

12 September 2001

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

Today we mark the 20th anniversary of the UN General Assembly's decision to designate the opening day of its regular session as the "International Day of Peace."

Certainly the history of the past twenty years has not lived up to the high hopes of the delegates who approved that resolution. Thus, we seek to rekindle the spirit of peace and tolerance by observing the "International Day of Peace." I would like to think that each of these annual commemorations gives renewed hope and courage to those who work and sometimes struggle for lasting peace in the world. From next year, by resolution of the General Assembly, the International Day of Peace will be observed annually on 21 September as a day of global ceasefire, non-violence and cessation of hostilities.

There is much to ponder and much to celebrate on this day. As we look back over the past five decades, the United Nations can take at least part of the credit for defusing numerous crisis situations with the potential to explode into armed conflict. More generally, the UN has also contributed to peace by ameliorating the underlying causes of conflict such as poverty, racial discrimination, and lack of education. Of course, we have also had our share of failures. But in each of these instances, we have learned important lessons that enabled us to face the next challenge with greater confidence of success.

Above all, I hope we will take this opportunity to remember the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. They deserve our highest respect and most profound gratitude.

Thank you.