

20 December 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,
at the 10th Emergency Special Session**

Excellencies,

Before I give the floor to the first speaker, I would like to make a brief statement on this occasion of the 10th Emergency Special Session.

I believe all members of this Organization fully agree that one of the most urgent and daunting tasks before the United Nations is to bring lasting peace to the Middle East. This is not an issue that involves the region alone, but is, rather, a global concern constituting a serious threat to world peace and security. Accordingly, the international community needs to address this problem in a collective manner.

Despite the numerous appeals from the international community, we see the situation in the region becoming more aggravated day by day. Doubtless we all feel frustrated by the limitations within which the United Nations must act in dealing with

this very complex situation. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon us to do our utmost to bring about a cessation of the daily bloodshed and violence in the region.

Members will recall that the 1991 Middle East Peace Conference, followed by the signing of the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, was warmly welcomed by the international community as a sign of hope and a demonstration of clear political will to achieve peace and stability in the region.

However, failure to implement the signed agreements and a steady deterioration of the situation on the ground led to the outbreak of violence in late September 2000. In the face of escalating violence in the Middle East, the General Assembly convened its resumed Tenth Emergency Special Session in October last year.

Unfortunately, despite the Emergency Special Session, we have seen a spiral of violence and an increasing number of casualties that has led to a breakdown in the peace negotiations.

The lesson we have learned from the violence prevailing in the region is that there is no alternative to the process of Israeli-Palestinian political negotiations based on principles of mutual respect and understanding of each other's needs and interests.

Therefore, at the beginning of this Emergency Special Session, I urge both parties directly concerned to return to dialogue and negotiations. And I call upon the international community to help to resume and normalize the peace process. In this regard, I sincerely hope that this Session will produce constructive results.

Thank you.