

11 April 2002

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

Today is a truly meaningful moment in the history of the United Nations. I welcome the deposit of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, now meeting the required minimum of ratifications for the treaty to enter into force. This treaty, pursuant to its Article 126, will enter into force on 1 July 2002, the first day of the month after the sixtieth day following the date of the deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification. I am particularly pleased to note that this has been achieved very rapidly.

Since 1948, following the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals after the Second World War, the establishment of a permanent international criminal court has remained one of the most important goals of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The scope, scale and nature of atrocities that have been committed in many parts of the world during the last 20 years reminded us of the urgency of creating a permanent mechanism to bring to justice the perpetrators of such inhuman crimes as genocide, ethnic cleansing, sexual slavery and maiming.

Although the Security Council established tribunals for criminals involved in the atrocities that took place in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, these tribunals are bound by mandates that are specific in time and place.

It is widely recognized that a permanent international criminal court would be more efficient than ad hoc tribunals in taking action against crimes and also in limiting the extent or duration of violence by the nature of its very existence. Furthermore, it will provide much stronger deterrence to potential criminals by giving them a clear warning that there will be no place for them to hide. Hence, leading authorities and experts have argued that a permanent international criminal court would make an important contribution to advancing international peace and justice.

Upon this notable occasion of the sixtieth deposit of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, I commend those Member States who have become party to the Treaty for their decision and urge all Member States to join in the efforts of the international community to make this historic Treaty successful.