

# United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Official Records



FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION

1204th  
PLENARY MEETING

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**President: Mr. Muhammad ZAFRULLA KHAN**  
(Pakistan).

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Zea (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

### Tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope John XXIII

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I feel that I should begin by noting that this is the first meeting of the General Assembly since the sad passing of His Holiness Pope John XXIII. I am sure that the Assembly will wish to express its feelings concerning this sorrowful event. During his brief pontificate of four and a half years, Pope John XXIII took his place among the greatest spiritual leaders in the history of mankind. In the troubled times in which we live, he manifested Christ's noble teachings of love and forgiveness, of reconciliation between men of every race and every creed and of different or even contrary ideologies. He was also an ardent crusader for world peace in these times. His apostolate embraced the entire world and extended to its remotest corners, and today the whole family of man, without distinction, mourns his passing and earnestly hopes that his beneficent influence will continue to irradiate the future of mankind. His pontificate was identified with the principles underlying our Charter and with the ideals for the attainment of which the world organization was specifically conceived and established - the rule of justice; the elimination of privilege; equality, prosperity and equal opportunity for all human beings; and the maintenance and full enjoyment of fundamental human rights. He had faith in our Organization as an effective instrument for the peaceful settlement of conflicts between States and for bringing States to live together in harmony. The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights found wide acceptance in his encyclicals, and especially the last of them, *Pacem in Terris*, which is one of the finest political and social documents of this century. For all these reasons, and irrespective of our religious beliefs or philosophical convictions, it is fitting that we should honour his memory and draw inspiration from his teachings.

2. I hope that my words will be accepted as an expression of the sorrow felt by the General Assembly

and by all distinguished representatives at the passing of Pope John XXIII, and I would request all representatives and all who are present here to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of the noble figure of the Pontiff.

*The representatives stood and observed a minute of silence.*

### Tribute to the memory of Mr. José Félix de Lequerica, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

3. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): We also learnt with deep regret of the death yesterday morning of our colleague, His Excellency Ambassador José Félix de Lequerica, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations.

4. His brilliance of mind, his friendliness and cordiality towards all his colleagues, and his high humanity made Ambassador de Lequerica one of the most outstanding members of the Assembly and one of the most well-known and admired figures in the United Nations. Our sense of loss is inexpressible.

5. On behalf of all representatives, I extend to Ambassador de Lequerica's family and to the Government and people of Spain our sincere condolences.

6. I invite the members of the General Assembly to stand and observe a minute of silence in his memory.

*The representatives stood and observed a minute of silence.*

### Address by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, President of the Republic of India

7. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I invite His Excellency Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, President of the Republic of India, to address the General Assembly.

8. Dr. Sarvepalli RADHAKRISHNAN (President of the Republic of India): I am very greatly honoured by the invitation to say a few words to this special session of the General Assembly.

9. The United Nations Organization symbolizes the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world for a central authority which can eventually control the activities of all nations. Science and technology have brought the world together and made of it a single body. Economic systems are becoming interdependent, intellectual ideas are circulating all over the world, and what is necessary is to give a soul to this Organization which is shaping itself before our eyes. The United Nations hopes to give that soul or that conscience to the world community which is emerging.

10. When the United Nations was starting it had fifty-one Members; today it has one hundred and

eleven. Still, it has not attained universality. If the decisions of the United Nations are to be depended upon, almost all the nations of the world should become members of this Organization. That is the one security we have for seeing to it that our decisions are implemented by all nations.

11. India was a founding Member of the United Nations. To the best of its ability it has contributed to the work of the United Nations. It has supplied forces in the Congo and Gaza, and the Chairman for the Korean Commission. In all these ways it has tried to help the work of the United Nations. India has extreme faith in the Organization and it will do everything in its power to strengthen the authority and influence of the United Nations.

12. There are many people who think that the United Nations has not done all that one could expect of it. But we should look to the work it has done: the work in the Congo, the encouragement it gave to liberation movements and the way in which it brought about a dispassionate and objective discussion of the problems of disarmament and a nuclear test ban. In these ways it has done a not insubstantial work, though it may not have reached the expectations we had.

13. In the specialized agencies of the United Nations much good work is being done. The Charter of the United Nations affirms faith in the worth and dignity of the human person. If you believe in the worth and dignity of the human individual, it is necessary for you to do anything and everything in your power to promote the integrity of the physical well-being of human individuals.

14. The Food and Agriculture Organization is attempting to remedy the defects which now prevail, namely that two-thirds of the world's population suffers from malnutrition and from hunger. That reality must be a reminder to us that we are not truly human until we are able to remove these deficiencies.

15. The World Health Organization affirms that every individual has a right to medical care and to conditions of health and sanitation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization wants to protect the moral personality, the cultural distinctiveness of every individual. It is not enough merely to live as physical beings in this world. We must develop our minds, hearts and spirit. By all its work, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is trying to do its best to promote the cultural personality, so to speak, of human beings themselves. These things are being attempted by the different agencies which we have.

16. In all these matters recently the Pope, whose death we mourn, has served the cause of humanity. As a true servant of God and humanity he tried to devote the last years of his life to the reconciliation of the peoples. But the main task of the United Nations is to save humanity "from the scourge of war", to use the words of the Charter. How can we save human generations from war? We are trying to remove the obvious causes of wars: political domination, racial discrimination and economic exploitation. In the past history of the world these were the things which led to wars. If we try our best to remove political domination, that is, to end colonialism, and if we also remove economic exploitation—in other words, if we bring about equal prosperity in all parts of the world and get rid of racial discrimination—we will build up

a world which can work for peace, which can make for peace. It is true that we are unable to do it effectively.

17. This decade has been called a Development Decade, but actually the disparities between the rich and the poor nations have been steadily on the increase. The undeveloped nations have not been able to get the technical knowledge and skill necessary for raising the standards of their peoples. Unless these things are brought to the doors of the common peoples of the developing nations, unless we help them with investment for capital, it is not possible for them to raise their standards. So what is called a Development Decade has not turned out to be truly a Development Decade. We must take some special steps to bring about real development there.

18. But the most essential part of the work of the United Nations is to save the world from wars. What is it that we find actually? The piling up of armaments and nuclear tests. These things do not give us much hope. We feel that if these armaments go on piling up and if these stockpiles increase, by accident, or by mistake, the world may burst into fragments. Even if that does not happen, when there are nuclear tests they are bound to injure, not only present generations, but also generations still unborn. We deliberately consign thousands and thousands of young children throughout the world to this kind of decadence, physical and mental. That is what we are doing. Why is it that when we actually know what the results of these things are we are unable to prevent them? There is something radically wrong.

19. We are the victims of the past; we do not wish to be the servants of the future. We are the victims of a nationalist and militarist kind of society. Other nations were regarded as supreme, and for achieving the aims and political ambitions of those nations we hitherto resorted to the use of force. But we have come to a condition when the nation-State has to be subordinated to the larger concept of world community. Unless we are able to do it, unless we give up the use of force, which is intolerable, detestable and wicked in a world where nuclear weapons have developed, it will not be possible for us to bring about peace in this world.

20. What are we trying to do? It is a change in the minds of men that has to be brought about. We are still believing in the nation-State and in the right to use force to have our own aims realized. These are the things which have us by the throat. Though we are members of this international community, though we call ourselves Members of the United Nations, our loyalties are to our own nation-States; they are not to the world as a whole, not to humanity as a whole. We must break away from the past, we must get out of the rut in which we have lived, Gandhi once said:

"I want my country to be free. I do not want a fallen and prostrate India. I want an India which is free and enlightened. Such an India, if necessary, should be prepared to die so that humanity may live."

21. Nationalism is not the highest concept. The highest concept is world community. It is that kind of world community to which we have to attach ourselves. It is unfortunate that we are still the victims of concepts which are outmoded and which are outdated. We are living in a new world, and in a new world a new type of man is necessary. Unless we are able to change our minds, to change our hearts, it

will not be possible for us to survive in this world. The challenge that is open to us is: is it to be survival or annihilation? It is easy for us to say that we wish to survive. But what are we doing to bring about that survival? Are we prepared to surrender a fraction of our national sovereignty for the sake of a world order? Are we prepared to submit our disputes and quarrels to arbitration, to negotiation and settlement by peaceful methods? Have we set up a machinery by which peaceful changes could easily be brought about in this world? So long as we do not have it there is no use in merely talking. The concept of one world must be implemented in every action of every nation if that one world is to become established. I have no doubt that the world will become one. As I stated the other day, it is in the mind of events, it is the will of the universe, it is the purpose of Providence. We are being led from State to State to the concept of one family on earth. If we are able to achieve it, we shall do so by handling our own minds and hearts.

22. Our task today is to deal with the souls of men. It is there that the changes have to be brought about. Before outer organizations are established, inward changes have to take place. An outer crisis is a reflection of an inner chaos and of the chaos inside the minds and hearts of men. If that is not removed, we cannot bring about a more satisfactory world order.

23. I have nothing more to say except to pay my tribute to your Secretary-General who has been quietly and unostentatiously doing the work of the United Nations despite so many obstacles, undaunted by many difficulties.

24. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of India for the important message we have just heard. I am sure that this message will be given special consideration by all of us.

*The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.*