

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records



COMMEMORATIVE SESSION  
14 to 24 October 1970\*

**1883rd  
PLENARY MEETING**

Saturday, 24 October 1970,  
at 10.45 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 21:

Celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (*continued*)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Speech by Mr. Okoi Arikpo, Commissioner for External Affairs of Nigeria .....              | 3 |
| Speech by Mr. Sanga Kittikachorn, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand .....    | 3 |
| Speech by Mr. Stefan Jedrychowski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland .....            | 4 |
| Speech by Mr. Mario Gibson Barboza, Minister for External Relations of Brazil .....        | 5 |
| Speech by Mr. Yvon Beaulne, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations ..... | 6 |
| Speech by U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations .....                           | 7 |
| Speech by Mr. Edvard Hambro, President of the General Assembly .....                       | 8 |

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

**AGENDA ITEM 21**

**Celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (*continued*)**

1. The PRESIDENT: On this day 25 years ago the Charter of the United Nations entered into force. It had been signed only four months before in San Francisco on 26 June 1945. It was a remarkable sign of the united will of States that such an important document could have been ratified so quickly.

2. Last year the General Assembly decided, by its resolution 2499 A (XXIV), that the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations should culminate "on 24 October 1970 with the signing and/or adoption of a final document or documents". In the same resolution the General Assembly requested the preparation of documents on the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, on the development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, on the Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. The texts of the documents prepared in compliance with this request of the General Assembly will be found in document A/L.600.

3. The first text contained in that document requires no action by the Assembly today. This is the pro-

\*The 1865th to 1870th, 1872nd to 1879th and 1881st to 1883rd meetings contain the speeches made during the twenty-fifth anniversary commemorative session.

gramme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was adopted earlier this session by the General Assembly.

4. In this respect it will be recalled that, as part of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly held a special commemorative meeting on 14 October to mark the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

5. In anticipation of that occasion, the General Assembly adopted at its 1862nd plenary meeting, on 12 October, the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration which is contained in resolution 2621 (XXV) of the same date.

6. In drawing Members' attention to that programme of action, I should like to recall in particular the statement made on the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Declaration by the distinguished Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four, His Excellency Ambassador Davidson Nicol. I should like to recall also my own concluding statement of that day:

"Let us find reinforcement in the principles of the Declaration, in the programme for further action which has been drawn up. Let us concentrate on constructive imagination to work for the full implementation of the Declaration and for the realization of that hope for 'freedom and progress' which forms the theme for this solemn commemoration."  
[1866th meeting, para. 178.]

7. The Assembly will now proceed to take formal action on the remaining documents. We turn first to the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the text of which is contained in section II of document A/L.600.

8. Bearing in mind the views and positions of Member States expressed in the course of the elaboration of the Declaration, which are to be found in the relevant records of the United Nations, I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt that Declaration.

*It was so decided.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>See resolution 2625 (XXV).

9. As a man of law I am particularly happy to have just announced the adoption of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This marks the culmination of many years of effort for the progressive development and codification of the concepts from which basic principles of the Charter are derived. The Assembly will remember that when we first embarked upon these efforts many doubted that it would be possible to obtain a result which would be acceptable to all the various political, economic and social systems represented in the United Nations. Today those doubts have been overcome. In a sense, however, the work has just begun. We have proclaimed the principles; from now on we must strive to make them a living reality in the life of States, because these principles lie at the very heart of peace, justice and progress.

10. The General Assembly will now take up the international development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, the text of which is contained in the draft resolution in section III of document A/L.600. Taking into account the statements made in the consideration of the elaboration of the strategy, I presume it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution.

*It was so decided.<sup>2</sup>*

11. The General Assembly accordingly proclaims the Second United Nations Development Decade starting from 1 January 1971 and adopts the international development strategy for the Decade.

12. This is indeed an historic moment. For the first time the international community has decided to embark on an integrated and comprehensive endeavour to realize the fundamental social and economic objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In this strategy the Governments pledge themselves, individually and collectively, to pursue policies designed to create a more just and rational world economic and social order.

13. The principal objective is to achieve an over-all rate of economic growth of the developing countries of at least 6 per cent and a per head growth rate of about 3.5 per cent. Concerted efforts will be made to bring about a more equitable distribution of income and wealth, to raise substantially the level of employment and to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare and to safeguard the environment.

14. While the primary responsibility for their development rests upon developing countries themselves, they will need to be assisted through increased financial resources and more favourable economic and commercial policies on the part of developed countries. In this context, one of the most significant policy measures will be the attainment by developed countries of the net aid-volume target of one per cent of their gross national product.

<sup>2</sup>See resolution 2626 (XXV).

15. I am sure that I am reflecting the aspirations of the peoples of the world when I express the hope that the political will, sagacity and vision which led to the launching of the Second United Nations Development Decade and the adoption of the international development strategy will continue to guide Governments in pursuing, in a determined way, the achievement of the objectives and the implementation of the policy measures contained in the strategy.

16. Now the General Assembly will take up the Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, which appears in section IV of document A/L.600. While taking into account the positions taken and the reservations made previously by a number of delegations, I take it that the General Assembly considers the Declaration adopted.

*It was so decided.<sup>3</sup>*

17. The General Assembly has just adopted as the final act of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the United Nations an important Declaration on the occasion of this anniversary. In this Declaration we, the representatives of States Members of the Organization, solemnly reaffirm our dedication to the Charter of the United Nations and our will to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter. We review the record of the United Nations in the last 25 years in the manifold fields of its activities. In the Declaration, we make a positive assessment that our Organization, despite its limitations, has made an important contribution in these various fields. The Declaration further presents the perspective of the serious remaining tasks confronting our Organization and concludes on a note of confidence that the actions of the United Nations will be conducive to the advancement of mankind upon the road to peace, justice and progress.

18. Now let us turn our eyes to another hall in this building because, while the Assembly has been meeting in commemorative session, the Security Council also has made an important contribution to the history of the United Nations. A part of the Charter came alive for the first time when the Security Council held its first periodic meeting earlier this week, and, though not planned last year as part of the commemorative activities, the meeting was held in the spirit of the anniversary. The Council defined the goals of the United Nations with regard to two of the most intractable international problems of the day, those of southern Africa and of the Middle East, and in dealing with the latter it gave a lead to the debates of the Assembly which will begin shortly. Equally important, the Council examined the fundamental problem of strengthening its capability to act effectively for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agreed on the desirability of certain steps which we all hope will be carried out successfully, with the aid of further periodic meetings of the Council.

19. I now call on His Excellency Mr. Okoi Arikpo, Commissioner for External Affairs of Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup>See resolution 2627 (XXV).

20. Mr. ARIKPO: Twenty-five years ago today the Charter of the United Nations came into effect. It was the most dramatic event of the first half of this century. Two catastrophic wars had inflicted such untold human misery and caused such frightening destruction of some of the best achievements of man that everywhere there was a profound determination that it should never happen again. An international Organization, based on the most virtuous principles of international order, was brought into being to promote for mankind the three central tasks of our Charter: peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building. Today, we celebrate the end of a quarter of a century of this inspiring experiment in a new form of international co-operation. That achievement by itself is tremendous.

21. I speak on this solemn occasion on behalf of the 41 African States Members of this Organization, only a few of which started as founding Members of the United Nations. The African presence here has grown in size largely because of the efforts of the Organization. Most of our countries were not parties to the original agreements and arrangements on which the Organization is structured. Nevertheless, on accession to membership of the world body, we accepted without any reservation its commitment to building the superstructure of a world order based on peace, justice and progress. We venture to believe that our participation here as representatives of a long exploited and brutalized continent has not only enlarged the scope and responsibilities of the United Nations system but has also increased its moral stature as the keeper of the world's conscience. Today, the United Nations—at the twenty-fifth milestone of its existence—is more truly a world Organization.

22. The 16 commemorative meetings which we have held in the past 10 days have provided fitting subject-matter for our celebrations. We have been able to assess, dispassionately and objectively, the successes and failures of our joint endeavours in the past 25 years. This has been a serious and worth-while exercise in self-examination and self-criticism.

23. Emerging from our discussions we have solemnly adopted by acclamation this morning three very important Declarations of our fundamental beliefs, which are likely to contribute tremendously to the achievement of the principles and purposes of the Charter of our Organization. The Declaration relating to the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations has elaborated the various principles upon which a new world order should be based. The Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary, which was the result of tremendous effort on the part of the Committee for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, has underlined the hopes which Members have for the future. What is more important to the group I have the honour to represent is the development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. The adoption of that strategy gives the assurance that Members of this Organization, particularly those from the developed world, have at last come to recognize

the necessity for intensifying efforts for bridging the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots". There is no greater threat to international stability than the situation in which more than two thirds of the world's population live in conditions of abject poverty, while the remaining third lives in great affluence. The improvement in the economic conditions of the great majority of the Members of this Organization who belong to the developing countries is in itself a vital factor in the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why we attach great importance to this document and the commitment which the developed countries have made to the fulfilment of the goals and targets contained therein.

24. At the seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity held at Addis Ababa last month, all African countries unanimously adopted a Declaration on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In that Declaration, Africa reaffirmed its faith in the indispensability of the United Nations as an instrument for the maintenance of world peace and security and the promotion of genuine co-operation among nations. Moreover, Africa expressed the hope that this Organization will rise to the lofty ideals of its Charter by tackling more effectively the explosive situation in southern Africa. We are therefore encouraged by the Declaration on colonialism and *apartheid*. We in Africa cannot over-emphasize our determination to fight these two evils with all the means at our disposal, confident that our objectives are in conformity with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Let us therefore resolve, as a climax to our commemoration, to proceed with vigour to tackle our unfinished business of restoring to the downtrodden people of southern Africa their human dignity and their inalienable right to self-determination and the enjoyment of freedom; let us join hands in eliminating *apartheid*; let us eschew force as an instrument of peace; let us co-operate in promoting the economic and social development of peoples everywhere. May the ideals of the United Nations continue to flourish and blossom in the interest of the happiness of mankind.

25. The PRESIDENT: I call on His Excellency Mr. Sanga Kittikachorn, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

26. Mr. KITTIKACHORN: It is a great pleasure and privilege for the delegation of Thailand and for myself in particular that the honour of representing the Asian Group on the final day of the commemorative session falls on Thailand, a country which serves as host to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and many other United Nations regional agencies.

27. We in the Asian Group are especially proud of the fact that one of the most distinguished sons of Asia has for the past nine years been serving as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. To U Thant we pay a special tribute for his unfailing faith in the

Charter of the United Nations and his dedicated service to the Organization.

28. The United Nations is today celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary in the midst of uneasiness and discontent. Yet, with its obvious shortcomings and inherent weaknesses, the United Nations is still the only global instrument that we, the peoples of the world, have for establishing international order and security. It has saved one generation from "the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". It has raised the level of the "dignity and worth of the human person". It has succeeded in many parts of the globe in obtaining "equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". It has made significant headway in establishing "conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained". It has promoted "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

29. While much remains to be accomplished—and accomplished at a much faster pace—the list of achievements by the United Nations is by no means unsubstantial. What is more important, however, is that there is no better alternative. It is, therefore, incumbent upon each and every Member nation and Government to ensure that the world Organization is given a better chance to fulfil the promises enunciated in the Charter and the aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations.

30. Mr. President, on behalf of the Asian Group, I pledge to you and to the Secretary-General our loyal support and whole-hearted co-operation to that end.

31. The PRESIDENT: I call on His Excellency Mr. Stefan Jedrychowski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

32. Mr. JEDRYCHOWSKI (*translated from Russian*): Mr. President, on behalf of the group of socialist countries—Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, the Ukraine and Poland—I should like to express the conviction that, under your distinguished and capable leadership, the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly will be of great importance in strengthening the role played by the United Nations in the life of the international community. This will be so, because of the solemn commemorative session and because of the importance of the questions which have been discussed from the very beginning of the session and which will continue to be discussed here.

33. The most important question being discussed is the strengthening of international security. The inclusion of this question in the agenda at the initiative of the socialist States is a reaffirmation of the fundamental tasks of the United Nations. It also reflects the urgent demands of the world of today, because it is only in conditions of universal peace and security that a satisfactory solution can be found to the great problems which the present already poses for nations and which the future will bring with it.

34. For this reason, during the present session of the General Assembly, a majority of delegations are so insistently demanding that we put an end to the armed conflicts which have been caused by aggression in the Middle East and in Indo-China and to achieve a peaceful political settlement. In view of their dangerous political, social and economic consequences, the most urgent task at present is to put an end to those conflicts. We attach the greatest importance also to the adoption of measures designed to strengthen international security both on a world-wide and on a regional scale. The socialist countries hope that an appropriate declaration on this important question will be adopted by the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

35. The nation's desire to strengthen peace and international security was reflected in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, which reaffirms the most important tasks and principles of our Organization in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereignty, equal rights, territorial integrity of every State, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the rights of all peoples freely to choose their social system. This very desire is the keynote of the approach adopted by the socialist countries and the majority of other States towards all questions and decisions connected with the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

36. If our Organization's role in this field is to be strengthened, the principle of universality must be fully applied, in particular by admitting both German States—the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany—to United Nations membership and by restoring the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China.

37. It is also very important that a document was approved at this session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration on the elimination of the colonial system, which was adopted 10 years ago at the initiative of the Soviet Union. The remaining vestiges of colonialism, racist régime and neo-colonial forms of exploitation are incompatible with the principle of self-determination of peoples underlying the Charter of the United Nations. They are also incompatible with peace and international security. Effective measures must also be taken to bring about the full and speedy implementation of that Declaration, as envisaged in the programme of action adopted at this session.

38. We have always attached great significance to the acceleration of the economic growth of the developing countries and, in this connexion, we considered the document adopted at this meeting on the Second United Nations Development Decade to be very important. In the interests of strengthening peace throughout the world, we must eliminate disparities in levels of social and economic development, which are the result of foreign colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. On the other hand, this can be achieved only in conditions of continuous peace. The elimination of this disparity will require not only the greatest mobilization by

individual countries of their own resources, expanded international economic, scientific and technological co-operation and foreign aid, but also the easing of political tension and the cessation of the arms race, which is consuming the resources for the peaceful development of mankind.

39. We shall strive to ensure that our work during the rest of this session promotes significant progress in the question of disarmament. We believe there are real prospects for adopting a treaty on the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and giving suitable guidance and impetus to the work on the preparation of a treaty on the prohibition and elimination of chemical and biological weapons. This session would thus be taking an important new step towards the chief goal of universal and complete disarmament.

40. The twenty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly has written an important page in the history of the codification of the principles concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States. The document adopted on this question reflects the principles of peaceful coexistence of States with different political and social systems. It also reflects the general policy of the socialist States, which are struggling for peaceful coexistence—the only alternative to another world war and the basis for comprehensive international co-operation.

41. The twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly will continue its work and will undoubtedly take other important decisions concerning various aspects of United Nations activity. The socialist countries will continue in the future, as they have done in the past, to make every effort to enhance the role of the United Nations in the strengthening of international peace and security. It was precisely in order to achieve peace, security and co-operation that the United Nations was established 25 years ago. This is precisely what all peoples of the world expect from the United Nations.

42. The PRESIDENT: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mario Gibson Barboza, Minister for External Relations of Brazil.

43. Mr. GIBSON BARBOZA (*interpretation from Spanish*): On the occasion of this twenty-fifth anniversary session of the United Nations the 23 countries of the Latin American Group wish to renew their pledge of allegiance to the Charter of San Francisco and to proclaim their unswerving determination to continue their common effort strictly to abide by the purposes and principles of our Organization.

44. During the past 25 years and in the course of this session of the General Assembly the Latin American nations have consistently tried to realize the hopes and promises of San Francisco; they have tried, more precisely, to respect the solemn commitments and obligations which they assumed in this international instrument which, in accordance with its Article 103, must take precedence over any obligations assumed

by Member States in any other international agreement. That Article, which should be frequently invoked and systematically respected, makes the Charter the constitutional framework of a new international order. It is not, therefore, a question of expressing highest hopes that the norms which govern the conduct of international relations should, slowly and gradually, be brought into line with the purposes and principles of the Charter, in terms of the objectives of peace, justice and progress. The problem involved is much more urgent and clear-cut: an attempt must be made to determine whether nations, great or small, nuclear or non-nuclear, developed or developing, weak, powerful or super-powerful, are willing to assume clear and direct obligations under positive international law and to renounce the threat or the use of force in the settlement of international problems. The Latin American nations are not proposing new principles; we are proposing only compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention, abstention from the threat or use of force, self-determination of peoples, and territorial integrity. We are not, as I say, proposing any new principles.

45. In a document submitted to the General Assembly [A/C.1/L.517], the Latin American countries clearly affirmed that true peace and genuine security—I would stress the words “true” and “genuine”—require that all States abide faithfully by the purposes and principles set out in the Preamble to the Charter. Therefore, efforts to strengthen international security and to bring about a relaxation of international tension will have enduring and lasting effect only if they are carried out within the framework of the Charter and are aimed at establishing a new international order which ensures justice for all States and all men. For Latin America, peace coincides with justice, and justice coincides with progress. And international security means, very simply, security for all—I repeat—for all nations. That is the ultimate purpose of the joint document submitted to the General Assembly as an expression of our ideas and our political will.

46. The Latin American nations have also asserted their conviction that there is an intimate interrelationship between the concepts of international security, disarmament and economic development, so that any progress made towards any one of those objectives will constitute progress towards all of them. We regret that this interrelationship, which is so very obvious to us, has not yet been more positively recognized in the documents and texts we are adopting today. These documents, even the one on strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, make us realize that there still remains a great deal to be done in order to achieve our objectives. No one can rightly deny that the strategy, with all its flaws and shortcomings, does represent some progress, inasmuch as it embodies certain concessions by the developed countries and demonstrates a less negative attitude on their part. No one can rightly deny that some important measures have been adopted since 1960, or even since 1964, for that matter, when the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was convened

in Geneva. But the fact is that the problems of the developing countries have been aggravated at a much more accelerated pace than that of the changing moods and attitudes of the developed countries. As a result of this new gap—the gap between grim reality and half-hearted intentions—we today, at the launching of the next Decade, face a situation more serious than that of 1960. For these reasons let us devote our efforts to a strategy based on imagination, boldness in planning and creativity, and not on immobility, inaction and accepting things as they are, on the pretext of being realistic.

47. We can today frankly and clearly say that instead of strategy for stability we have strategy for dynamism. I will not answer that, but I would say that history clearly shows that it is futile to attempt to immobilize the present. Some day, somehow, the future will come.

48. In their joint document on peace and security, the Latin American countries assumed a firm and resolute position in favour of putting an end to the arms race, the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the condemnation of colonial oppression in any form, and effective respect for and full exercise of human rights. These, in our opinion, are the fundamental and essential conditions for security among all States, all nations and all men. In the final analysis, that is the task of our Organization; it must plan for the future of man. The United Nations would have failed to achieve its objectives and been untrue to its purposes and principles if it did not now lay the foundation for peace based on justice and for a future of justice inspired by progress and freedom.

49. If the present commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary were merely an end in itself, our presence in this hall could neither be explained nor justified. We have not come here merely to contemplate the past, but to create the future. Our presence here should not mark the end of a period, but the inception of a new era—an era in which the United Nations will effectively devote itself to the lofty objectives of the Charter.

50. This is not, therefore, the time for us to congratulate ourselves; it is rather a moment for reflection; above all, it is the time to act.

51. It is in this spirit that we, the Latin American nations, take part in the commemoration of this twenty-fifth anniversary. This should be a new point of departure for the United Nations—a point of departure towards peace, justice and progress—a point of departure towards genuine brotherhood among all men on the face of the earth. That is the message of Latin America at this time of rededication to the ideals of the Charter.

52. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yvon Beaulne, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations.

53. Mr. BEAULNE (*interpretation from French*): My colleagues of the Western European group and

other States have asked me to represent them at this rostrum as we approach the close of the commemorative session over which one of our number—you, Mr. President—has presided with such tact, competence and dignity. I appreciate the honour they have done me and my country in asking me to act as their spokesman.

54. In the last 10 days many prominent contemporary figures, heads of State and heads of Government, have with eloquence and wisdom made known the needs, thoughts, interests and hopes of the people they govern. We now know that the success or failure of the United Nations should be judged not by whether it has overridden those individual interests but by whether it has protected them, not by whether it has lent itself to the purposes of any one Member or group of Members but by whether it has reconciled the aspirations of all.

55. Peace, justice and progress are three inseparable objectives. Balance sheets do not show real prosperity if they do not take into account the poverty that often is the price of economic growth. Ecological and social criteria become as important as increases in production in determining the material progress of a society. We cannot accept the recovery of human rights by peoples deprived of them at the cost of the rights of others. If the enjoyment of rights is to be called justice, we must defend those rights already won even as we assist in the attainment of those not yet achieved. Security won by submission to force can be called peace only if we mean the peace of the grave.

56. Even in those nations that have been spared violence, human dignity and compassion must now be proof against brutish enemies who try to rivet mankind in the shackles of terror. They think open society is feeble because it is tolerant. But they are wrong.

57. The United Nations must prove itself in the same way. Each one of us must be ready to accept the legitimacy of needs that differ from our own. We must not pursue factional advantage to the detriment of purposes which are more useful and more generally shared. In the drafting of documents that have just been adopted, we have seen that it is sometimes better to compromise. If we reached agreement, it is because all of us in a certain measure deferred to the opinions of others. These documents on the twenty-fifth anniversary—the Strategy for the Second Development Decade and the Declaration on Friendly Relations among States—are landmarks in the history of the United Nations.

58. As the rhetoric and ceremony of these celebrations draw to a close, I should like to express the hope that this anniversary be considered not just the end of a journey but a new beginning, stimulating us to new efforts to implement the goals set down in the Charter. We must increase our efforts; as the Secretary-General said recently—and he is held in high esteem by all I have the honour to represent—"it will require a new will, new behaviour patterns and new forms of co-operation if these efforts are to succeed". The variations of our equations are innumerable. The



act of manipulation itself alters the result, and every result is no more than another variable in an infinitely receding series.

59. Peace, justice and progress will not be won by focusing on the endlessly changing and retreating target of perfection. Instead of aiming for inaccessible perfection, should we not be satisfied with the search for partial and attainable improvements? Provided we set no limit on the succession of objectives we pursue there will be no limit to the number we can achieve.

60. In the face of the very many tasks we have before us, in a world that has expanded to the galaxies, our self-confidence should not be based solely upon man's feats of the past. In retrospect we realize that we have done great things together. But it is now more important than ever before that we have courage and gather our forces as we look towards future accomplishments.

61. The PRESIDENT: I now call upon His Excellency U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

62. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: After all that has been said about the United Nations in this twenty-fifth anniversary year and in the last week's commemorative session, it would be superfluous for me to attempt another survey of the last 25 years or a declaration of objectives for the next 25. Most of us, I am sure, have a fairly clear idea of the shortcomings of the United Nations, of the reasons for them and also of the great aims which might so usefully be pursued in this Organization. We all know what the United Nations has done and what it has failed to do. And we all know how much more it could have done and should have done.

63. It is intolerable that the peoples of the world should have to live indefinitely on the brink of disaster and that so many of them continue in a state of utter misery. This is the root-cause of our general frustration. Our basic problems are ancient ones: the difficulty of putting accepted ideals and principles into practice and that paradox of human nature which gives men reason to discern the course which common sense and the common good prescribe and then impels them to proceed doggedly in the opposite direction of short-term self-interest even if it may lead to ultimate self-destruction.

64. Thus it has been for the most part in the first 25 years of the United Nations. With some notable exceptions, Member Governments have, in practice, been more preoccupied with using the United Nations as an instrument to promote their own national policies than as a new kind of organization in which the nations of the world in co-operation could forge and execute solutions to world problems and work together for a better future. And when the pursuit of narrow national interests has led to the brink of disaster, it has all too often been easy to say that it is the United Nations which has failed. It may be convenient to the Member States, and occasionally to national or world public opinion, to use the United Nations as a scapegoat,

overlooking its very real achievements in the face of tremendous odds. These achievements represent the occasional and tentative, if I may say so, but none the less admirable efforts of nations to break out of the habits of the past and to try to conduct their affairs in a way commensurate with the problems of the present and the challenges of the future. What has to come is an acceptance of the fact that what is good for the international community will in the long run be the best for each nation as well.

65. It is the brighter, more encouraging episodes in our 25-year history which we must cherish, study and build on. The record, as many leaders here have pointed out, is a considerable one, however imperfect. There is no cause, and no possible excuse, for despair. Even if all our great political problems were miraculously to vanish overnight, we would still be confronted with some of the gravest challenges the human race has ever faced. Clearly, we have no alternative but to persist with redoubled energy in trying to make this Organization, our only experiment in world order, really work and develop as the authors of the Charter hoped and intended.

66. In what circumstances has the United Nations worked best in the last 25 years? On the political side, it has worked best only in exceptional situations when the Members have been sufficiently alarmed by a crisis and when they have had confidence enough in the United Nations to give it the authority to do what was needed and to co-operate whole-heartedly in the process. If in the next 25 years the United Nations is to live up to its responsibilities for securing peace with justice and advancing human well-being, Governments will have to show a far more consistent and sincere confidence in their own ability to co-operate through the United Nations than they have shown in the past. This is not a question of whether the United Nations as such is a success or a failure. If there were any alternatives, the success or failure of the United Nations would be relatively unimportant, and the Organization could be safely consigned to the archives as yet another honourable historical experiment which ultimately failed to live up to its early promise.

67. But as far as I can see there simply is no alternative means in sight for attempting to deal with the swarm of increasingly urgent global problems which now beset us, especially now that survival itself may be the critical question. What other way is there out of the maze of national and special interests, preoccupations and priorities into the larger arena where we can at last face, head on, the monstrous problems of our time? The arms race, with its inexcusable risks and the 200 billion dollars a year which it costs, is at least a familiar and well-documented nightmare compared to some of the other consequences of rapid scientific and technological change which are now running away with our planet at a constantly accelerating pace. Population, poverty, food shortage, urbanization, the squandering of natural resources, the pollution of the whole environment: these are problems we have hardly begun to face, and yet the hour is already very late. As we watch the sun go down, evening after evening,

through the smog across the poisoned waters of our native earth, we must ask ourselves seriously whether we really wish some future universal historian on another planet to say about us: "With all their genius and with all their skill, they ran out of foresight and air and food and water and ideas". That is what they are going to say from another planet; or: "They went on playing politics until their world collapsed around them"; or: "When they looked up, it was already too late". If the United Nations does nothing else, it can at least serve a vital purpose in sounding the alarm.

68. The general directions in which we must move are obvious and, in principle at least, I believe that they are generally acceptable to all Governments, even if they have not yet been accepted in practice. We must move from power politics to collective responsibility, from narrow national or commercial interests to a sense of earth patriotism and global solidarity. In the United Nations we must achieve universality, so that all peoples on earth are represented and have a voice here. We must move at all levels of life from international anarchy to a just and respected code of international law and behaviour. We must eradicate the last persistent vestiges of colonialism, which is an intolerable anachronism in our time. We must eliminate completely the old forms of racism and ensure that new forms of that insidious disease are not allowed to develop. We must develop, with the minimum delay, adequate new international means to control our new and rapidly changing circumstances. We must build here in the United Nations an Organization which can rise above the old quarrels and conflicts of nations and peoples and ideologies, and which can tackle, in the interests of all mankind, the real problems of our planet as a whole, on a scale which can produce real results.

69. If I have expressed myself in somewhat dramatic terms it is because I believe that we are at a highly dramatic stage—and the drama might easily become a tragedy. But that need not happen. There is so much good in men and there is so much good in nations and most of us, I believe, have good intentions. The problem is to give effect to these intentions. "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil", Edmund Burke once said, "is for good men to do nothing." I hope that the nations of the world assembled in this Organization will not allow that judgement to be made of the United Nations. New forces are stirring in our world and new voices are being raised which demand peace, justice, progress and a new deal for mankind on a scale never before attempted. I hope and believe that in the 25 years to come the United Nations will respond in full measure to that demand. But I feel compelled to add that, in the end, success will depend upon the will of Governments and peoples.

70. Only 10 days ago, on 14 October, on the very day when the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations opened in this great hall, three atomic explosions took place in the world. Nothing could have illustrated more vividly the sad state of affairs which still prevails on earth 25 years after the Second World War.

71. On the closing day of our ceremonies, we must sound a note of warning about the possible drift of this magnificent Organization from the ideals, high hopes and determination of the great men who founded it after the holocaust of the Second World War. We have little time left to restore the faith which the peoples throughout the world had at the birth of this Organization. We have no right to be complacent with slow and partial results or with words and declarations unaccompanied by deeds.

72. There are two alternatives before this Organization: one is that there will be no moral force in this world, there will be no declaration of intent to abide by the Charter nor profession of faith in and commitment to its principles and purposes, and no change in our outmoded procedures and policies. The other alternative is for the Organization to receive stronger and heartier support from all its Member States, especially from the mightier ones; to become rapidly universal in its membership; and for its Member Governments to act and behave in such a way as to make steady progress towards a just, peaceful and prosperous human community so that this planet may be a safe place to live in. If the first course is followed this Organization will become increasingly irrelevant; the second alternative represents the road to a stronger and more effective United Nations fulfilling its primary purposes under the Charter. I am sure that, faced with these two alternatives, the good sense of the human race, of *homo sapiens*, will prevail.

73. The PRESIDENT: The commemorative session is drawing to its close. We have heard moving and brave words which have heartened us and strengthened us. We have also heard angry and bitter words. They do not dismay us because they mirror the world in which we live, where strife and struggle still abound and where poverty is far from being abolished. No celebration in this hall could or should conceal this fact.

74. Speakers have claimed that this is an historic session, but words alone cannot make us merit this epithet. Only the future can show whether this has indeed been an historic session. That will be decided not by the words of today but by the acts of tomorrow.

75. Yes, we have listened to many words. We have passed resolutions and adopted declarations of great importance and this should indeed not be minimized, for words have been of great importance to the history of mankind.

76. Words spoken on a mountain near the lake of Tiberius have reverberated throughout civilization for 2,000 years. Prophetic visions in the deserts of Arabia have inspired multitudes in three continents. And the sayings of a young prince in the lands of Asia still live in the hearts of millions. Declarations adopted nearly 200 years ago in tumultuous Paris and a little earlier in Philadelphia have changed the course of history.

77. But it is clear that even the best of declarations are not enough, if we do not act on the inspiration



we derive from them. Indeed, resolutions are a grave danger if they are not acted upon. Ignored principles, broken pledges and empty words may perhaps be the threnode of our Organization. We have sinned in that way in the past and we must recognize these mistakes in a spirit of humility.

78. But our task today is to look towards the future. We do it with courage in the face of tremendous difficulties. Our optimism will inspire us to begin the great

tasks. Our realism will steel us to continue the struggle. And do not let us forget that love of our fellow man, compassion and tolerance are the very basis for the solidarity of mankind which must inspire us all in the future.

79. I declare closed the commemorative session in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*