

3 May 2005

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

This year, we commemorate the 15th World Press Freedom Day whose theme is "Media and good governance". The annual commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day is an important occasion for Media professionals who, for many of them, pay a heavy price while exercising their duty. In 2004 only, 53 journalists were killed, 1146 were mistreated and more than 600 Medias were censored across the world.

But today's observance is also a unique opportunity to remind the international community that freedom of press and freedom of expression are fundamental rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and supported by the United Nations Charter.

The professionals of free and pluralist Media are not only messengers carrying good and bad news, but they also participate in the diffusion of common values which enliven life in society.

The theme of this year underlines the importance of the responsibility of journalists. Indeed, they have an important role to play in promoting good governance as essential element for maintaining peace and collective security and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the fight against poverty.

For the press to carry out its mission with responsibility and professionalism, Member States of the Organization of the United Nations must promote freedom of press worldwide, including in areas of conflict.

In a more and more interdependent world, the upcoming World Summit on the information society scheduled to be held in Tunis in November 2005 will provide the international community with the opportunity to renew its commitment to a freer and more responsible press.