

1 December 2004

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping,
President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly,
on World AIDS Day**

Today, the International Community is commemorating World AIDS Day. It not only gives us the opportunity to assess our achievements in the battle against this scourge of modern times, but also gives us the chance to further raise a collective awareness on the challenges facing us in the process of eradicating HIV/AIDS.

The pandemic continues to spread rapidly, thus causing havoc on all continents. Today, about 40 million people are living with this disease. AIDS deeply hampers social and economic progress, particularly in developing countries, compromising the efforts to fight against poverty and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The trend figures are alarming: infection rates are unprecedentedly high, the most vulnerable groups being women and young girls.

Today, the global response to AIDS calls for adequate information, sufficient and equitable access to prevention and treatment, as well as for nondiscrimination of people living with AIDS.

The 60th Anniversary of the United Nations Organization and the High-level meeting on HIV/AIDS on 2 June 2005 offer opportunities for all countries of the world to review the progress made up to date in this fight and to think collectively about more effective measures against HIV/AIDS.

Fighting AIDS is our common endeavor. It is urgent that the international community as a whole undertakes concrete, continued and coordinated action to stop the progression of this pandemic.

AIDS is not a fatality. Mobilized, we will defeat it.