

Gro Harlem Brundtland
Prime Minister of Norway

Address to the 48th General Assembly of the United Nations,
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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this high office. I should also like to welcome the new members of our organization: Andorra, Eritrea, the Czech Republic, Monaco, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovakia.

The historic and courageous breakthrough in the Middle-East tells us that even the deepest trench can be bridged. The conflict has tormented this entire region for most of this century. It has brought superpowers to the brink of war. It has placed enormous burdens on the United Nations itself. It has deprived families of their dear ones and held people under the ominous spell of fear.

Now we must seize the moment. Now we are at a turning point also for the United Nations. Now we must answer to the clarion call and mobilize our collective political and financial resources to help move the peace-process forward.

The time has come to let the divisive, acrimonious Middle-East debates and decisions of the past fade into history. The Israeli and Palestinian leaders have made reality of the seemingly impossible. We would fail abysmally in our duties should we falter now in our efforts to support the process of prying peace out of the knot of conflict which men and women of vision have dared to think, dared to do.

Due to our long-standing relations with the parties, both our friendship with Israeli leaders and the mutual trust we have established with the PLO, Norway was privileged to contribute to these defining dramatic events.

In this spirit, we shall go to Washington on October 1, committed to help in building peace. For the peace process to succeed, it must be consolidated and stabilized by the economic development the two parties have agreed to undertake together.

The fruits of peace must become tangible and real for the women, men and children of Gaza and the West Bank. The process of implementation could change the perspectives and expectations of the parties, convert interdependence into a sense of community and make possible solutions and visions which today seem beyond reach.

The economic situation in Gaza and on the West Bank is dramatic and calls for immediate and extensive economic aid. Now we must respond to the just but unfulfilled aspirations of the Palestinians - for job opportunities, for schools, hospitals and universities. Now we must assist in building houses, roads and water supplies, and make reconciliation pay so that new generations of Israelis and Palestinians may grow up without fear, as good neighbours in a life of dignity.

A period of healing is needed in which all peace-loving countries, the UN itself, the Bretton Woods institutions, other financial institutions, and the EC join financially and substantially in a coordinated, immediate investment-for-peace programme. I pledge and confirm that Norway's assistance will be substantial and that we shall be honoured to play a continued political role should the parties so desire.

A period of renewal and change must embrace also South Africa and our relations with that country. South Africa is in desperate need for peace and reconciliation. Fixing a date for democratic elections in April next year is a beacon of hope that finally, the post-Apartheid system will gain the democratic legitimacy which the South African government cannot claim today.

Until the day when black South Africans can enjoy the human rights of which they have been oppressively deprived, until the day when violence is ended and joint political control has been established over the military and police forces, until that day South Africa will remain a country in imperative transition.

The outside world and the UN must in time recognize the potential of post-Apartheid South Africa, at peace with itself, endowed with immensely rich natural as well as human resources, for the whole region of Southern Africa. Education and training are needed for generations which now are ready to assume an equal role in the economy of their country. We must now act forcefully, encouraging proponents of peace and

transition and discourage the shrill voices of hatred and interposition so that one day - soon - the South African man and woman may be free at last.

Mr. President,

We must never lose hope that peace can be achieved. But our hope has been severely tested by the protracted atrocities in Bosnia and Hercegovina. There seems to be no limit to the brutality that human beings are capable of mobilizing in the service of a nationalistic goal. They have been committed in the name of doctrine, - the doctrine of the ethnic state, - and as such prolong the sinister path of doctrine as a source of war and contention in this century.

Ethnic nationalism is a threat to peace and stability everywhere. The ethnic mosaic of Europe does not lend itself to such reduction. A doctrine of the ethnic state is a prescription for war. Our task is to build communities which include rather than exclude and to make all multi-ethnic regions safe refuges of enlightened diversity.

A military victory, where aggression appears to pay in Bosnia, will be noted in those parts of the world where different nationalities are sharing territory and political organization. In the former Soviet Union alone ethnic tensions are reaching critical mass or have already erupted as in Nagorno-Kharabakh and Abkhazia.

The authority of the United Nations is seriously undermined if there is vacillation on where and how to use blue helmets. We should admit that there have been failures along the way and learn from experience.

Our main thrust must be to aim for a negotiated solution based on known elements. The alternative to a negotiated settlement is continued bloodshed. The alternative to peace is war. Norway fully supports the efforts of Thorvald Stoltenberg and David Owen.

All parties now must cease hostilities and allow time for the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina to heal so that we can start slowly to build a foundation for peace. Let us be inspired by the Israelis and the Palestinians. And let it be a message from us all to the parties in Bosnia: Enough! Peace is possible.

The time for a settlement is long overdue. The situation is already disastrous and another winter of war is bound to take a severe toll of lives. Norway is among the major providers of

humanitarian assistance to the area. International attention is focused on the terrible ordeal of the Muslims, but there are Croats and Serbs who suffer greatly as well. We should be evenhanded in our humanitarian assistance, making a clear distinction between warlords and war criminals and those on all sides who are without a voice and without a choice, those who are victimized and whose only hope is the assistance we can provide from the outside.

Mr. President,

It is absolutely imperative to improve on the coordination and cooperation between UN peace-keeping operations, UN humanitarian agencies and non-governmental humanitarian organizations. Somalia is an obvious case in point. For Norway it is a priority issue to move such coordination forward. We shall convene a conference before the end of the year with the aim of improving our capacity to organize real "Peace Operations" incorporating both humanitarian and military tasks.

We should all support the proposals by our Secretary-General for a necessary strengthening of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The management organization for UN peace keeping operations here in New York is manifestly inadequate. The result is that troop contributing nations exercise direct control which radically reduces coherence and effectiveness. The situation is aggravated by the propensity of the Security Council to make ambitious decisions but failing to provide the Secretariat with the means to implement them. Failing to provide financial, human and technological resources undermines both peace and the authority of the United Nations.

We know what needs to be done. We must focus on the following:

- Realistic mandates for new UN peace-keeping operations, where goals and means must be clearly defined.
- Proper stand-by arrangements for troops and equipment from member states. Norway is prepared to contribute in concrete terms to a collective stand-by effort.
- Improved training as well as analysis of past experience. Our training facilities should be linked in a consortium for UN peace-keeping training.
- There must be immediate and substantial increase of the UN reserve fund for peace-keeping. Moreover a unified peace-keeping budget must be introduced which allows the Secretary-

General to obligate at least 20 per cent of the estimated cost of peace-keeping operations once they have been approved by the Security Council.

- Improved financing for peace-keeping operations and financial discipline among member states.

Indeed the whole financial situation of the UN is in a disgraceful state. As the eight largest contributor to the UN system in absolute terms and by far the largest in per capita terms we find it exceedingly difficult to understand how so many countries fail to honour their obligations.

The Secretary-General has said that "the organization lives from hand to mouth". The permanent members of the security council have a special responsibility. But we should also ask if countries should at all be eligible to the Security Council if they have not paid their contributions.

Mr. President,

The post-Cold-War patterns of risks and uncertainties has brought about a wider recognition and understanding of the need to address the serious economic and social inequalities in the world and their implications for global security. Core issues such as environment and development used to be seen as side issues by the prime movers of international affairs. There is a new hope that this could be changing.

The Secretary-General points out in his report that without sustainable development, peace cannot long be maintained and that political, social, educational and environmental factors must all be part of development.

Unsustainable production and consumption patterns still prevail and can only be counteracted by changing how and in which fields our economies continue to grow. If current forms of development were employed, a further five- to tenfold boost in economic activity would be required over the next 50 years to meet the needs and aspirations of 10 billion people.

Presently, the vast majority who are poor make only a minimal claim to our natural resources, while the more voracious North is consuming in a few decades what it has taken the planet billions of year to accumulate. The Norwegian Minister of the environment raised the issue of production and consumption patterns in the industrial part of the world at the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Early next year Norway will host a meeting on these issues as a contribution to the next session of the Commission.

The rapid population growth in many parts of the world is a ticking time bomb. 90 per cent of this increase is taking place in developing countries, many of which are unable to feed their present populations. We may soon be facing new famine of a magnitude dwarfing even Malthus' gloomiest predictions. There may be mass migration and countries and regions destabilizing as people compete for ever more scarce land and water resources.

The world conference on population and development to take place in Cairo in September 1994 must address the complex root causes of the population explosion.

The agreements reached at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio last year, however imperfect, set a sound, ambitious agenda for action to ensure sustainable development. Yet I regret to say that the momentum generated in Rio has been allowed to lose some of its force.

The world will not forget, and our children will long remember that the industrialized countries committed themselves in Rio to provide new and additional funding to combat climate change and safeguard biological diversity. So far however, contributions have been small-scale.

The aid fatigue continues despite enormous needs and a more fertile ground for development in countries which have made sacrifices and taken the bitter but crucial medicine of structural adjustment, and despite the reduction of military budgets to levels where countries again should be deemed creditworthy.

Far, far more serious, and not only for the developing world, is the gambling with the Uruguay Round holding the prospects of global free trade hostage to narrow national interests. For most countries, strongly dependent as they are on international trade, an agreement, even if each and every provision may not be ideal, is absolutely necessary. I urge the major parties to live up to the expectations created at the Tokyo G-7 meeting that before the end of the year, the deal will be closed.

Environment and trade must be the next agenda item. We should be more outspoken about conflicting interests and more receptive to the fact that we do not have the option to go our separate ways.

We must develop a sound, scientific basis for managing our natural resources in a sustainable way. In a politically,

culturally and socially diverse world, science and knowledge can be the only basis for sound and lasting cooperation in this field.

And while we reduce our strain of finite natural resources, the environmental agenda is constantly widened by the unveiling of the ecocide almost committed by the former communist countries.

The nuclear threat is not confined to that inherent in the remaining arsenals of nuclear weapons. Increasingly our security is threatened by the enormous deposits of nuclear waste on land and at sea. Large scale international cooperation is required to eliminate this threat.

Nuclear weapons have not disappeared and the capacity to make them is broadly present. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery constitutes perhaps the greatest threat to international peace and stability in the years ahead. It is a matter of utmost priority to broaden and deepen the non-proliferation regime to comprise a broader pattern of commitments and cooperative behaviour. In this connection Norway urges the nuclear weapon states to redouble their efforts to conclude a comprehensive test ban treaty. We expect that they will refrain from any testing while negotiations proceed. We also urge North Korea to submit fully to the safeguard regime of the IAEA and to adhere to the Non Proliferation Treaty.

Mr. President,

Development without democracy and the respect for human rights will never be sustainable. Democracy is indispensable for promoting and upholding respect for human rights, for social and economic development, for peace and security, and for liberating the human creativity which is so vital to any social and economic development.

I urge this Assembly to create the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to agree on a quantum leap in the allocation of resources for the UN's human rights activities. This is a modest price to pay for strengthening the basis for peace and stability.

Mr. President,

The lines between foreign and domestic policies have long since vanished. Narrow-minded forms of nationalism will not serve us. We must move towards an inclusive enlargement where the powerful are just and the weak secure. Only the United

Nations can provide the framework of a better organized world which today is too fragmented and uncoordinated. More and more causes are common as indeed is our whole future.

The Middle East breakthrough gives us the hope that no challenge is too difficult and the belief that we can make this world a civilized place.

Thank you, Mr. President.