (Eastern European States), Ecuador (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Denmark (Western European and other States).

Habitat + 5 Special Session

The President began the meeting by introducing the Chairperson of the prepcom of Habitat + 5, Ambassador Garcia-Duran, Ambassador of Colombia to Nairobi and Permanent Representative of Colombia to UNEP and Habitat.

It was noted that Ambassador Duran will brief the regional groups on

- 1) state of the art of preparing for the special session
- 2) on the suggested informals next week.

The President referred to his letter of 17 May 2001 and its enclosure, the letter of Ambassador Duran with suggestions on, how to complete the preparations for the special session.

HIV/AIDS special session

Round tables:

The President noted that he has met with the chairmen of regional groups since January on the issue of the special session on HIV/AIDS. The President further noted that the round tables, which will be organized during the special session, are of particular concern to him and to the Chairpersons as well.

According to resolution 55/242 the regional chairs are responsible for informing me on the nomination of

- 1) chairs of the round tables
- 2) distribution of members of their respective groups to the four round tables of the special session.

The President summed up that he has received nominations for the chairs of round tables:

- 1) Brazil (Treatment and Care of HIV/AIDS) (Head of State)

- 2) Poland (Human Rights & HIV/AIDS) (Minister)
- 3) Malaysia (Socio-economic Impact of HIV/AIDS) (Minister)
- 4) Tanzania (Resources) (Head of State)

The President noted that in his earlier meetings with regional chairs of the preceding months, he has indicated that he should like to receive the list of member states per round table from each respective group by the end of this month.

He stressed that receiving this information is necessary for being able to plan for the allocation the rest of the seats in each of the round tables to other than member states of major regional groups, namely Estonia, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Palau, and Observers (Switzerland, Holy See, Palestine), entities with a standing invitation to observe the work of General Assembly (pls. refer to A/INF/55/6), United Nations organizations, and the civil society actors (NGOs, people living with AIDS, and private sector pls. refer to 55/13 and 55/242).

Total number of seats, according to 55/242, is 65/table, minimum of member states 48 and maximum 54, leaving from 11 to 17 seats per table for others than member states - distribution of seats between the regional groups indicated in resolution 55/242:

Africa: 14 member states
 Asia: 14 member states
 Easter Europe: 6 member states
 Latin America & Caribbean states: 9 member states
 Wester Europe & Other states: 8 members

These limits should be observed. It is imperative to have this information.

Lists of civil society actors for round tables and speakers in the plenary (pls see. 55/242):

It was noted that the substantive office, UNAIDS, has been requested to provide us with the list of civil society actors who would participate in the round tables and who are suggested to speak in the plenary. These lists will be submitted to the member states for their consideration as soon as we have them (in accordance with 55/242).

Negotiations on declaration of commitment:

The President noted that negotiations are going on, and the efforts by everyone are appreciated. He went on to express his hope to conclude them by the end of this week.

Revitalization of the General Assembly; Improving the working methods of the Assembly

The President noted that discussions on May 16 and 17 had been very good and constructive. In his opinion this shows that there is willingness to move forward in this process.

There was an overall support to the approach taken in the non-paper and the support for the urgent implementation of existing resolutions in particular 51/241. Due note of all comments and suggestions was taken.

The President mentioned that he continues consultations together with Ambassador Valdes.

The President then asked for co-operation from Member States in order to facilitate their task in the following manner:

Concerning the streamlining the agenda he invited Member States to take another look at the Plenary agenda and come forward in the coming days with possible suggestions to him and Ambassador Valdes on where we could make progress in this regard.

The President asked in particular the main sponsors, be they countries or groups of countries, to indicate whether any of those items that had been listed in the non-paper for possible biennialization or triennialization or clustering could be considered in this context. He further asked whether there are some other items that could be considered in this regard.

Once again the President assured Member States through the Chairpersons that he will continue to work in full transparency and openness in order to keep the whole membership involved.