

11 July 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 July**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of July: Rwanda (African States), Qatar (Asian States), Bulgaria (Eastern European States), Grenada (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Finland (Western European and other States). Representative of the Republic of Korea also attended the meeting.

**1. DEMISE OF H.E. MR HUMAYUN RASHEED CHOUDHURY**

The President commenced the meeting on a sad note. The President noted that last night his Office was informed by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh of the demise, earlier yesterday in Dhaka, of H.E. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament. He was seventy-two. Mr. Choudhury served as the Foreign Minister of his country from 1985 to 1988. He was also the President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-first session (1986-1987). The passing away of H.E. Mr. Choudhury will be observed at the beginning of tomorrow morning's plenary meeting. It was noted that in that connection, in line with past practice, regional groups as well as the host country are invited to make short statements.

**2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN**

The President informed the Chairpersons that negotiations on the outcome document "A world fit for children" have made a lot of progress. Two-thirds of the text has been approved. Negotiations will resume during the last week of August with a view to finalizing the document. The President thanked the Chairpersons for this constructive atmosphere and appealed to the Delegations to continue in this spirit, in the best interest of children.

It was further noted that the speaking lots have been distributed by the drawing of lots last month. Any changes will have to be made through voluntary arrangements between Member States. Following the decision taken by Member States at the second substantive session in January 2001, we are still going to distribute two speaking lots per each plenary meeting, with the exception of the first and last ones, for participants other than Member States, the Holy See, Switzerland and Palestine, provided that those participants are represented at the highest level.

Organizational arrangements for round tables will require an active role from the regional groups. The President told that he has already drawn attention to various details in my letter of 3 of July to the regional chairs. There will be three roundtables. Each roundtable will have two co-chairs. One co-chair shall be the head of the country of the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The other five co-chairs shall be chosen by the regional groups. The President reminded that he invited in his letter the regional chairs to consider expeditiously, within their respective groups, the selection of these five co-chairs in order to meet the July 31 deadline.

The General Assembly resolution from last month also requested the regional groups to determine which of its members will participate in each round table, following the geographical representation decided by the resolution. The President noted that he trusts the Chairpersons to start consultations early on also in this regard, taking into account the fact that during the month of August, many Delegations will be harder to reach than normal.

The President then drew the attention to the fact that the President of the General Assembly has been requested to select, in consultation with the co-chairpersons of round tables and Member States, two child delegates for each round table, by 31 August.

Any further consultations, if needed, shall be carried out by the Bureau under Ambassador Durrant. The President noted that she has his full support.

### **3. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA**

The President briefly reminded Chairpersons on the consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea. Its second official meeting was held in May. The report of the meeting A/55/121 includes a number of proposals for the consideration of the General Assembly during the 56th session. In this regard, the President said that he wishes that the regional chairs could start, as early as possible, informal consultations to consider the co-chairmanship of the process, also in the light of the availability of the current co-chairs, Ambassador Slade and Mr. Simcock.

### **4. REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

The President noted that as the Chairpersons are aware, he has conducted, together with Ambassador J. Gabriel Valdés of Chile, further consultations with Member States, as a follow up to the informals of the plenary on May 16 and 17.

It was further noted that in the meantime the President has circulated a new non-paper (dated June 15) to encourage discussions and consultations amongst Member States.

The consultations will continue and the next round of plenary informals will be held on July 26.

The President asked once again - through the Chairpersons - cooperation of all Member States in order to bring the process forward so that results can be achieved before the conclusion of this Session.

## **5. AFRICA WORKING GROUP**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa will be held from 30 July to August 3, 2001.

Many delegations have brought up the need to review the effectiveness of the working group as a tool to monitor the Secretary-General's recommendations, given the experience gained during the last two years in the working group, and to look for possible alternative ways to carry out the monitoring.

The President noted that he believes that the Working Group, in addition to preparing its report to the GA, needs to take sufficient time to review its experiences and to look at possible other options on how to continue the monitoring.

This implies that in the July session no new issues will be taken in for consideration as was previously foreseen in the programme of work.

The President noted that he will be sending a letter and a note prepared by the Bureau on this issue in the coming days to Member States.

## **6. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM**

It was noted that the next substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group will be held next week (July 16 to 20). An announcement of the working schedule is already in the Journal.

The Bureau has prepared CRPs in view of preparing the report of the WG. These CRPs should be in the pigeonholes tomorrow.

The President concluded by saying that he is looking forward to active participation by Member States.