

28 October 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemoration Ceremony for Major-General Joseph Nanven
Garba**

Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to open this ceremony to commemorate the memory of a former colleague, Major-General Joseph Nanven Garba, who presided over the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly from 1989 to 1990. The distinguished list of speakers at this ceremony is a demonstration of tribute to his memory. Though I did not have the pleasure to know him personally, he was, by all accounts, an extraordinary person, a man of many talents, who had received many distinctions and awards and who had contributed richly to the work of the United Nations.

During his life time, he combined a distinguished military and diplomatic career. He participated in the United Nations Peace Keeping Force in India and Pakistan in

the years 1965-1966. He was Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister during the period 1975 to 1978 and led his country's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. General Garba was also an author. Amongst his many works, I would like to mention one entitled "The Honour to Serve: Reflections on Nigeria's Presidency of the 44th UN General Assembly "(1993).

During his Presidency of the General Assembly, he facilitated world peace and security through obtaining consensus resolutions on the subjects of poverty, drug trafficking and apartheid. Perhaps he will be best remembered for his untiring and relentless efforts to champion the cause of South Africa against apartheid. The adoption of the Convention on Rights of the Child was another important achievement during his presidency.

With these remarks I invite Mr. Secretary General to say a few words.