

25 May 2001

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
at the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary
after the agenda of the Special Session on HIV/AIDS was adopted**

After this official business, I should like to seize this opportunity to, first of all, to thank you for your hard work during this week and in the course of the whole process leading to the Special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June.

I should also like to extend my warm thanks to the two able facilitators, Ambassador Ka of Senegal and Ambassador Wensley of Australia, who have shouldered the cumbersome and delicate task of facilitating this preparatory process so far. I am greatly indebted to the substantive secretariat, UNAIDS, and its able team, which has worked day and night for the benefit of all. I wish to thank also the Secretariat of the General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, including the interpreters - their team make miracles happen every day.

I know that everyone is doing their utmost for this preparatory process to be a success.

Having said this, I recognize that you still have a number of issues to deal with. I have been reported by the two facilitators and my own staff, that your discussions have been very rich and many valuable proposals have been made to improve the text of the draft declaration.

This process is new and also the topic, HIV/AIDS, has sensitive elements around it. - I commend all of you of the good spirits in which the negotiations have been conducted. All parties have made compromises and accommodated others' views.

We all know, that member states, in resolution 55/242 decided to have this week for negotiating the declaration of commitment for the special session.

Therefore, I hope that the facilitators may present to me after this week an agreed text on the declaration of commitment on HIV/AIDS. - I put my trust on every one of you that they will be able to do so.

Once again, thanks for all of you for your hard work.