

20 September 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-level Dialogue on Strengthening International Economic
Cooperation for Development through Partnership**

Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased and honored to welcome you to the second High-Level Dialogue on Strengthening International Economic Cooperation for Development through Partnership. These High-level Dialogue sessions provide an invaluable opportunity for an open and constructive exchange of views on ways of ensuring that globalization becomes a positive force for all of us.

Due to the last week's tragic events, major meetings of General Assembly had to be rescheduled or postponed, including the High-Level Dialogue. I wish to express my deep appreciation to all the delegations for agreeing to hold the High-Level Dialogue today, notwithstanding this difficult situation. I think this sends a message of firm determination of member states that the General Assembly will not be deterred in its efforts in support of world peace and development by such criminal actions.

This is a time to be creative in our thinking, to share new ideas, and to map out the direction we should take for the benefit of developing countries. Without the pressure of having a negotiated outcome, the dialogue format will encourage all participants to explore solutions to the most vexing challenges that this Assembly will be addressing over the months to come.

Under the overarching theme of globalization, two crucial sub-themes are on the table. The first covers two issues of importance, that is, the integration of developing countries into the world economy and generating financial resources. The new Millennium is characterized by shrinking distances, instant news and communication, short production cycles and unprecedented wealth creation. On the other hand, globalization is also characterized by growing development gaps both among and within countries. While the international community has done much to promote the integration of developing countries into the world economy, we need to address the legitimate concerns about marginalization of developing countries which have been unable to enjoy the full benefits of globalization.

The question of financing for development took on new urgency in the follow-up to the series of global conferences and summits convened by the United Nations in the 1990s. These events set out a multitude of goals and targets and comprehensive action plans at the national, regional and international levels to realize a holistic vision of development. In particular, the Millennium Declaration adopted last September has given an unprecedented level of political commitment to

these goals. I believe that the Declaration's goal of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 must also be our overriding goal not only during this two-day dialogue, but during the entire 56th session of the Assembly.

In this regard, I would like to stress the significance of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place in March of next year in Monterey, Mexico. Many challenging ideas and considerations have already been presented during the preparatory process. I hope that we can build these in developing our own distinctive contribution to the success of the Monterey meeting through partnership among relevant stakeholders.

The second sub-theme of this dialogue is closely related to the first one. Globalization has been recognized as multi-faceted in nature, and the current phase of globalization is shaped by the fact that knowledge has become a source of competitive advantage. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have come to play a pivotal role in the emerging global knowledge-based economy. ICT can be a powerful tool in the economic and social development of countries, societies and individuals by opening up new avenues for trade, commerce and employment.

Yet the majority of the world's population continues to live in poverty, and many countries have yet to reap the full benefits from the ICT revolution. Closing the digital divide among and within countries is an enormous task and, therefore, cannot be the sole responsibility of one group of stakeholders. Basically, governments have the primary responsibility for promoting the well-being of their people. However, the public sector alone can not provide all the answers for the complex problems of globalization. Civil society and the private sector not only have a stake in development, they have the necessary ideas, perseverance and creativity to surmount obstacles and find solutions to the challenges we face.

I am pleased to note that their role has been recognized by the United Nations in setting up an ICT Task Force with multi-stakeholder participation. With regard to the World Summits on Information Society to be held in 2003 and 2005, it is vitally important that the major stakeholders be involved in addressing a number of issues including the digital divide throughout the preparatory process and the final events. I am hopeful that the General Assembly will play a major role in ensuring the success of these seminal events.

In my view, it is crucial for the General Assembly to continue to explore ways of interacting with the multi-stakeholders who are instrumental in turning policy proposals into practical reality. It is encouraging that they have repeatedly shown their willingness to assume their share of responsibility for achieving development targets. This dialogue should therefore strive to be as interactive as possible and to be fully open to the views and suggestions from academia, civil society and the private sector. I look forward to a rich and productive dialogue.

Thank you.