

15 August 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 August**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of August: Sierra Leone (African States), Republic of Korea (Asian States), Croatia (Eastern European States), Guatemala (Latin American and Caribbean States) and France (Western European and other States).

UNGASS ON CHILDREN, 19-21 SEPTEMBER

1. Arrangements for Round Tables

It was noted that according to the resolution 55/276, adopted in the end of June, the special session on children would include three interactive round table sessions, one on each day of the special session.

All the round table sessions will have the same overarching theme for discussion "Renewal of commitment and future action for children in the next decade".

Co-chairs

According to the resolution each roundtable will have two co-chairpersons, who were to be Heads of State or Government. One of the co-chairpersons was to be the Head of State of the country of the President of the 56th General Assembly, namely President of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Kim Dae-jung, who would co-chair roundtable 3. The other five co-chairs were to be selected by the regional groups by 31 July.

It was noted that the President of the General Assembly has received by 15 August notifications from regional groups on endorsed co-chairpersons as follows:

African States: H.E. Mr. Frederick Chiluba, President of Zambia

Asian States: H.E. Mr. Nambar Enkhbayar, Prime Minister of Mongolia

Eastern European States: H.E. Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

Latin Am. and Caribbean States: H.E. Mr. Alfonso Portillo, President of the Republic of Guatemala

Western European and Other States: H.E. Mr. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada

The President proposed the following pairing of co-chairpersons, based on the consultations and preferences expressed:

Round table 1, Wednesday, 19 September, from 3 pm to 6.30 pm
Mongolia and Romania

Round table 2, Thursday, 20 September, from 9.30 am to 1 pm
Canada and Guatemala

Round table 3, Friday, 21 September, from 9.30 am to 1 pm
Republic of Korea and Zambia

It was noted that some consultations are still needed towards a final decision, agreeable to all.

Participants in the roundtables

Resolution 55/276 determines the maximum number of Member States from each regional group as follows: African States (18 participants), Asian States (18 participants), Eastern European States (8 participants), Latin American and Caribbean States (12 participants), Western European and other States (10 participants).

The regional groups were asked to urgently indicate the allocation of participants in each round table.

All regional groups should submit their regional allocation of participants to the round tables as soon as possible and preferably by 27 August. This is important so that allocation of other participants, as decided by resolution 276, may be determined without delay.

It was informed that the President will also contact and inform Member States that are not members of any regional group on their participation.

Representatives of children

According to resolution 55/276 two children may participate in each round table to give an introductory statement. The President of the General Assembly was requested to select these child delegates, in consultation with the co-chairpersons of the round tables and with the Member States, by 31 August.

The President and the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee is suggesting the following general criteria for nomination of child delegates:

- regional representation/languages;
- gender balance;
- under the age of 18 (balance within this age group, e.g. 11-14/15-17);
- nominee should have been actively involved, or participated in the preparatory process at national and/or regional/international level;
- nominee may have experience or expertise on one of the topics of the special session;
- it would be an advantage, if a nominee has previously demonstrated some confidence to address a formal meeting and a large audience.

It was noted that the President will in accordance with the resolution (op 8) choose two child delegates for each round table, all together six children, in consultation with co-chairs and Member States.

To facilitate the process of selection the President would like to invite each regional group to propose to the President of the General Assembly by Monday, August 27

- up to three child delegates, including at least one boy and one girl, and taking into account the above criteria.

This is important to enable the President to circulate by 31 August a list of six children to Member States.

2. Participation of NGOs in the plenary of the special session

At its second substantive session, in January 2001, the Preparatory Committee recommended (A/S-27/2, chapter VI, section A) that, given availability of time, a limited number of representatives of NGOs accredited to the special session may make statements in the debate of the plenary of the special session. The President of the General Assembly was requested to present the list of selected NGOs to the Member States in a timely manner for approval. The President of the General Assembly was requested to ensure that such selection is made on an equal and transparent basis, taking into account the geographical representation and diversity of NGOs.

It was noted that the President will circulate a proposal on representatives of NGOs shortly.

3. Speaking slots for participants other than Member States, the Holy See, Switzerland and Palestine

Furthermore, at the same session, the Preparatory Committee recommended upon the organizational arrangements for the special session (A/S-27-2, chapter VI, section B, draft decision II). It was decided that the last two speaking slots at each plenary meeting, with the exception of the first and last ones, were to be reserved for participants other than Member States, the Holy See, Switzerland and Palestine, provided that they are represented at the highest level.

The President will come back on this issue later.

4. Presentation of the outcome of the Children's Forum at the special session

At the second substantive session last June, the Prep Com recommended (A/S-27/2/Add.1, Chapter VII, sect B) that at least two child delegates to the Children's Forum will present the outcome of the Forum to the special session. The Children's Forum will take place from 16 to 18 September. According to the decision of the Preparatory Committee, these child delegates will be identified by the children's Forum, in consultation with the President of the 56th General Assembly, namely the Republic of Korea, and Member States.

Participants were kindly asked to note the upcoming briefings:

22 August Security briefing (tentative)

28 August General briefing