

10 December 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,  
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,  
on Human Rights Day**

Today we commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly. For the past 51 years, the Declaration has represented a common statement of goals and aspirations of humanity—a vision of the world as the international community would want it to become.

The Declaration recognizes that the “inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” and is linked to the recognition of fundamental rights towards which every human being aspires. Human rights are inherent rights to be enjoyed by all human beings of the global village—men, women, children, disabled persons, refugees, stateless persons as well as by any group of society.

In many parts of the world, human rights are still threatened by war, conflict and repression. At the same time, there are millions of people denied food, shelter, access to medical care, education and work, and too many live in extreme poverty. In this regard, the promotion of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights bear equal importance, toward which all of us should combine our efforts to make progress. It is in this spirit that I invite each and every one of you to play an active part in promoting the global cause of freedom and in furthering the United Nations goals of a more open, tolerant and harmonious world.

In particular, the participation of civil society, and in particular the Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs), is essential to the success of the United Nations human rights programme. In this field, the NGOs are working hard to implement vital human rights promotion and education programmes. The NGOs’ information and expertise have a vital role to play in the effective implementation of the United Nations human rights programme.

Challenge is ours. We should make every day matter in the fight to broaden the horizons of human rights until the day comes when no man is tortured, no woman is denied her dignity and no child is abused—when all human beings enjoy their human rights.

On this Human Rights Day, I congratulate the member states of the United Nations and people all over the world on a remarkable record of achievements in the promotion and defence of human rights, and invite them to make efforts further to protect and promote human rights. Let human rights take roots, spread and flourish in all countries over the globe.