

23 April 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the occasion of the World Book and Copyright Day**

Through the observance of World Book and Copyright Day, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promotes reading and publishing, as well as the need to protect intellectual property through copyright. The Day also commemorates the work of three great writers: Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, all of whom passed away on this date, 23 April, in 1616.

Books have always been the most universal way of transmitting and preserving knowledge. But because of the frequently high cost of printing and publishing, books are not always accessible to all readers. Today's electronic revolution has not yet replaced the need for well-supplied public libraries and other similar sources to enable readers and students to access needed material.

Whether writing science or fiction, a writer's work is an expression of his or her creative abilities as well as his/her knowledge. Copyright is recognition that the work of a writer is unique and valuable to all. And this Day provides an occasion to acknowledge that both intellectual and artistic property has the right to be protected.

It is also a way to help foster through books the expression of our cultural and intellectual diversity, thus ensuring that our reading experience continues to be rewarding.