

6 April 2005

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping,  
President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Tribute to the Memory of His Holiness Pope John Paul II**

This morning, before we take up the item on our agenda, we have the sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, His Holiness John Paul II, who passed away on Saturday, 2 April 2005.

Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II displayed a unique moral authority and exceptional charisma, both as a spiritual leader and as a statesman. A source of inspiration for much of humanity, he worked tirelessly to promote peace and to bring together people of all nations, races and creeds. Until the final moments of his long and rich life, Pope John Paul II did not hesitate to travel to all regions of the world to bring in person his message of peace and fraternity.

In his statement before the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Pope reminded the world that the United Nations must be "a moral centre where all nations of the world feel at home and develop a common shared awareness of being, as it were, a family of nations".

Ten years later, in this year of 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, those words of the Pope maintain all their power.

We will remember him as a man of great courage and humility in the service of peace, justice and dialogue among men and nations.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I convey my most sincere condolences to the Vatican community, to all Catholics and to all those throughout the world who have been touched and inspired by the life of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II.