

23 March 2002

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

During the last 10 years, the number of persons affected by hydro-meteorological disasters averaged 211 million which accounts for seven times more than those affected by conflict. The impacts of extreme weather and climate are far-reaching and cause serious socio-economic problems including poverty and environmental degradation.

In this context, I applaud the theme for World Meteorological Day 2002 “Reducing vulnerability to weather and climate extreme,” which the World Meteorological Organization chose in order to create awareness about the dangers of weather and climate extremes.

I am pleased to note that currently three global and 25 Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres provide weather forecasts and generate regionally focused phenomena such as tropical cyclones, droughts and floods. Another encouraging development is that an increasing number of countries are integrating their computers and telecommunications facilities into the global infrastructure for monitoring and early warning of weather and climate events likely to endanger life and property.

In celebrating World Meteorological Day this year, I remain convinced that natural disasters due to extreme weather and climate can be eventually controlled through shared information and strengthened cooperation among National Meteorological and Hydrological Services(NHMHSs), the World Meteorological Organization(WMO), other related institutions and decision makers responsible for community welfare.