

STATSMINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

AKERSHUS SLOTT, 2 MAY 1994

MR SECRETARY-GENERAL

MRS. BOUTROS-GHALI

Honoured guests,

It is a great honour to wish the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his wife Leila Boutros-Ghali heartily welcome to Norway. We are deeply honored by your presence and we can assure you that tonight, you are only among friends and supporters.

Mr. Secretary-General, you have been assigned what your predecessor Trygve Lie called "the most impossible job in the world". During your first years of office, your sincerity, your courage and your political judgment have enabled the UN more than once to rise to the occasion. The blue UN flag is waiving as a great beacon light of hope in tormented regions where the misery of conflict, poverty, or migration endanger the lives and future of millions. I can assure you that Norway sees a role for itself in making the impossible possible, in helping you to forge compacts out of conflict and in realizing the larger vision of a better organized world community.

In many ways, we Norwegians have a special relationship with the United Nations. We are by far the largest per capita contributors to the UN system. 40,000 Norwegians - 1 per cent of the entire population of this country - have worn a UN Blue Beret. We even gave you Thorvald Stoltenberg.

In recent years, the idealism from the birth days of the United Nations has become easier to couple with realism. The Organization's scope for action has increased considerably. So have the demands on the UN

Today, when CNN can transmit live as troops are landed in Somalia and the sound of the shelling in Bosnia, people become morally and emotionally involved in conflicts, but not necessarily in conflicts not covered by the CNN. The call goes to the United Nation to resolve the conflicts. It is a staggering vote of confidence. However, you know that the means at your disposal is the sum of what the member countries are willing to provide in terms of personnel, equipment and humanitarian assistance.

The member countries cannot expect the UN to do the job if they are unwilling to pay their share of the global bills for peace, environment and development.

In the former Yugoslavia, member states have been unclear about what they want the UN to do, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the already insufficient available resources,

There are few conflicts in the world today in which the UN is not involved, sometimes modestly, other times massively. One of the success stories we have witnessed is the abolition of Apartheid with which the United Nations has been seized for 3 decades. No doubt the United Nations played a key role in facilitating the success of the democratic forces in South Africa.

Rejoicing the victory against apartheid is not, however, sufficient to ensure favorable developments in the new South Africa. Great expectations for a better life have been created. Much depends on the South Africans themselves, in particular their ability to put an end to violence. Nevertheless, we have to realize that to a considerable extent, they depend on the international community to fulfill their expectations. Along with all of us who encouraged the struggle against apartheid, the United Nations has a moral obligation to continue to support the fledgling democracy in South Africa. I am confident that under your able and dedicated leadership, Mr. Secretary-General, the United Nations will live up to its obligations.

A characteristic applied to the situation of the UN is that of a "revolution of rising expectations". The United Nations faces new challenges not just as regards the issue of war and peace, but also in the field of economic and social development, including the safeguarding and promotion of human rights. The welfare - in the widest sense of the word - of the individual human being must always be at the center of our efforts.

"An agenda for development" and your own initiative "The United Nations in the next half century" provide a solid basis for a timely discussion on the future activities of the United Nations. We need an effective and strong world organization, and we must be prepared to place the resources required at its disposal.

Unfortunately, too many countries fail to honor their financial obligations towards the United Nations. This is unacceptable, and we keep reminding the General Assembly of this fact every fall. No doubt, the permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility. Without increased availability of resources the United Nations will not be able to do what its member states want it to do, regardless of the number of verbal tributes and calls for an active UN involvement.

Mr. Secretary-General,

You will have the honor of leading the UN through its fiftieth anniversary next year.

The world organization needs a person of your stature and dedication at its head at this crucial point in time. I would like to assure you of our continued support in your endeavors to make the United Nations become an even more effective tool for making the world a better place.

I would like to propose a toast to our distinguished guests, the Secretary-General and his wife and to an effective and dynamic United Nations.