

21 November 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,  
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the monthly meeting between the Office of the President of the  
General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for  
the month of November**

The meeting was attended by the Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for the month of November: Mauritania (African States), Kyrgyzstan (Asian States), Slovenia (Eastern European States), Brazil (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Germany (Western European and other States).

**1. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP**

The President noted that the follow-up process for the Millennium Summit is on its way and this afternoon there will be another round of consultations on the basis of his elements paper (A/55/CRP.1).

He also informed the Chairpersons that his office had a meeting on November 10 with coordinators of next year's high-level meetings in order to discuss how best to use these events in the implementation of the Millennium Summit outcome. The meeting proved to be very useful, as the need for co-ordination is evident. It was also noted that a short note on this meeting is posted on President's website.

**2. BRAHIMI REPORT**

The President reminded that the Millennium Summit called for expeditious consideration of the Report's recommendations. He added that although the consideration has been fairly complex and difficult, it is his understanding that the political will and momentum is there and should be used to reach concrete results.

The President noted that the report is a valuable contribution to the efforts of strengthening the United Nations in one of its core functions; that is, in the maintenance of international peace and security. He added that it is important to maintain the discussion at a high political level and bring the matter back to the General Assembly for decisions.

**3. REFORM OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Many decisions have been taken over the years to improve the work of the General Assembly. The President noted that as the President of the General Assembly, that obviously is of great

importance to him. He added that the real challenge is how to implement these decisions so as to make the General Assembly more focused in its work.

The President noted that he has already started with small practical steps, such as punctuality and the recent decision on the starting date of the General Assembly session. He added that he has consulted Member States and there is an eagerness to take further steps. The President has urged Member States to discuss this issue and come up with ideas and suggestions. He noted that he is willing to provide leadership, but that he will need the initiative and support of Member States. It was also noted that a statement made by the President at the Forum of Small States on 15 November on this issue is available on his website.

#### **4. APPOINTMENTS**

##### **4.1 Open-Ended Working Group on Africa and Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council reform.**

The President told that he is still consulting Member States on the appointment of the two vice-chairmen to these open-ended working groups. His intention is to make the formal announcements no later than early December.

##### **4.2 Oceans and the Law of the Sea; Informal Consultative Process (agenda item 34.a.)**

Extensive consultations have been carried out, and will continue until the end of this month with regard to the two co-chairs of the Informal Consultative Process on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS).

So far, there has been wide support for the two current chairs to continue; however, some reservations have been expressed about one of them. Announcement on the results of these consultations is expected not later than 1st week of December.

##### **4.3. Consultative Committee on United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (agenda item 17.i.)**

There is still one regional group (Asia), which has not nominated its candidate.

The others are: Africa: Namibia, Eastern Europe: Croatia, GRULAC: Jamaica (nomination received after last meeting with regional chairs), WEOG: The Netherlands.

It was noted that the missing nomination should be done expeditiously so that this item can be scheduled for consideration.

## **5. HIV/AIDS SPECIAL SESSION (Agenda item 179)**

Regarding the special session it was noted that a "Non-paper road-map" on the tentative schedule of the preparatory process was distributed to all delegations on 9 November 2000. The first internal planning meeting of all concerned secretariats (UNAIDS and its co-sponsoring organizations, General Assembly Presidency and Secretariat) was held on Monday, 20 November 2000.

Consultations on the selection of the two co-facilitators have been carried out; an announcement on that issue is expected no later than the first week of December. Otherwise work progresses according to the "road-map".

It was further noted that the first general briefing on the HIV/AIDS special session by the President is expected on 15 December 2000 (Friday), from 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.; non-papers on organizational matters and on the format of Non-Governmental Organizations participation will be distributed to delegations; informal discussions on these non-papers are expected to start in mid-January 2001.

## **6. OUTREACH**

The President stressed that as indicated in his acceptance speech, one of the goals of this Presidency of the General Assembly is to reach out to other stakeholders of development.

### **6.1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)**

He noted that he participated as the first General Assembly President in the General Assembly of CONGO (Coalition of NGOs with accreditation to the United Nations), which was held in Vienna on 6 November 2000.

### **6.2. Bretton Woods Institutions**

Last week (14 November 2000), the President visited Washington D.C. This was the first time that the General Assembly President has visited the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The visit must be seen as part of outreach and partnership building. In development, and in particular development financing, the Bretton Woods Institutions are essential partners. Now, the United Nations should ponder how to recognize this partnership in a more visible way.

In the World Bank, the President met briefly with the Board of Directors, and the Millennium Summit was discussed. He noted that there was good interest among the Board members in the United Nations issues.

In the World Bank, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was much in focus. It may be mentioned that one of the two Managing Directors of the World Bank will participate on 13 December 2000 in an informal panel dialogue of the General Assembly Plenary meeting on

"ICT in Development". The President will chair the panel, which is organized in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Secretariat and the President of ECOSOC.

In International Monetary Fund (IMF), its participation in the Financing for Development process was the particular focus. The President told that he had held discussions with Mr. Köhler and senior members of his management. The visit was welcomed by IMF and there are hopes for more active participation of IMF to the Financing For Development in the future.

### 6.3. Conventions

The President also noted that he will open the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Desertification convention in Bonn on 11 December 2000.

## 7. RIO+10

The issue of the Rio+10 Summit's host (venue) has not yet been solved. The President told that he has consulted various parties and urged the regional groups concerned to find a solution.

Further consultations with regional groups (chairs) and the concerned parties will be carried out soon, to find a suitable solution. It would still be preferable if the G-77, in particular the African and Asian groups could find a solution. The President added that he has also been in contact with the G-77 Chairman on this.

For the sake of the preparatory process, the venue needs to be decided upon during this session of the General Assembly.