

15 May 2002

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

The International Day of Families, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/237 20 September 1993, has provided a unique opportunity to enhance public awareness of issues relating to families. The family constitutes the natural and fundamental unit of society. If a society maintains a sound basis for the family, it can achieve stability and peace.

Therefore, families should be protected and strengthened through promotion of equal partnership between women and men in the family and mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation within the family and within society.

This year marks the eighth anniversary of the International Day of Families. The theme of this year, " Families and Ageing: Opportunities and Challenges" is suggested in the context of the Second World Assembly on Ageing to be held in Madrid in April 2002.

Older persons are important assets for families. They are essential to forging solidarity between generations in families, communities and nations. This year's theme provides an excellent opportunity to highlight older persons' roles and the intergenerational dimensions of families in a society.

Lastly, I would like to encourage national governments and Non-governmental Organizations to participate in the preparatory process of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.