

18 March 2005

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping,  
President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly,  
on the International Day against Racial Discrimination**

As we commemorate today the International Day against Racial Discrimination, we remember the tragedy of 21 March 1960 in Sharpsville, South Africa, as the police opened fire on people marching against an Apartheid Act, killing 69 persons.

This remembrance gives us the opportunity to renew the commitment of the international community for the preservation and the respect of both human dignity and equality, in accordance with the principles enshrined in its Charter.

For almost three decades and in the framework of a large programme of action at the national, regional and international levels, the General Assembly has been intensifying its efforts to raise public awareness against racism and discrimination.

The rise of acts of racism, xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance calls upon all of us to be vigilant and to further mobilize ourselves in order to combat with greater energy those evils which, throughout the world, are at the origin of conflicts and still constitute factors of social exclusion and poverty.

I, therefore, urge all States, regional and international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to intensify their efforts with a view to fighting with more determination against racial discrimination.