

10 December 2000

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
on the occasion of Human Rights Day**

Today on Human Rights Day, we commemorate the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the past 52 years, this Declaration has been the basis for what we today regard as our human rights.

The Declaration has been translated into more than 300 languages, making it the most translated document in the world. Making it available to everyone - educating people about their rights - is essential, because we cannot exercise our rights unless we know what they are. That is why today's Human Rights Day theme, on human rights education, is so important.

I strongly believe in the importance of human rights education. It contributes to better understanding between diverse people and empowers marginalized and powerless groups. It helps eliminate gender-based or racial discrimination. Unfortunately, effective national human rights education strategies have very rarely been developed. I invite member states to ensure that human rights education becomes an essential component in all educational, training and public information programmes. Let us work together towards the full realization of human rights for all.