

30 May 2003

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

The Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan paid this tribute to the United Nations staff on the occasion of the Nobel Peace Award to the Organization and the Secretary General. The Nobel Committee reaffirmed “that the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations.” The Committee honoured the United Nations and the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, by awarding the peace prize for 2001 in two equal parts.

At the initiative of the Secretary General, it was proposed to place the entire award funds of approximately one million dollars, which were to be shared equally between the Secretary General in his personal capacity, and the Organization, into a newly established United Nations Nobel Peace Prize Memorial Fund. The purpose of the Fund would be to provide financial assistance for the education of children of United Nations civilian personnel who have been killed in the line of duty in the service of peace. I endorsed the Secretary-General proposal, in my personal capacity, on the occasion of UN Staff Day in October 2002. Later, I conducted consultations on the matter with members of the General Committee with the aim to bring this matter to the attention of the General Assembly. It is my great pleasure to convey to you the good news that the General Assembly decided yesterday that the United Nations portion of the Nobel Peace Prize award be donated to the United Nations Nobel Peace Prize Memorial Fund.

Yesterday’s decision concurs with the firm belief of the Secretary-General that the dedicated staff of the Organization have made the United Nations worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize, and that it is completely appropriate to use the entire award for those who have made the greatest sacrifice by giving their lives in the cause of peace.

The subject of safety and legal protection of the United Nations and associated personnel has been a matter of deep concern to the General Assembly. In this connection I refer to resolution 57/28 which was passed on 9 November 2002 calling upon all States to, inter alia, become party to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Work on this issue is continuing in order to expand the scope of the Convention.

In these turbulent times of change, globalization and connectivity, spurred on through the spread of the Internet and democracy, the staff of the United Nations face many new challenges. Their continued dedication to find peaceful and collaborative ways to help solve the multitude of problems so succinctly defined in the Millennium Goals, will be essential. As we know, United Nations is the only legitimate world forum where every nation and every citizen has a stake. It is the only Organization on which universal hopes are concentrated to promote peace, justice and

prosperity. All of you, the staff of the United Nations are the repository of the collective conscience and moral force of mankind which is reflected through your diversity. Therefore the contributions made by each one of you, wherever you may be serving in the world, your headquarters or the remote villages and towns, are crucial to fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of millions of human beings for a world free from hunger and poverty, a world where we protect our environment, a world where every child has access to education, a world where the culture of tolerance, non violence and peace prevails. It is through your integrity and competence, that the implementation of the ideals of the United Nations Charter is made possible. Under the leadership of the Secretary General and with your dedication, the United Nations will continue to evolve into a forceful and dynamic organization.

Let us continue to work together towards achieving peace and prosperity throughout the world.