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PLENARY MEETING**

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**President: Mr. Víctor A. BELAUNDE (Peru).**

**Address by H.E. Mr. Adolfo López Mateos, President of the  
United States of Mexico**

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As a Latin American, I take great pleasure in welcoming to this hall the President of the sister Republic of Mexico, Mr. Adolfo López Mateos.
2. I recall with emotion that, over the past ten centuries, Mexico and Peru have followed a parallel historical course, that the Congress of Panama was resumed at Tegucigalpa, and that the Chapultepec Conference, at which the countries of Latin America adopted a united attitude as regards the drafting of the Charter, gave a presage of the brilliant role which Mexico was to play in the United Nations. Mexico's contributions to world culture are the pride of America.
3. I call upon His Excellency the President of Mexico, Mr. Adolfo López Mateos, to address the Assembly.
4. Mr. Adolfo LOPEZ MATEOS, (President of the United States of Mexico) (translated from Spanish): In conveying to the nations represented in this Assembly the warm and friendly feelings of my country, I wish to reaffirm Mexico's profound faith in the future of this world Organization and its conviction, based on an analysis of the present international situation, that in the United Nations lies the best hope of surmounting the crisis through which the world is passing.
5. Mexico, a founding Member of the United Nations, welcomes with enthusiasm any proposal to bring the affairs of nations under the rule of law, particularly those which may create dissension or conflict, in order that, without offence to the dignity of the parties and in application of the principles of justice, solutions may be found conducive to peace, harmony and happiness for all concerned.
6. Our approach to international affairs is based on the firm belief that there are no conflicts which cannot be settled peacefully. If men have succeeded in living under a rule of law, subject to law and deferring to the law in the settlement of their disputes, why should not nations do likewise? Revolutionary Mexico was steeped in a philosophy which viewed international law as the logical extension of domestic law. We believe that freedom of the individual and freedom of nations are inseparable and interdependent. Nations are free only when they live in a free

country. The Mexican Revolution, the first successful one of this century, added to that traditional concept a new principle, namely, that individual freedom can only be fully exercised in an atmosphere of social justice. That is why my country fights for the independence of nations, the freedom of individuals and social justice for all communities.

7. The rules of law followed by this Organization were born of the same principles of human coexistence and transcend the geographical or historical boundaries between peoples and nations. These rules possess the necessary characteristics of universality, equity and moderation. International law has been and is still in process of being created by all nations; it rests on the free acceptance of its principles and the sincere will to respect its decisions. After every violation of its rules, it has emerged stronger and more robust.

8. Its basic principles are the equality of nations, the respect of all for the rights of each, the observance of treaties and agreements freely entered into, the right of every country to decide for itself the institutions which suit it best; the quest for peace based on the dignity of every people and supported by justice; the guarantee of fundamental human freedoms which must be enjoyed by all; and firm co-operation between nations aimed at extending prosperity to all parts of the world. These principles are the most generous established by man and have been reaffirmed at every stage of history.

9. From time to time, a crisis occurs in international life. These crises almost invariably arise from the latent conflict between past and present, between power and law. In our time, the discredited theory of the balance of power still influences power politics and impedes progress towards security within the law. The result is a conflict in which the very existence of each nation and of the world is at stake, and that is the major problem which the international community must urgently resolve.

10. In the present crisis, the future of the United Nations depends primarily on the solution which can be found for the disarmament problem, and on overcoming, in a courageous and honourable way, the urge to dominate, to prevail and to exercise hegemony which has long been the basic motive of the foreign policy of powerful nations.

11. Disputes and day-to-day problems are the sphere of action of international law and provide the impulse for a renewal of its formulas. The body of international law consists of tried principles, criteria and rules which men have found to be valid throughout history, as well as new principles, criteria and techniques whose utility and value they have already been able to judge. Thus, international law derives new life and new vigour from a crisis. An international social code emerged from the First World War and became

a decisive instrument in the struggle for justice. We have every reason to believe that since the Second World War, an international economic code based on the co-operation between nations at various stages of development has been slowly evolving, not without effort and difficulty. That code is being implemented by technical and financial assistance imparted because nations believe that co-operation will breed co-operation, that no country can stand alone, and that all countries are part of one world in which the fate of one affects the future of all the rest.

12. International crises generally appear as a swing of the pendulum between war and peace. We have succeeded in discovering the deep-rooted causes which to some extent provoke or foster warlike action. Those causes are mainly poverty, injustice and fear. Poverty frequently results from the fact that man is unable to utilize natural resources; injustice sometimes takes the form of domination or oppression by some groups over others; fear usually is generated because some groups threaten others, powerful nations are a threat to other powerful nations, or powerful nations are a threat to weak nations.

13. In the past half-century, there have been fundamental changes in the life of nations. Internally, those changes have been reflected in the earnest attempts to provide the population with higher standards of living. Many nations have completed their development or begun it; others are seeking to overcome their technical backwardness, to achieve economic progress, prosperity with freedom and political autonomy in foreign affairs. The aspirations of those nations and the difficulties they experience in creating decent living conditions are at the root of the world's anxiety regarding the huge gap between the more highly developed countries and the remaining peoples of the earth who naturally want to improve their lot. This is one of the deep-rooted causes of war, and it must be attacked by providing those nations whose needs are great and whose resources are inadequate with the means of making their own effort more productive and accelerating their development through international co-operation.

14. We all want peace and we must be sincerely determined to attain it and to consolidate it by peaceful means. History shows that a peace which rests on the instruments of war is illusory and that sooner or later the instruments of violence accumulated for the avowed purpose of staving off war will jeopardize peace or irreparably shatter it. We should not regard peace as impossible or Utopian. Peace is and should be possible, for without it we cannot live.

15. We have been told time and again that the means of destruction now in the hands of the great Powers are so tremendous that if they were used in a war, civilization would be annihilated. What then would be the point of a war in which nobody would be the victor and which would destroy the whole human race?

16. Very few of the numerous nations on this earth possess these omnipotent weapons of destruction. That is why those few nations bear the responsibility of refraining from using them. But all we peoples represented here have the common obligation to persevere in seeking formulas of peace and when they have been found to put them into practice in the context of present-day realities, and to strengthen them by mutual confidence.

17. The peace for which peoples yearn is not an armed truce; nor is it an era of sterile inertia. We must think of peace as something dynamic, magnanimous and realistic in which the principle of world co-existence will be superimposed on the impulse towards destruction, and in which negotiation will prevail over threats and violent disputes will give way before persuasion. World peace should be founded on the principle of collective security. Peace without justice would be oppressive, and peace without progress would be sterile. The world must unite not only in the face of the horror of war, but in the will to achieve peaceful progress. Peace means co-operation between nations to settle world problems and the attainment of the classic ideal that nations should do all they can to help each other.

18. For the common man, peace means bread in the house, schooling for his children, a hospital for his sick relatives, and work which will enable him to live without anxiety. Men also think of peace as the certainty, the unalterable conviction, that they will be free from oppression and threats.

19. Disarmament is a problem of such overriding importance that nobody could refuse to consider it in any of its aspects or in whatever terms it is stated. The responsible leaders of all countries should persevere in their efforts to resolve it, examining all suggestions and probing all methods. Faced with so serious a problem, none of them should give way to disillusionment, inertia or apathy. Clearly the question of world disarmament far transcends the action of the small or medium Powers; but though they may lack the argument of force, they should take up the arms of persuasion and, within their own borders and so far as they are able, promote the social, economic and political conditions necessary for peace.

20. The efforts of science and technology to harness nature have endowed our era with great powers. Those resources should be placed at the service of international harmony and co-operation in order that the benefits of civilization may be extended to all, that proper living standards may be introduced where they are not fully enjoyed and hastened where progress is too slow. In that way, the instruments of power will become the mainstay of freedom, peace and justice.

21. Nothing can be planned for the future of mankind except through understanding and agreement. The power gained by the great nations of the world has led to the conviction that they should use it to promote the advancement of peoples and avoid the danger of destroying civilization. Man, who has proved himself capable of dominating the forces of nature, must now learn to master the forces of the mind. It would be inhuman to think that men have advanced so far only to destroy each other and be destroyed in the process.

22. It is said that our civilization is being put to the test. If that is so, faith in man leads us to believe we shall emerge from that test successfully. We believe in progress because we are far from believing that the world is perfect. We are not in a blind alley. Great horizons open before us and we must march towards them in the knowledge that freedom is an absolute term and that man's value is enduring. The time has come for us to decide that only by standing together in our purpose of achieving freedom and

prosperity for all can we ensure that human history will continue. We all have faith that we shall succeed.

23. Mexico believes in positive solutions. It prefers the force of law to the resources of power. As always, it is determined to uphold tenaciously the legal principles of international coexistence. It appeals to the noblest feelings and the highest responsibility of all the statesmen of the earth in the confident hope that they will know how to shape the future which their peoples have entrusted to them, and to carry out the mission on behalf of mankind which their power and greatness have thrust upon them.

24. With faith in the principles of the United Nations and determination to co-operate at all times in the world cause, and with best wishes for your personal happiness and for the prosperity of your countries, I convey a message of peace, justice, freedom and harmony from my country to all the countries of the world assembled in this hall.

25. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the Assembly, I should like to express to you our pleasure and gratitude for the words you have so eloquently spoken.

*The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.*

