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*President: Mr. Adam MALIK (Indonesia).*

*Special meeting on the occasion of Human Rights Day*

1. The PRESIDENT: Today we commemorate the adoption by the General Assembly 23 years ago, on 10 December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [resolution 217 A (III)]. By resolution 423 (V) of 4 December 1950, the General Assembly invited

“... all States and interested organizations to adopt 10 December of each year as Human Rights Day, to observe this day to celebrate the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, and to exert increasing efforts in this field of human progress.”

2. It has become a well-established and cherished tradition every year to mark the anniversary of the Universal Declaration by a special concert performed in this hall. Indeed, a programme of dance and music to fit the occasion had been scheduled for tonight. However, in the light of the present international situation, and in view of the pressure of work on the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, it has been found that this year the most suitable and effective way to celebrate the anniversary would be by holding a special solemn meeting dedicated to reflecting upon the importance and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the role of the United Nations in the implementation of its principles. A number of distinguished speakers holding high offices in United Nations organs have consented to give us the benefit of their thinking and stimulate our determination to achieve some of the most noble purposes of our Organization. I shall now call on them.

3. First I invite Mr. Ismael Byne Taylor-Kamara of Sierra Leone, the President of the Security Council, to address the General Assembly.

4. Mr. TAYLOR-KAMARA (Sierra Leone): The significance of the observance of Human Rights Day, particularly at this point in time, has considerable pertinence to achieving the purposes and principles of the Charter. We must assume that all States Members of this Organization have a vested interest in faithfully contributing to fulfilling the principles which they have pledged themselves to uphold.

5. Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter gives as one of the purposes of the United Nations:

“To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”

6. The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, commences with the following paragraph:

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.

7. I venture to state that all would agree with the saying that peace is the underlying condition for the realization of human rights and war is its negation. In a world where scarce resources are expended on the machinery for armed conflicts and the suppression of peoples for one reason or another, it is plain to see that these resources could have better been utilized for the development of economic, social and cultural conditions which would create a better standard of living for the peoples concerned. The realization of these basic human rights would in itself reduce tension, thus creating the peace which is so desperately needed, particularly at this time, within various national communities and in the international relations of Member States.

8. Two days ago this Assembly convened a special meeting on the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination [2005th meeting]. I should like to observe that that occasion was but one of the many expressions of our Organization's concern with eradicating the causes of tension among the peoples of the world.

9. I should like to end my statement on a simple note, Mr. President, and to ask you to request all concerned to strive more earnestly to achieve international co-operation and the realization of the basic human rights of all peoples, bearing in mind, again in the words of article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

10. The importance of implementing the various pertinent international instruments cannot be expressed too strongly

if we are to realize universal respect for human rights. International peace and security must be accorded the highest priority in an endeavour to build a future free of want and conflict. In these endeavours we must count on the co-operation of all men of goodwill, non-governmental organizations, regional intergovernmental organizations, and Governments. The United Nations and its various organs and specialized agencies must redouble their efforts.

11. Finally, let us pay a tribute to the meaningful contribution of such men as Dag Hammarskjöld and Dr. Ralph Bunche, who gave so much to the end that peace and security might prevail.

12. The PRESIDENT: I call on Mr. Rachid Driss of Tunisia, the President of the Economic and Social Council.

13. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): On this anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are asked to stop our sometimes frenetic activity and pause for a few moments in order to reflect and to attempt to answer the question posed by our eminent and highly esteemed Secretary-General, U Thant:

“What can we do to transform the world into a place where each can live in dignity and freedom as an equal member of society?”

14. The United Nations has tirelessly drafted texts and traced guidelines for action which, if fully respected by each individual, would make it possible to achieve the ideals enshrined in our Charter and in the Declaration. Respect for these principles is necessary to enable every person on our planet to live in dignity and freedom. But how can we speak of dignity and freedom when men are dying of hunger, children are suffering from malnutrition and disease, and human beings live in increasing wretchedness? Respect for human rights should not be limited to respect for private life, or respect for the right to travel, as is frequently believed in rich countries. The human being who wages a daily struggle to ensure a simple level of subsistence for himself is unable fully to enjoy all his freedoms.

15. The international community, and, within the community, every individual, must wage a parallel struggle on two fronts: first, that of respect for fundamental human rights as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration, and second, that of respect for economic and social rights, also mentioned in articles 23 to 26 of that Declaration, and especially in article 25, which people sometimes tend to overlook. I should like to read that article:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

16. Only the fullest respect for all those rights and freedoms will make it possible for mankind to advance harmoniously on the road of progress. Unfortunately, these principles are daily trampled under foot by certain régimes which set up racism, discrimination and *apartheid* as

government policy and stubbornly maintain this retrograde attitude, which is intolerable in this twentieth century. The peoples of southern Africa are suffering under the yoke of colonialism and oppression. Other peoples, such as the people of Palestine, are also enduring an unjust and disagreeable fate.

17. As long as these iniquitous situations persist, we shall be far from realizing the dream of a world where human beings will be free to speak and to believe, a world free of terror and poverty. As long as these intolerable injustices persist in this world, the principles proclaimed in the declaration of 10 December 1948 as “the highest aspiration of the common people”, will be nothing but a kind of mirage.

18. At this moment, when a wide-scale war looms over us, it is urgent to put an end to the deadly battles in India and Pakistan, and everywhere else. The right and urgent duty of man is to stop the bloodshed so that peace can permit mankind to pursue its march towards co-operation and progress, which are the true safeguards of human rights.

19. The PRESIDENT: I call on Mr. Károly Szarka of Hungary, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

20. Mr. SZARKA (Hungary): When celebrating a very important anniversary in the United Nations it is customary to underline the solemn character and the bright aspects of the subject. This should be done on this occasion commemorating the twenty-third anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, since 1951, has been better known as Human Rights Day.

21. This year, however, we depart somewhat from the usual procedure to commemorate the existence of one of the most important documents of the United Nations. This procedure also indicates the dangers that the United Nations, and indeed the whole world, faces.

22. In this context allow me to recall a part of the message sent by the Secretary-General to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly on 10 December 1970:

“In spite of substantial results already achieved, we are keenly aware of how much remains to be done before the humanitarian goals of the United Nations Charter will have been attained, and before the principles and standards embodied in the Universal Declaration become translated into reality.”

23. These lucid words of our Secretary-General have been underscored this year by this unusual commemorative meeting on Human Rights Day. One of the reasons we had to choose this form of commemoration instead of our usually more relaxed and more festive custom was that the lofty principles and standards embodied in the Universal Declaration are being seriously violated in some parts of the world.

24. Since the last anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the war against the people of Viet-Nam has been extended to the whole of Indo-China. The grave situation in the Middle East involving the human rights of

large numbers of Palestinian and other Arab people has not improved, despite the efforts of the international community to find an early and just solution.

25. *Apartheid*, that vicious crime against humanity, is in full bloom in South Africa and the consolidation of the illegal white minority rule in Rhodesia has recently received major encouragement.

26. The colonial Powers, such as Portugal, stubbornly defy both the United Nations and universal demands and maintain their domination by military power in a number of African and other territories.

27. And, last but not least, the recent tragic events affecting human rights in East Pakistan, resulted first in an unprecedented exodus of millions of people, then finally in armed conflicts.

28. These are only the major events of the present world situation where the basic principles and standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are gravely endangered. We must also be aware of the fact that the list is far from being complete.

29. With that partial listing of violations of human rights, I intended to underline our major task here in the United Nations and to give it a special emphasis on this very day. We feel that our major task should be solemnly to reiterate our faith in the basic principles of the Universal Declaration and to pledge our solidarity to all victims of oppression, tyranny, discrimination or aggression.

30. The very fact that we are celebrating Human Rights Day in spite of the dark shadows which the regressive forces try to cast over it gives us new impetus in our dedication to the basic principles of the Universal Declaration.

31. This document has always been since its inception an enduring source of inspiration for positive and progressive action to promote and secure universal and effective recognition and observance of the basic principles of freedom and dignity for all without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion.

32. I wish to put great emphasis on the term "enduring source", because to ensure the full and universal observance of human rights we need much more than the mere existence of the Declaration. Besides that important document we need, more than ever before, a strong dedication to its values as well as proper and fruitful co-operation among nations to translate those values into reality.

33. Such co-operation, I am convinced, can be sought in this field even if we happen to have different legal and socio-economic systems. The best proof of this has been the United Nations itself.

34. While we recognize the fact that, with the advent of the socialist system of society in human history, new and positive concepts in certain fields of human rights, such as the concept of collective rights and responsibilities for the development of the society, have gained wide acceptance in the life of many nations, the transcendent concepts of basic human rights, embodied in the Universal Declaration,

continue to prevail. Such basic principles as the right to life, to freedom and dignity, to self-determination, among others, remain our common concern.

35. It is for these reasons that we reiterate our conviction that this twenty-third anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be a valuable occasion on which to pledge our renewed efforts for the realization of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration and our full solidarity with those who are still suffering from discrimination and oppression.

36. The PRESIDENT: I now call on Mrs. Helvi Sipilä of Finland, Chairman of the Third Committee and former Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women.

37. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Finland): The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 23 years ago, expressed and solemnly proclaimed the aspirations of man when, after the scourge of war and the "untold sorrow" that the war had brought, he was ready to plan for a new and better world.

38. Twenty-eight of the Declaration's 50 sentences, in which our universally adopted human rights are listed, begin with the words, "Everyone has the right...". Eight other paragraphs beginning with the words "No one shall be subjected to..." are supposed to protect us from any denial of our fundamental rights and freedoms.

39. All these articles have one single purpose, namely, to guarantee equal rights to everyone "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" [article 2].

40. Twenty-three years have gone by. What has been changed?

41. In the world of today some people have all the rights enumerated or some of them. Others are subjected to the denial of almost all of them.

42. On Human Rights Day, which commemorates the adoption of the first and the most important international instrument on human rights in the history of mankind, we are faced with many thought-provoking questions. Where is everyone's right to life, liberty and security, when we live in the days of war and oppression in various parts of the world? What is our future going to be, when increasing proportions of national budgets are authorized to be used for the improvement of the already skilfully planned equipment of warfare, by which maximum numbers of people could be deprived of their first and foremost fundamental right, their right to life? Why are all our actions in the field of disarmament so slow, and why is this world forum, once created especially for the maintenance of peace, now almost faced with bankruptcy, from which a small proportion of the financial means used for armament could easily save us? Have we lost our faith in the fundamental freedoms of every human being? Have we forgotten what was once so solemnly proclaimed as a common aim? Where are we going now?

43. Reading our Universal Declaration of Human Rights we may continue our questions. Where is today everyone's

right to education, when there are still about 800 million illiterates in the world? What have we done in order to guarantee everyone's right to work, when millions of people are unemployed? How can they reach the expected dignified standard of living, when they have no remuneration or an inadequate one? And is it not almost a mockery to underline everyone's right to rest and leisure, when, due to certain circumstances, the rest and leisure are the deplorable result of unemployment and when every day is a holiday, but without pay?

44. Where are the equal rights of various races, when *apartheid* and racial discrimination are not only phenomena which occur, but which are even the adopted policy of Governments and when the situation is only worsening in certain parts of the world?

45. What has happened to the equal rights and equal duties of men and women, when women in some parts of the world are still denied even their fundamental right to suffrage, and when they nowhere in the world participate on equal terms with men in the affairs of the community, either at the local, national or international levels?

46. This non-participation is partly due to the lack of equality of opportunity beginning with access to education—the majority of the world's illiterates are women. It is also partly due to a lack of training and skill and a lack of opportunities in the fields of employment and occupation and an unequal share of home and other responsibilities. But it is also due to outmoded attitudes of both men and women and to the provisions of private law, which seldom provide for equality.

47. When in today's world even the concept of the family, once so solemnly proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the natural and fundamental group unit of society entitled to protection by society and the State, is being challenged, we may ask what is going to happen to our youth, the youth which in so many ways is trying to find its own way in a rapidly changing society with so many values being contested. And what is the benefit of special care of and assistance to mothers and children, when in old age mothers are often more than others subjected to a denial of all their human rights because once in their lives they devoted their efforts to their family responsibilities at the sacrifice of other rights having possibly greater economic rewards.

48. In raising these questions I have not forgotten the very important development we have made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the form of the further elaboration of international law, which in many fields has clarified for us concrete targets and created international machinery for the implementation of our human rights.

49. I have not forgotten the Declaration and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination [*resolution 1904 (XVIII) and 2106 A (XX)*], the various conventions in the field of political rights, marriage, education and employment, or the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [*resolution 2263 (XXII)*].

50. To be sure, we have made a great deal of progress, evidence of which is seen even here today, when 132 Member States participate in the General Assembly compared with only 51 at the beginning, and when millions of people of the world have gained the right to participate directly in the affairs of our world Organization. We have now even reached the era when first efforts on some world-wide implementation method for the materialization of human rights are already in operation. And we are eagerly awaiting the day when the International Covenants and the Optional Protocol<sup>1</sup> adopted six years ago, will be in force and give us further guarantees that not only the civil and political rights of human beings, but also their economic, social and cultural rights, will be observed.

51. At the beginning of the Second United Nations Development Decade, which is considered a crucial period in the history of mankind, we have had to realize that human rights are not only civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights, and that without the materialization of all these rights most of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would remain a dead letter.

52. Last year we unanimously adopted a strategy for development and advancement towards equality in various fields [*resolution 2626 (XXV)*], and we have tried to make it clear to ourselves that, with successful international co-operation, much can be achieved during one more decade, provided we can maintain peace in the world.

53. We have now started the second quarter-century of our life as Members of the United Nations. But have we really seriously devoted our efforts to the materialization of what we so solemnly proclaimed at the beginning of our co-operation and what we reaffirmed in various ways only a year ago?

54. When progress is slow, do we not often try to find the failures of others and to deny our own shortcomings, instead of trying to join our efforts for the earliest possible implementation of what we once decided upon? Constructive efforts are often forgotten; destructive ones make world news. That seems to be one of our common characteristics. News about the construction of the world's most magnificent building hardly catches our eye, but should it collapse we would be ready to find the guilty one to accuse him and to punish him, and everyone in the world would know it.

55. This leads me to my final question. Should we not today, on this Human Rights Day, turn our questions to ourselves as human beings, since human strife begins with us? Should we not, instead of trying to find others we believe to be guilty of our own obvious failures, ask of ourselves, "What have I done in this world as an individual, as a human being, as a citizen and as a representative of my country in order to help myself, my community—local, national and international—and my neighbours near and far to enjoy universally adopted human rights? What can I do from now on, when there is still time to improve my

<sup>1</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (resolution 2200 (XXI), annex).

efforts? That is not only my responsibility but even my great privilege.”

56. We do not need empty words. We need a serious reaffirmation of our firm belief in the importance of our joint national and international action to ensure the implementation of human rights, and we need that action.

57. The PRESIDENT: I now call on Mr. Andrés Aguilar, the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights.

58. Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The founding fathers of the United Nations properly understood that recognition of the dignity and worth of the human person and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of man were essential for the establishment of true peace in the world. This fact emerges clearly from the Preamble to the Charter and from Article 1, which sets forth as one of the purposes of the Organization the promotion and encouragement of “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”.

59. Faithful to those principles, the Organization immediately started on the task of preparing and drawing up the necessary norms. Early in 1947 the Commission on Human Rights began its work, following its establishment in 1946. Thanks to the efforts and dedication of the members of that Commission, which at that time was presided over by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, it was possible, in a relatively brief period of time, to prepare the draft Universal Declaration of Human rights later adopted by the General Assembly, meeting in Paris, on 10 December 1948. The Declaration, proclaimed as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all Nations”, was later followed by the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

60. The Charter, the Declaration and the Covenants have served as a foundation and a frame of reference for many important international instruments worked out subsequently by the Organization itself, by specialized agencies such as the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO and by regional organizations. This is not the proper moment to try to review each of those instruments; suffice it to say that the work that has been done, primarily within the institutional framework of the Organization in the field of legislation or standards governing human rights, is considerable.

61. This work is not yet finished; it is still necessary to spell out certain rules in the existing instruments and to legislate on new problems of great importance: respect for human rights in armed conflicts and new problems concerning human rights arising as a result of progress in science and technology.

62. But it is clear that, without overlooking this legislative aspect, it is necessary now, above all, to find appropriate means and procedures for the application of these various covenants and conventions.

63. Some of them already contain provisions designed to ensure means of supervision of various types. This is the case, for example, in respect of the International Conven-

tion on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which entered into force on 4 January 1969.

64. Of course, this is not the occasion to evaluate the efficiency of the various systems used to this end: primarily periodic reports, procedures of investigation and conciliation; nor should we pass judgement on initiatives such as the creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

65. What should be noted is the favourable trend in recent years to use to the full the means available to the Organization to solve particularly serious cases of violations of human rights. Obviously, the international community does not and cannot view with indifference the existence of situations which have a serious impact on the rights and freedoms of large groups of people and endanger international peace and security.

66. Through the extension of the functions of existing organs, and in particular the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary body, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, some positive steps have already been taken, such as the appointment of groups of experts to study specific situations; the progressive elaboration of the concept of “constant and systematic violations”, and the preparation of model rules of procedure, for application by United Nations bodies which are responsible for studying situations that appear to show a picture of constant and systematic violations of human rights.

67. It is worth drawing the Assembly’s attention, in this connexion, to the fact that the Commission on Human Rights, in compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2144 (XXI) of 26 October 1966, decided every year to consider an item on its agenda which has been entitled: “Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of *apartheid*, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories”. In this connexion, the procedure proposed by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and adopted by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session held at Geneva during the months of February and March 1969 is of great importance.<sup>2</sup>

68. In talking about United Nations action to bring about the observance of human rights, mention must also be made of the work done through bodies created to study specific situations, such as the Special Committee on *Apartheid*, the United Nations Council for Namibia, and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Each one, in the area of its jurisdiction, has made its contribution to the common effort.

69. Of course, the primary obstacle in the way of international action to bring about the effective and

<sup>2</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-sixth Session*, document E/4621, chap. XVIII, resolution 17 (XXV).

universal application of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the reluctance of many States to ratify those international instruments which contain methods and procedures of supervising these rights and to permit action in their territories by groups of experts. It is to be hoped that, as ideas evolve and with a more understanding attitude by younger generations, Member States of the international community gradually will change their attitude.

70. In the meantime, we must pursue our efforts, continue our advisory services and intensify the efforts already under way to disseminate information about the existing norms, and to educate people, particularly the young, in respect for human rights.

71. The truth is that much still remains to be done. In the field of legislation, in the new branch of humanitarian law, the problems which from the standpoint of human rights are raised by scientific and technological progress, and the problems of youth, are some of the areas where careful studies have barely begun to be made. As regards application, it is clear from what I have already said, the exceedingly difficult problems that are created by the present state of affairs, call for lengthy and patient endeavours. It is equally obvious, as I said a few minutes ago, that it is important and urgent to intensify future efforts in respect of education and publicity.

72. The time has come for action. In various parts of the world at the present time armed conflicts have broken out which threaten the first and most important of all human rights: the right to life, which is the foundation and prerequisite for all other rights and freedoms. In other parts of the world there is a dangerous situation which may degenerate into war if we do not soon find the appropriate means to solve the dispute.

73. In other parts of the world, the inadequate degree of development deprives *de facto* almost two thirds of mankind of the most indispensable means for living an existence commensurate with their status as human beings. If to this we add the persistence of colonialism and racist régimes, and the unfortunately all too-frequent cases of discrimination for reasons of race, colour, sex and religion, we come to the sad conclusion that we cannot rejoice in the contemplation of the work that we have done and that we must redouble our efforts to find suitable means and procedures to bring about effective and universal respect for human rights.

74. It is a good thing to recall that the text of article 28 of the Universal Declaration, whose anniversary we are celebrating today, reads:

“Every one is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.”

To give life to this concept will of course require a sincere and determined effort by all of the members of the international community.

75. This task is both necessary and urgent. The difference between the wording of the declarations and conventions and reality is such that there is a general feeling of

frustration and anger, above all in those peoples who, in addition to the deprivations that result from inadequate development, suffer from oppression by national or foreign minorities, and the humiliation and limitations imposed by discrimination. In other words, to conclude, may I say, what we need now is, not more words, but deeds.

76. The PRESIDENT: The ideas and the ideals that have led to the establishment of the United Nations sum up and reflect many centuries of efforts and of aspirations, of success and of frustration and new beginnings. The United Nations, I believe, is a mirror of history, showing us not only the threats and the dangers of our unresolved problems, but also the promises and the rewards of the future of fraternity, justice, material well-being and fulfilment—for all without exception, nations and individuals alike.

77. I do not wish to speak now of the fragility of this mirror, of its imperfections, of the long road still ahead, nor would I enumerate the immense accomplishments of the United Nations in its first 26 years. Perhaps it would suffice to say that, if the United Nations had not existed, global nuclear war might have already brought about the end of our species. But there is on this mirror a corner shining with particular brightness, and I would like to devote a few words to its meaning.

78. We are assembled here this afternoon, at this moment of crisis in the world, to mark the twenty-third anniversary of one of the greatest achievements in contemporary history: the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is my belief that the Declaration constitutes one of the finest monuments built by mankind in the twentieth century. The Declaration is a guide for all nations and the companion of all those suffering from injustice and oppression. It vindicates the sacredness of the human being and provides hope—and often a shield—for the persecuted and the weak. It anticipates and aids in bringing nearer that kind of world that all men, at all times, everywhere, have held to be the very essence of dignified life.

79. No nation is perfect. There are too many examples of shortcomings, abridgements and violations of the rights so loftily proclaimed in the Universal Declaration. In this very hall we have too often heard descriptions of violence done to the letter and to the spirit of the norms for fraternal behaviour enunciated 23 years ago. But let us not lose sight of the great advances made and of the progress in the making. And, if examples are required, I would propose we take a retrospective look at the changes going on in the world, in the last quarter of a century, in regard to the promotion of human rights and the development of a strong and world-wide movement of public opinion pressing for their protection and expansion.

80. Look, for instance, at the growing revulsion for, and condemnation of, all forms of discrimination and racism, *apartheid*, and other practices aimed at mutilating the dignity of the human person. Look at the enactment of legislation at all levels—local, national, international—aimed at protecting the rights of minorities or of majorities traditionally victims of discrimination in many societies, such as women and children. See how States acknowledge

the right of everyone to liberty, life, security and privacy; to freedom of thought, of expression, and of assembly; and assess the meaning of those laws as a very long step forward even in cases when its enforcement falters. Or just listen to our children, the generation of tomorrow, and verify how much more assertive and confident of their rights they are in comparison with us, the children of the previous generation.

81. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a landmark in the search for a more human world. With it,

the Members of the United Nations have expressed their belief that only with respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms can the aims of peace and prosperity for all peoples on earth be really achieved.

82. The special meeting on the occasion of Human Rights Day is concluded.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*

