

28 September 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Briefing for the NGO-community**

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to join you this morning. On behalf of the chairpersons and from my part, I wish to welcome each and everyone to this briefing.

Yesterday the plenary started to consider the Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The statements follow the successful Millennium Summit, where the Heads of State and Government expressed their common vision for the new century and affirmed the global development agenda, as set by the global conferences of the 1990s.

In yesterday's statements, there were three themes, which also characterized the Millennium Summit and the General Debate. First of all, the speakers recalled the spirit of the Millennium Summit, saying that we need to build on the momentum and translate the Millennium Declaration into concrete action. To achieve this target, some of the speakers called for civil society to have a role.

Second, globalization was again widely discussed. In this regard, we need to work towards making globalization benefit all through a cross-cutting approach.

The third topic was the link between peace and socio-economic development. Several delegates emphasized the need to prevent conflicts before they erupt, to shift from the culture of reaction to the culture of prevention, because conflicts go hand in hand with poverty and lack of human rights.

This year, we have some 180 items on the agenda of the GA. Most of the items are the same as previously, but among new issues, there are a role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, scale of assessment of peacekeeping operations, as well as reform of the UN peace operations.

The Millennium declaration will guide our work during the current session. This is a challenge, which requires dialogue and co-operation from all of us, both during this session and in upcoming years. The participation of NGOs is important. The UN and governments cannot do the work alone, but need partnerships with the civil society. NGOs do valuable advocacy work among citizens in different parts of the world by disseminating information and assisting with the implementation of targets of global conferences. It is my strong belief, that through co-operation with NGOs the results are more sustainable in all societies, both in the North and in the South.