

(Caracas)
Lunchtale
19. juni 1986

Med forbehold om endringer

SPERRET til

Gro Harlem Brundtland

YOUR EXCELLENCY

Allow me first of all to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for your kind and generous invitation to visit Venezuela and your fascinating capital, Caracas. I would also like to thank you personally, Mr. President, for the warm reception and the sincerity expressed in your words of welcome. In the light of the growing cooperation between our two countries which has taken place during your presidency, it is no coincidence that Venezuela should be the first country in the Latin America to be visited by a Norwegian prime minister. I wish to underline the valuable and encouraging industrial cooperation which has developed to the mutual benefit of our two countries. Since some of your eminent quests represent the fields of industry and shipping, and the technology involved, I would like to express my appreciation for the confidence the Venezuelan partners have shown in the technical expertise Norway has had to offer. Let us hope that this excellent development in our relations will continue, and that it will expand based upon the existing political, cultural and personal friendship.

Although time does not permit me to go more deeply into the interesting historical aspects of our relations, let me just recall, Mr. President, the visit to Norway by one of your most heroic liberators, Francisco de Miranda, who in his quest for inspiration for Venezuela's freedom and independence, spent some time in Norway in 1787. There he found a country and a people actively engaged in the same ideals - ideals which both Norway and Venezuela have pursued ever since. On this fundamental platform, we have followed similar policies and lines of action in our common search for peace, liberty and human dignity. I see no differences of interest, Mr. President, which should prevent

the Norwegian and the Venezuelan people from shortening the distance between these policies, which we nevertheless pursue in most national and major international issues, in order to reach our aims in harmony and cooperation with our many other friends and allies. All freedom-loving people should proceed together to ease the burden of the many multinational problems which face the world, and which disturb the peace and social progress we all seek.

My country very much admires the patience and great effort the Venezuelan government and your partners in the Contadora group have made in your endeavour to achieve peace and stability in the Central American region. You know, Mr. President, that the Norwegian people strongly supports the Contadora process and we can only hope that your excellent diplomacy, patience and tolerance will produce the desired result of peace and continued democratic progress for the people and the countries involved. As we all know, the foundation of democracy and human right in every country is closely linked with social and economic progress. We have this philosophy in common, Mr. President. Our governments' active engagement in most international economic, social and development organizations, and not least your present seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, will, I believe, assist progress and stability in the countries where assistance is most sorely needed.

There is an urgent need for increased international cooperation and foresight in today's world, an interdependent world, that calls for renewal of the spirit of multilateralism, and for the active support to strengthen the United Nations.

Mr. President, I feel that many of your guests expect me to touch upon the subject of oil, of OPEC and my government's much publicized assistance in the stabilizing of oil prices.

When assuming office I stated before the Norwegian Parliament that if the OPEC countries agree upon measures that can stabilize oil prices at a higher and more reasonable level, then the Norwegian Government would contribute to such a stabili-

zation this could also secure the supply of oil and gas in the future.

We have formulated this policy, Mr. President, because we want to make it clear that we take these problems seriously.

We are also concerned that lasting low oil prices gives the wrong signal with regard to longterm world energy policy and use of scarce resources. It will reduce the incentive we need to increase energy efficiency. In our work in the World Commission on Environment and Development we have also been focusing on this part of the problem, and we are reaching the conclusion that too low oil prices are not consonant with sustainable development and sound economic practices aimed at protecting our common future,

I must at the same time make it clear that we face considerable practical problems. Concession terms and the fact that several of our most important oil fields are fields we share with the United Kingdom - "unitized fields" - set obvious limits of a legal and technical nature.

I thank you again Mr. President, for the opportunity you have given me to visit your country and for the interesting exchange of views we had this morning. I am also grateful for the opportunity which your kind invitation has given me to discuss matters of mutual interests with your minister for energy and mines, Dr. Arturo Hernandez Grisanti, and others, it is not unusual that common interests create common solutions. Mr. President, I would like to propose a toast to your personal health, the continuous growth and development of the Republic of Venezuela, to the happiness of its people, and to a prosperous relationship between our two countries.