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## **Press Release SG/SM/6113**

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### **SECRETARY-GENERAL ACCEPTS DECLARATION OF WORLD THANKSGIVING**

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Following is the statement made by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros- Ghali on 21 November, on receiving the text of the 1996 Declaration of World Thanksgiving in a ceremony at Headquarters:

I am pleased to accept this Declaration of World Thanksgiving. It has been signed by men and women of different faiths and cultures, but its message is in the best United Nations tradition of international solidarity and concern for all humanity.

Thanksgiving in North America began more than 300 years ago as a harvest holiday. It has evolved in character, so that today we celebrate not just food on the table, but blessings such as family, good health and freedom. It is also a time of humility, of remembering the less fortunate among us, those who are deprived of freedom, of food, of good health.

There is a Thanksgiving custom that I find particularly moving. Some people live too far from their families to travel home for the holiday. Others find themselves away from home on business. Still others are lonely or homeless. But for Thanksgiving, room is made at the table. Be it a family dining room, neighbourhood restaurant or soup kitchen run by a religious or secular charity, efforts are made to see that there are no orphans on Thanksgiving.

The United Nations is also a home for the family of nations and a voice for the marginalized in society. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let us also remember the world's "orphans" -- refugees and people living in poverty, particularly children -- and the world's orphan conflicts too. And may the spirit of Thanksgiving prevail throughout the year.

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