

7 May 2002

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,  
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Acceptance of the Declaration of Religious**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In accepting this declaration, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the commitment of the world's religious communities to the rights and needs of children.

On the occasion of the UN Special Session on children, we are once again reminded of the difficult, and often unacceptable, conditions in which a large portion of the world's children are forced to live. It is this situation that the Special Session sets out to change.

Over thousands of years and in countless communities religious bodies have borne the primary burden of providing basic social services to those who need them most and can least afford them – above all, children. Thus, we look to the world's religions to give us guidance and inspiration as the world's leaders assemble here to address the overriding issue of children's welfare. Your declaration does precisely that and serves as a compelling and timely reaffirmation of the global religious commitment to helping children.

Thank you again and, finally, let me congratulate you on the excellent work.