

19 September 2004

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping,  
President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine**

Dean James Kowalsky,  
Members of the clergy,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to take the floor in front of the church dignitaries in order to share my views about the role of the UN in the promotion of peace in the world.

First of all, I would like to thank the St John the Divine church for the kind invitation extended to me as President of the 59th session of the General Assembly to attend service this morning.

I am particularly grateful to St John the Divine cathedral for carrying out this established tradition which shows a faithful commitment to peace within and between nations.

As a Christian, I am deeply convinced that there is no sustainable human achievement without God's blessing.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Founded right after the Second World War, the Organization of United Nations assigned itself the missions to keep international peace and security, promoting peaceful cooperation and relations among nations, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of development for all.

To this end, the UN has always been seeking solutions to the several conflicts which occur throughout the world.

The Organization has also engaged to promote disarmament and has taken highly appreciable initiatives to encourage the respect of both human rights and fundamental liberties.

Over the last 60 years, the UN has tried to be, as stated in its Charter, a center where all nations harmonize their views. Moreover, it has appeared to be the only framework with international vocation where humanity as a whole expresses all its concerns and wishes.

All these efforts have played its part in guaranteeing what has been termed "negative peace", that is: "absence of war", I should say "absence of global war". However, the real and greater

challenge lies in bringing about conditions of positive peace, namely: “the elimination of structural violence”.

This is indeed a major challenge to the world community that is to stem the occurrence of armed conflicts and instability around the world, in particular in developing countries that dearly need all the resources to fight poverty, hunger and disease.

While we need to join all our efforts to promote peace and security, it is equally important to stress the dimension of the task which is still to be achieved, particularly concerning development.

Indeed, there cannot be lasting peace and security without social justice and development within and between nations. Building peace and security today means tackling with poverty, misery and social injustice; all deep causes of conflicts and instability around the world.

It is the United Nations’ commitment to work towards this end. These challenges have become even more pronounced in the face of globalization.

Therefore, we need a new understanding, a new mentality and a new commitment regarding the management of global affairs, in a world where human values of compassion, mutual assistance and solidarity have the greatest weight.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Peace cannot go without equity in the redistribution of expansion, the sharing of power and the access to social services such as health and education.

It is the lack of such a vision which is at the origin of most of the actual armed conflicts that we all know.

Therefore, peace implies justice, equity, love and charity, which are necessary conditions for a collective life full of harmony and exempted from violence.

Those values that we should permanently remain with us are the foundations of the principles, goals, objectives and ideals defended by the United Nations.

Having declared 2001 to 2010 the international decade for the promotion of peace and non-violence culture, particularly for the benefits of children, the General Assembly of the United Nations hereby invites us to act and gives us a deadline within which we shall be able to deepen our personal and collective commitments, finding the means of both respecting them morally and achieving them practically.

During my presidency, I undertake to continue to promote those objectives. I would like to count on the participation, the cooperation and the involvement of all: that means political leaders, leaders of the civil society, and of course the church.

May God bless the Nations of the world!

May God bless you!

Thank you!