

29 May 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
on International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

As we today, for the first time, celebrate the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, it is a great honor for me to pay tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations under the United Nations flag. The dedication, courage, and vision of United Nations peacekeepers are, without doubt, qualities to be recognized and admired. By taking part in peacekeeping operations, peacekeepers compromise their security and comfort to bring security and comfort to people whose lives have been shattered by war.

United Nations peacekeeping belongs to the most outstanding instruments that the Organization has at its disposal for maintaining international peace and security. In recent years, the mandates of peacekeeping operations have become more complex. In addition to monitoring ceasefires, United Nations peacekeepers deliver humanitarian aid, provide electoral assistance, create conditions to enable economic reconstruction, collect weapons, and, in certain cases, help to rebuild administrative, law enforcement, and judicial infrastructure.

United Nations peacekeepers have been awarded the Nobel Peace Price in 1988. The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is another opportunity, whereby their work can be recognized and appreciated.