

14 December 2001

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

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you know, I have just returned from Oslo, Norway, where I had the great honour to accept the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations. I was also honoured to attend this occasion, along with Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who accepted the prize on his own behalf. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all the “family members” of the entire UN system and pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

Since this was the first time that the United Nations as a whole was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, I was especially pleased that the major UN organs and various agencies were well represented at the ceremony.

I wish that all of you – the representatives of the Member States – could have been there as well. The Nobel Peace Prize belongs to each of you as much as to any other member of the UN family.

Surely this award is meant to offer encouragement to the men and women of the United Nations in carrying out their work. Such encouragement will be especially welcome to the thousands of UN personnel who serve under extremely difficult conditions, often at grave risk to themselves. While we can be justly proud of what the United Nations has accomplished, we should also look ahead to the many daunting challenges that still lie before us such as terrorism, poverty, drug abuse and trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and environmental degradation. These challenges cannot be met by any single Member State or any single organization alone.

Since 1945, the international community and the peoples of the world have exerted their best efforts, often with high hopes, for the realization of global peace and well-being through the United Nations. Our efforts have not always been successful, nor our successes always permanent.

But we should not be discouraged. I have no doubt that, were it not for the United Nations, humankind could hardly have advanced so far as it has in realizing the vision of the UN’s founding fathers in 1945. The indispensable role of the UN was clearly recognized by Chairman Berge of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, at the award ceremony in the following words: “The only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations.”

Finally, let me mention that I will closely consult with the representatives of the Major Organs and Member States about how to utilize the prize money which the UN has received from the Nobel Committee.

In concluding my brief report, I join with you in celebrating the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize as both recognition of past achievements and a spur to even greater efforts in the future.