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**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records



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PLENARY MEETING**

(Opening meeting)

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*Temporary President: Mrs. Angie  
BROOKS-RANDOLPH  
(Liberia).*

*President: Mr. Edvard HAMBRO  
(Norway).*

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**Opening of the session by the Chairman of the  
delegation of Liberia**

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I declare open the twenty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Minute of silent prayer or meditation**

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

*The representatives stood in silence.*

*Address by Mrs. Angie Brooks-Randolph, Temporary  
President, Chairman of the delegation of Liberia*

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: This is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Organization established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We therefore meet at a moment when we must not only take stock of and evaluate the past, but also plan with foresight and daring for the future. It is our duty to seek to dispel those increasing doubts which have arisen about the effectiveness of our

Organization, and to restore that element of hope and trust which existed when the United Nations was founded.

4. In my inaugural statement as President of the twenty-fourth session of this Assembly, I dwelt at some length on some of the internal weaknesses of this Organization: the parochialism and the lack of a sense of reality with which business is oftentimes conducted.

5. In the real world, today as then, we are confronted with violence and armed conflicts on almost every continent. The tragic situation in Viet-Nam still continues. The Middle East crisis, which a few weeks ago gave some glimmer of hope, would now seem to have regressed into its uncompromising stand.

6. Power politics and/or political expediency continue to frustrate and impede, rather than offer a genuine outright effort to solve, once and for all, the questions of Korea and of the representation of China at the United Nations. This principle seems to apply also in some other parts of the world where there is a desire by the people to be reunited.

7. I am deeply concerned that the need for the United Nations to establish a permanent peace-keeping force at the service of justice and not of arbitrary politicians is not being given proper consideration by the United Nations, through its authorization and financing. A permanent peace-keeping force is not the total answer to the question of peace-keeping—in view of the power struggle which plagues the world—but it is true that a peace-keeping force could separate warring Powers, make negotiated settlements more likely, and reduce the chance that a local conflict would develop into a global war.

8. Again, a new kind of threat to international peace and security is emerging by: (a) the hijacking of international aircraft, endangering the lives of innocent passengers and crew, who at times are also held as hostages, as well as the destruction of property and/or the aircraft; (b) diplomats, while serving their countries, are sometimes kidnapped at their posts and

*The printed official records of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly are published in fascicle form, the record of each meeting being issued separately. A prefatory fascicle is issued for each session, containing a table of contents and the agenda.*

killed. These are serious problems to which the United Nations must give careful consideration. Both nationally and internationally there is need for measures to be established and meaningful support to be given to avert such criminal acts, as they are a menace to international relations, create barriers to international understanding, and thereby pose a threat to international peace and security.

9. Action in the field of disarmament is relatively slow; the gong has been sounded by Secretary-General U Thant as to the urgency for Members of the United Nations—and, I may add, the world in general—to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race.

10. In Africa, the anachronistic State of South Africa continues in all its repressive glory despite the numerous resolutions of the United Nations condemning its practices of *apartheid* as a violation of the principles of the Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The efforts of the United Nations in support of the right of the people of Namibia to self-determination and independence under the provisions of the Charter and resolution 1514 (XV) are thwarted through the repressive laws and rigid implementation thereof by South Africa, which is a Member of the United Nations and a signatory of the Charter. In Rhodesia, the illegal repressive régime continues, against the interest of the majority of the African population; the Portuguese Territories of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) are still in the grip of colonialism—all despite the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

11. In addition, one cannot rule out the inescapable fact that the greatest obstacle to the realization of the principles of the Charter lies in the fact that power politics continues to operate, both overtly and covertly, in international relations. The concept of power politics, whether as the instrument of nationalism or of ideological extremism, is the natural enemy of international order as envisaged in the Charter. Patriotism, national pride or ideological conviction can and must take new and more creative forms than the old concepts of political domination and material power. This is a challenge to statesmanship and political genius in all regions of the world.

12. Those and other similar situations constitute a setback to international order and one is bound to wonder, as is sometimes done, if the United Nations in its present form has outgrown its usefulness.

13. Nevertheless, there are certain areas where the United Nations can boast of some measure of success. In the regions of health and education, the United Nations, through its specialized agencies, has done a great deal of constructive work. But, coming from a small country, I should like to dwell a little on international co-operation for development.

14. Over the last twenty years the transfer of resources from the developed to the developing

countries has been unprecedented in history. Economic growth in many of the developing countries has, therefore, in many cases, proceeded even at faster rates than the industrialized countries ever enjoyed at a similar stage in their own history.

15. All that sounds very good. But when we remember the low level of development after the departure of the colonial Powers, we realize that even with these development rates the standard of life for many in the developing countries has not been sufficiently affected.

16. As we sit here today in our gracious surroundings, in order to inject a better sense of reality we should keep reminding ourselves that more than two-thirds of mankind still lives in conditions of abject poverty, of disease and social backwardness. These conditions do not conduce to international amity. Economic disparities are as great a threat to peace as ideological differences.

17. Despite this, we find, unfortunately, that international support for development has continued to flag since the early sixties, and the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries continues to be a central issue of our time. Some of the donor countries have become disenchanted with development aid, partly because of unrealistic expectations of immediate development by the recipient countries; partly because in many cases it does not seem politically advantageous any more; partly because of the increasing seriousness of their own internal domestic inequalities, and urban and environmental problems.

18. Some developing countries, too, are themselves showing signs of frustration and impatience with their development programmes. Economic development is seen as a continuation of the political struggle for independence, and easy and instant prosperity was expected. Unfortunately this cannot be. Meaningful broad-based economic development is a slow and often painful process.

19. Without going too deep into all the problems of development, I would urge the rich countries not to weary in their aid programmes—if not for moralistic reasons, then for enlightened and constructive self-interest. The fullest possible utilization of the resources of the world, human and physical, will benefit both the rich and the poor countries with the consequent increase in international trade.

20. It is in the area of trade that their most meaningful and self-sustaining economic growth can be achieved. The stimulation of exports is vital to the developing countries. Exports transform their resources into foreign exchange, and the greater the foreign exchange earnings the less the need for aid. It is here that the developed countries could really make their most useful adjustments, given the will to do so.

21. The commodity problems of price instability and adverse price trends of the primary products of the developing countries are well known. Yet at the same

time they are forced to pay higher prices for imported manufactured and capital goods. In the light of this I would urge, as the second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development<sup>1</sup> has done, the industrial countries to lower the barriers to trade such as high and discriminatory import quotas and regulations of all kinds on products of special interest to the developing countries.

22. In the past we have relied too much on words. For the future we must aim for what is possible and see that it is done. Our Charter provides for all that is presently possible in a world of independent and sovereign States, but we must put it into fuller effect. We must implement its security provisions. We must pay more attention to our duty to seek a peaceful settlement of our international disputes. We must dedicate more time, effort and resources to overcoming poverty, disease, discrimination and illiteracy. We must meet, through international co-operation, the challenges of the world of the 1970s: an end to wars, strife and the armaments race, the threats of over-population and pollution, the need for orderly régimes for the new resources science makes available to us beneath the sea and in outer space.

23. In the modern world no nation can be an island unto itself. The need for the United Nations, where we can meet and seek to resolve our common problems, is dictated by the realities of present-day life. We must face those realities squarely. We must seek to replace the national interest by the international interest. The challenges before us are therefore enormous as we meet today for this twenty-fifth General Assembly.

24. The theme of the twenty-fifth anniversary is "peace, justice and progress". We know that peace and justice are two commodities in rather short supply today. They are two principles we constantly praise in words but often deny in deeds. But peace and justice are two commodities with many components. They are also inextricably bound to each other. To move forward to their realization requires more than anything else a will on the part of States to accept increasingly some form of third-party resolution of their disputes. They must be ready to give real substance to their obligations under Article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

25. Peace and justice are essential to our continued survival. Even if the record has been uneven—and there are grounds for some disappointment—I still believe that the United Nations is essential to peace and justice. Can you imagine a world without a general international organization of the scope of the United Nations in which international peace and justice would flourish? To that, my answer is a definite no.

26. In this venture for peace, justice and progress I know that the youths, the future leaders of tomorrow, and the women of the world, have a contribution to make. I ask that this opportunity be afforded them by their national States and on the international level.

27. Fellow representatives, as I take my leave of this podium, I wish you well in your task. I am sure that you will extend to my successor the courtesy, consideration and wise counsel you afforded me last year. We must make this session a landmark in man's age-old desire and striving for peace, justice and progress.

28. Mr. Secretary-General, I thank you for your kindness, your counsel and assistance during my tenure of office. My thanks go also to your staff for its co-operation.

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### Credentials of representatives to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly:

##### (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee

29. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members. Accordingly I propose that for the twenty-fifth session the Credentials Committee consist of the following Member States: Australia, Ecuador, Greece, Ireland, Liberia, Mauritania, Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

30. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that those countries are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee.

*It was so decided.*

### AGENDA ITEM 4

#### Election of the President

31. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I now invite the members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, the election will be held by secret ballot.

*At the invitation of the temporary President, Mr. Román (Nicaragua) and Mr. Ohin (Togo) acted as tellers.*

*A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	125
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	0
<i>Valid ballots:</i>	125
<i>Abstentions:</i>	1
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	124
<i>Required majority:</i>	63

*Number of votes obtained:*

Mr. Hambro (Norway) . . . . .	122
Mr. Piñera (Chile) . . . . .	1
Mr. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) . . . . .	1

<sup>1</sup>Held at New Delhi from 1 February to 29 March 1968.

*Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Edvard Hambro (Norway) was elected President of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.*

32. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Hambro and invite him to assume the Presidency of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

*Mr. Hambro took the Chair.*

*Address by Mr. Edvard Hambro, President of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly*

33. The PRESIDENT: I thank the Assembly very much indeed for the trust it has placed in me by electing me to preside over the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session. I shall do my utmost to serve the Assembly and the Organization in the spirit of the Charter and in accordance with the high example which has been set by those who have preceded me on this rostrum—most recently by Mrs. Angie Brooks-Randolph, the Assistant Secretary of State of Liberia, to whom we all pay homage for the warmth and immediacy of her personality, for her long-standing commitment to the United Nations and its work and for having conducted us safely through the last session of the General Assembly.

34. I shall gratefully count on the co-operation of all representatives, and particularly the Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the Main Committees. I shall equally rely on the wise counsel of our most distinguished and beloved Secretary-General and on the experience and support of my old friend and collaborator of more than twenty-five years, Constantin Stavropoulos, and all his able collaborators.

35. The General Assembly meets today for its twenty-fifth session, and we observe this milestone by a solemn commemoration. But observance of ceremonial is not enough. We must use this occasion to reassess our experience, to evaluate our present situation, and to draw up better plans for a future of which we can still only perceive the vague outlines.

36. The Assembly has already given us a framework for this task by adopting as the central theme the words "Peace, justice and progress". This demanding motto, where each element depends on both the others, sums up with sweeping generality and simplicity mankind's hopes for the United Nations.

37. Attitudes towards progress have varied from time to time, but mankind has always striven to improve its lot. Since the unlocking of the atom, society and its sciences have developed faster than in any other period in the history of the globe—for better or for worse. We have penetrated to the infinitesimal, from atom to neutron and electron and even to anti-matter. We have soared to the infinite. We have explored the vast spaces surrounding us. We have descended to the depths of the oceans. Mankind is making a world controlled by computers, and we have started to

unravel the mysteries of the chemistry of life and to gain the means to control thought and emotion.

38. But our progress has been uneven. The world's material wealth has increased as a result of our scientific advances, and yet millions of persons today seem destined for wretched lives in squalor and in hunger. And we know that scientific innovation and technical progress have brought us benefits, but also forces of destruction more frightening than ever before, embodying a threat of nuclear annihilation. Advances in medicine and public health have permitted unprecedented population increases. But we have not yet sufficiently improved our ability to feed or gainfully employ the new millions. Social stability is jeopardized and the very survival of mankind is at stake.

39. In our pursuit of material progress we have been greedy and ignorant. The debasement of our environment has become a companion to affluence. Our atmosphere is contaminated; our waters are poisoned; life on land and in the seas is impaired and the living resources are being destroyed. It is a price which mankind cannot long afford to pay. The erosion of our environment is accelerating and must be checked by immediate and concerted action. For pollution knows of no national borderlines, recognizes no political sovereignty, and does not, in the final analysis, distinguish between rich and poor.

40. The speed of progress has broken the harmony of development and social adjustment of former times and man finds himself troubled by spiritual conflict. Young people are questioning old values and their relevance to new situations.

41. Justice, the second element of our theme, is an abstract value. It is connected with certain notions that we all have accepted. The concept of equality is one of them. This encompasses the equality and sovereignty of all nations and the equal treatment of all individuals. It comprises the right of all peoples to self-determination. It means also the right of all men to certain fundamental freedoms and respect for the dignity of every human being. And justice has an even richer texture. It means less national selfishness and greater willingness to make sacrifices for the common good. It means that everyone has a right to a minimum standard of life and that all nations should share equitably in the fruits of technical and economic progress.

42. Our conception of justice is always contained within the realities of a social framework. Justice requires a sharing of certain basic values and a will to observe certain patterns of behaviour. These are necessary prerequisites for any society. A tradition of observing common habits and shared convictions creates law. But law is not only tradition. Law must also allow development and must provide the means for change. Law must embrace both justice and tradition in order to balance within its system the conflicting desires and interests of competing social forces, and to reconcile them without resort to violence.

43. Peace, justice, and progress—peace itself depends on justice and progress. War is the negation of justice and makes a mockery of progress.



44. The main purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance and safeguarding of international peace. The primary task of the principal organs and the fundamental obligation of Member States is to work incessantly for this purpose.

45. But peace is not the mere absence of armed conflict. Even when wars are absent there is no peace. When the nations of the world spend staggering amounts to arm against each other there is no peace. When armaments take precedence over the need to provide a dignified standard of life for everyone, there is no peace. Peace requires a constant commitment on the part of every member of the international community. Peace must be gained anew in every decision that affects international life. The necessity of peace—the demands of justice, the promise and ambivalence of progress—forms the basis for our discussion and examination of the United Nations and for the improvement of the procedures and mechanisms which have been given us under the Charter.

46. Over the past twenty-five years the United Nations has been an indispensable factor in maintaining the security of the world. We have avoided a world war and the Armageddon of a nuclear holocaust.

47. On the other hand, there have been many conflicts and serious international crises. There have been far too many; some of them are still with us today, causing great suffering and taking an unrelenting toll of human life. Certain conflicts remain from the chaos that was brought about by the Second World War, and others are of more recent origin, proving that the international community has still not sufficiently developed its capacity for settling political differences without recourse to force.

48. Certain events have occurred over the past few months which may have given the anxious millions new hope. There may be progress in the strategic arms limitation talks; the United Nations role in furthering a settlement of the Middle East question was reactivated; and, in Europe, two major Powers have pledged themselves to avoid the use of force.

49. These recent developments have one common and encouraging feature. Governments have decided that diplomatic negotiation is a more promising avenue towards a desired goal than the use of force, openly or by implied threat. The choice of negotiation and diplomacy instead of forcible action seems an utterly rational one. It shows a recognition that certain overriding, common interests are stronger than particular, immediate objectives.

50. For the world has become smaller and more interdependent. Events in one part of the world affect us all. Disputes between two nations can have fatal consequences for third parties and for all mankind. What happens within one nation may have a crucial bearing on others. Our rapidly advancing technology is providing new fields of endeavour. We have acquired new means of dominating our material environment, at the same time as we run the risk of destroying it. It is

an imperative task for the world Organization to make science and technology the servant and not the master of mankind.

51. In order to deal effectively with these realities of the present-day world, we will have to establish new patterns of international co-operation. We may have to re-evaluate some of the principles that have governed international society. The ideology of national sovereignty has been an instrument for national liberation, and it remains in the minds of many the ultimate guarantee for the safeguarding of national identity and for maintaining the cultural diversity which we value. But in dealing with the problems of the future, problems which embrace and go beyond the field of political conflict, we must learn to co-operate in a new way in order to reach agreed solutions. Each nation must learn to accommodate itself to the common interests of the world community. We must realize that our mutual interdependence will demand greater international solidarity in the future. The fragmentary international society of yesterday is obsolete. We are now in a stage of transition, and we look forward to the integrated community of tomorrow.

52. The future organization of international society must be based on agreed and accepted procedures for dealing with international disputes, under more effective rules of international law. Only thus can we protect the rights and the human dignity of every person, regulate international commerce and communications, ensure economic development and improve social conditions in all countries. The machinery for attaining these objectives may take various forms, but it seems inevitable that we must strive for more effective forms of organized international collaboration both on a regional and on a world-wide scale. One can envisage a steadily expanding network of international organizations with the United Nations as its most comprehensive and authoritative exponent. In this network of international organizations no nation must be excluded from effective participation.

53. The international community must make a conscious effort to move in this direction. We hope and trust that all States, super-Powers as well as smaller nations, are prepared to strengthen the Organization to enable us to take concerted action in all fields to solve our common problems. There is some encouragement in the history of the past twenty-five years. We must have learned the lesson that confrontation and violence of all kinds lead to polarization and a deepening of conflicts. Tolerance, negotiation and compromise form the only basis for the settlement of differences. The common experience of working together in the United Nations has brought about a gradual change in the outlook and convictions of the men who lead nations. An increasing number of national leaders seem to realize the imperative necessity of modifying some of the traditional habits of international conduct. Nations today are beginning to submit their national interest to the common interests of mankind, in conformity with the fundamentally democratic principles of the Charter.

54. Our Charter, the fruit of a few hectic weeks of concentrated activity at San Francisco, has survived criticism, surmounted obstructionism, and overcome serious international disagreement. Perfectionists may be dissatisfied with our Charter, and at times they insist on its revision. However, the experience of twenty-five years has shown that the Charter has proved sufficiently flexible to adapt to the ever-changing needs and situations, and to provide a framework, a machinery for serious negotiations which has been steadily improved since the early years of our Organization.

55. But that machinery still requires further development and further sophistication. Specifically there is a need to broaden the scope for peaceful settlement of international disputes. We must improve our methods of peaceful settlement to ensure that the United Nations can act before a situation so deteriorates that peace, justice and reason cede to violence and force.

56. Furthermore, the capacity of the Organization to deal with the whole range of economic and social development must be improved. It is not enough to concentrate on the peace-keeping function of the United Nations, important as that is. The Organization must also develop the capacity for peace-making. We must not only halt the use of force and settle disputes peacefully. We must deal with those basic faults of contemporary society which lead men to violence in desperation over their condition. Some of these problems concern the development and distribution of material benefits. Others are concerned with ideological and psychological motives for man's actions. Racial antagonism, disregard of fundamental human rights and intolerance between groups constitute potential threats to international peace to the same extent as conflicts between nations.

57. The United Nations has recognized that a nation is but the sum of the men and women who form part of it and that the strength of a nation depends on the freedom and well-being of all its citizens. We have recognized the rights of the individual and we know that the suffering and humiliation of human beings everywhere is ultimately our common concern. The

practice of the United Nations has shown that violations of human rights no longer can be said to fall exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of States. All men have a right to self-respect and dignity, irrespective of race, creed and culture. They must have a right to live and work in peace and dignity. They have a right to their share of material progress. To ensure the full enjoyment of these rights, the United Nations will need more funds for economic and social development and for humanitarian purposes, and the Organization will need to develop better and more effective procedures for upholding human rights and values.

58. I think that we realize that our success in this hall depends on the support and concern of women and men all over the world, of all the individuals who will be following the deliberations of the General Assembly at this anniversary session. Those who observe the United Nations from the outside may have experienced deeper disappointments over the last twenty-five years than those of us who work within the Organization and see the cautious progress and the small triumphs that give us the encouragement to carry on. It is our task today to rekindle the enthusiasm of public opinion and restore the confidence of the millions who have placed their hopes in our work.

59. We know the problems; we have the instruments. We must also have the will to act with a sober sense of the need of all nations for justice and for peace. Let us work, honestly and with humility, to concentrate our efforts on all that we have in common, and all that unites us.

### *Organization of work*

60. The PRESIDENT: Rule 105 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides that each Committee shall elect its own Chairman, taking into account equitable geographical distribution and the experience and personal competence of the candidates. In accordance with past practice we shall now hold successive meetings of each main committee in the Assembly Hall to elect Committee Chairmen.

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*