

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**1040th
PLENARY MEETING**

Thursday, 19 October 1961
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Address by Mr. Urho Kekkonen, President of the Republic of Finland

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): At this meeting, the General Assembly is to hear the President of the Republic of Finland. I ask the Chief of Protocol to be good enough to escort Mr. Kekkonen into this hall.
2. I have the honour to extend a sincere welcome to Mr. Urho Kekkonen, President of the Republic of Finland, who has kindly consented to address the General Assembly.
3. The moderation, active perseverance and realism so characteristic of the Nordic countries, of which Finland is an outstanding example, lend special importance to the remarks of the President of the Republic of Finland. Now that we have just concluded the general debate, these remarks will permit us to close the discussion on an agreeably peaceful note.
4. It is with real pleasure that I invite the President of the Republic of Finland to take the floor.
5. Mr. Urho KEKKONEN, President of Finland: I should like to thank the President for his kind words of welcome. His high office, the esteem and admiration we have for his person in Finland, gives special value and significance to the opinions he has been kind enough to express about my country.
6. It is for me a matter of deep satisfaction to see in this Hall so many representatives of States which have only recently joined the United Nations. We firmly believe in Finland that the necessary condition for the success of the United Nations is that the Organization should include all nations. But my satisfaction stems mainly from the fact that so many nations have now assumed, as sovereign States, full responsibility for their own fate and for their share in the fate of the earth. The great tasks of vanquishing threat and fear, of establishing peace and prosperity are not the concern of a limited number of chosen nations. Freedom and democracy and justice, all the values we cherish and want to strengthen, are not a privilege. They belong to all the peoples of the world. It is for all of us to build together the world of tomorrow, in harmony, in friendship, in peace and justice.
7. Finland believes in this Organization. When we applied for membership in 1947, the Government declared that Finland supported strongly and fully the

purposes of the United Nations. We knew how difficult its task would be but we wanted to join in its efforts. We approve of it today as strongly and fully as then. And we are as willing now as then to help make it an efficient and useful instrument for the strengthening of peace and for the defence of the dignity and worth of the human person. We have pledged ourselves to observe the Charter. We intend to abide by it as strictly and as scrupulously as we fulfill all our international commitments. We believe that only reliability can breed confidence; and we want the confidence of all.

8. We see the United Nations as a challenge to those blind divinities which are called fate, fatality or historical necessity. We see it as the expression of a universal will to avoid the errors of the past and to unite the wisdom and the strength of all in order to improve the lot of man.

9. We consider that it is our task here to narrow differences, to seek constructive solutions, rather than to sharpen or sustain existing conflicts or create new ones. We in Finland are to a large extent a nation of co-operators; and we know that true co-operation is best advanced by strong, independent-minded individuals. We believe in the possibility of harmonizing through conciliation dissimilar interests for the benefit of all.

10. Rather than as judges, we see ourselves here as physicians; it is not for us to pass judgement or to condemn but rather to diagnose and to try and cure.

11. We in Finland have learnt from our own experience that little, if anything, of lasting value can be achieved overnight. We know that it takes much hard work, much patience and single-mindedness to reach any worthwhile goal. Finland has been for a very long time a poor country where unrelenting efforts have been needed in order simply to ensure the mere existence of its inhabitants. Our soil is hard to till, our climate is not mild, we have fought many costly wars. We have had our ample share of hardships and difficulties.

12. But we know also, from our own experience, that much can be achieved when one sets oneself to a task. We are happy to note the success we have achieved in our endeavour to safeguard Finland's security, not by relying on military means, but by gaining the confidence of the great Power which is our neighbour, by maintaining friendly relations with all countries near and far, by dissociating ourselves from the conflicts of interest and the tensions existing between others, and by adhering faithfully to all obligations undertaken. Our policy of neutrality is designed, as we have said many times, to remove Finland without ambiguity from the realm of political speculation. We are grateful for the recognition that our attachment to independence, to democracy and to peace has received from every side.

13. I have been told that it has been considered here that Finland can afford to pay an increased contribution to the United Nations. And it has been pointed out to me that, among the Member States contributing more, only two have a smaller population than Finland. We are not going to contest those estimates. We are happy that our achievements have come to the attention of the United Nations.

14. We are also aware of the increased responsibilities we have incurred through this development. We intend to increase our contributions to the funds of the United Nations which has already done so much in helping those of our fellow Members which have not yet had the opportunity to develop their economy fully. This work of assistance is indeed among the noblest activities of the Organization, and we feel, as do our Scandinavian friends, that it is only fair to contribute to its success.

15. I am deeply aware of the gravity of the hour and of the many crucial issues the nations of the world face in this Assembly. I intended to state here the spirit of our general approach rather than our views on each of those problems.

16. I must, however, express the overriding concern of the Finnish people with the present stage of the disarmament problem. We have witnessed with increased anxiety the stupendous progress in armament techniques, the devising and the production of ever deadlier weapons. We have witnessed with equal anxiety the lack of progress in disarmament talks. We know of course

the many problems connected even with the reduction of the military potential of any State mindful of its security. But those problems are certainly bound to increase, and to multiply, if the present tragic development continues. It is our earnest hope that the Powers principally concerned will deal with the problem of disarmament with all the will to succeed they can muster. We hope that it will at least prove possible to arrive at effective measures which would enable us all to trust in the reality of peace.

17. When I planned my visit to the United Nations, I looked forward to meeting here, once again, Dag Hammarskjöld. He is no more among us. He gave his life for the cause of peace. I should like to pay tribute to his exceptional qualities and to his outstanding achievements. He was a great statesman and, what is more, a great man.

18. I should like to thank the President for letting me take the floor, and I wish to extend to him and to the General Assembly my most sincere wishes for success in the accomplishment of your duties.

19. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the President of the Republic of Finland for the admirable address which he has just delivered.

20. I ask the Members of the Assembly to remain in their seats while I escort the President of the Republic of Finland from this Hall.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.