

Oslo

Med forbehold om endringer
SPERRET til 17. juni 1986,
kl. 09.30

Gro Harlem Brundtland

STATSMINISTERENS TALE VED APNINGEN AV DEN EUROPEISKE
JUSTISMINISTERKONFERANSE I OSLO, 17. JUNI 1986

Mr. Secretary General, Ministers of Justice, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I wish you all a warm welcome to Oslo and to the fifteenth Conference of the European Ministers of Justice. For the first time this Conference is being held in Norway, and we sincerely hope that it will be as successful as the previous conferences have been, we appreciate that so many of you have been able to come to our country, and we are looking forward to having you with us for the next few days.

It is in our common interest that all the countries of Europe develop a joint line of action in responding to the political, technological and ethical challenges now facing us all. Terrorism, data processing and genetic engineering, are only examples of issues that now require all imagination, concern and foresight.

It was the quest for greater political unity and cooperation in Europe that led to the founding Conference at St. James Place in London, chaired by that great internationalist Ernest Bevin, which adopted the Statute of the Council of Europe in 1949.

Since that time the Council of Europe has been one of Europe's ideological market places. Many of the ideas and thoughts that have been the subject of the deliberations of the Organization have later inspired the work of the United Nations and thus have become globally recognized. This aspect of the Council's work should not be underestimated at a time when cooperation of a truly international character is more called for than ever.

The ideas behind the Council of Europe - to protect democracy and human rights and to improve the living conditions of the people of Europe, based on individual freedom, political liberty on the rule of law - are as important today as they were more than 30 years ago.

Throughout the past 30 years, the Council of Europe has demonstrated its ability to take up new problems and to come up with solutions which have been widely accepted among its member States. This has been very significant in the legal field, where a number of important instruments have been adopted in the fields of both civil and criminal law.

The day-to-day work in the legal field within the Council of Europe is carried out by steering and expert committees of government officials and experts. But let us never underestimate the need for political direction created through initiatives taken at conferences like the present one. The political impetus of the Conferences of the European Ministers of Justice is of vital importance to the Council of Europe, and to our European culture.

The subjects chosen for this Conference are of current interest to Norway. Clearly, the situation must be the same in your countries. Drug abuse and damage to the environment represent serious threats to society. These are international problems and call for action not only at national, but also at international level. The international aspect is also obvious with regard to the third subject of this Conference: The question of increasing the effectiveness of the various legal instruments for co-operation in criminal matters between the member states of the Council of Europe. Both within the framework of the Council of Europe and in the wider framework of the ECE, the environmental issues have carried increased weight and common concern in the last ten years. Our peoples have recently been shaken by the catastrophe in Chernobyl - that underlines the fact that we are all dependant upon one another for our security in a wide sense, indeed for our future.

There is an urgent need for increased cultural and political cooperation. In our work in the World Commission on Environment and Development, it is very clear that one important line of work to support necessary change, lies in the field of law, nationally and internationally. New concepts and new institutions will require new frontiers of imagination and determination in this very area.

I hope that your discussions once again will prove to be an inspiration and that your decisions will lead to new concrete results. I hope your excursion to other parts of Norway will be blessed with good weather, and that you will all enjoy your stay in this country. I wish you every success with your Conference.