

1 November 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the occasion of admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
to membership to the United Nations**

It is a great pleasure on this historic occasion to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a member of the United Nations.

We have at the Millennium Summit reaffirmed our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the family of nations is of great significance, as it strengthens the universality of the United Nations and thus enhances its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Equally, I am confident, it strengthens the efforts by the international community to bring stability to the South East Europe, efforts in which the United Nations plays in many ways the leading role.

The path leading to this moment has been long and troublesome. But today we should look to the future and welcome the admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a promising new beginning. Today signals also the strength of the United Nations itself and its decisions.

Less than a month ago the whole world congratulated newly elected President Kostunica and the people of his country for their success in assuring a peaceful victory towards democracy. We all held high regard for the people whose democratically expressed will prevailed over many obstacles. Their voices have been heard around the world and the movement towards democracy has gained new strength.

Moreover, this change gave realistic hope for a solution to the remaining problems in the region of South- East Europe based on the principles of peace, democracy, rule of law and human rights.

The admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations signifies a new era in co-operation between the new member state and the other members of the United Nations, including its neighbors and other successor states of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The resolutions of the General Assembly on the strengthening of cooperation in the region of South East Europe will gain additional momentum. This will also give new vigor to a number of regional initiatives. Here we welcome the recent admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. We can also envisage a new era in fulfilling many other goals of the United Nations Charter, including respect for human rights. All this will contribute to the strengthening of regional stability and international peace and security.

The United Nations and its Member States should be prepared to strengthen their support to the region and to the government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in addressing the many remaining problems that need to be solved.

Today we must look to the future while at the same time remember that freedom carries with it responsibilities, including those relating to the pursuit of justice. Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is of paramount importance for all the countries concerned, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Finally, I wish the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia peace, prosperity and every success for the future.