

21 November 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,  
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,  
on World Television Day**

Today, the United Nations family observes the World Television Day which the General Assembly declared in 1996. At the same time we stress the commitment of the United Nations to enhance its links with the media and support of television programs focusing on such issues as peace and security, economic and social development, and the enhancement of cultural exchange. In the existing international climate it is also an occasion to remind ourselves of the increasing impact television bears on decision-making by alerting world attention to international conflicts and by sharpening the focus on other major issues.

In 1996 the first UN World TV Forum recognized that television is today's most powerful medium of communication that can and must play a role in presenting these issues to the world. We are living a revolution marked by convergence between broadcasting, communication technologies and telecommunications. The upcoming World Summit on Information Society next year in Geneva will once more emphasize the role of television.

Recognizing its power, public television has a vital role in guaranteeing access for all people to information on their own cultures and on global events. It is certainly indispensable for the proper functioning of genuine democracies. Television is a decisive factor in globalization. It supports cultural diversity and helps to establish freedom of information.

The United Nations cannot achieve its purposes unless the peoples of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities.

This is a day to renew the commitments by all parties to support the development of a media that provides unbiased information, preserves cultural identity as well as diversity, and promotes understanding among peoples and so that television can truly fulfill its potential as a force for democratic exchange and social development.