



PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

The United Nations 50th Anniversary Celebrations

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To millions of people, the UN has meant food where there was none, vaccination where epidemics raged, a school to attend, a new well in the village, and blue helmets who kept belligerents apart, shielding civil life.

To scores of new nations, access to this rostrum meant sovereignty and self-determination. From this rostrum, for 50 years, all countries have been able to call for world attention.

To the hundreds of thousands of good and dedicated people who have served the UN, - let us pay our tribute. To the peace-keepers and field-workers who did not return, among them our second Secretary-General, - let us pay our respect.

But let us not only commemorate the past. Let us also chart a new beginning. Though the UN today faces great difficulties, we, the member states, are responsible.

The plowshare that worked for 5 decades is worn. Let us forge a new.

Today I will address five pressing issues. First: Finance.

Some dozen parliaments hold this organization hostage by withholding their membership fees. How unworthy.

The Secretary-General, the world's principal civil servant, suffers the undignified role of having to pass the hat around while countries are burning.

We have loaded new tasks on the UN and asked it to solve them with insufficient funds. This situation cannot last. We must all pay our fees, in full, and on time.

We require some countries to pay more than their fair share. Other countries voluntarily pay more than their fair share. Many countries pay too little or hardly anything at all.

Second. We must reform. Change and renewal is a must for every effective organization. Reform of the Security Council is needed, where the issue of a regionally balanced enlargement now must be addressed. The most obvious candidates being, of course, Japan and Germany, while the Council's decision-making efficiency must be retained and its implementing ability greatly enhanced.

We need reform in the social and economic field. Responsibility for sustainable development, poverty, population, education, the environment is spread out. Mandates overlap. Let us draw up a schedule for implementing what we have decided in Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing. We meant what we said. Now, let us do it.

Third. We must coordinate our humanitarian assistance activities better, - allowing us to react more quickly and more effectively.

Funds, people and resources often prove to be available only when the human suffering has aggravated enough to dominate the evening news, while other tragedies of famine, environmental degradation and underdevelopment remain unnoticed.

Four. We must improve our peace-keeping and conflict prevention capacity to save more lives and save expenses. Delayed action is costly in terms of human suffering and resources. More countries must contribute. We need better stand-by arrangements, sharing of experience and training.

Five. We must build the civilized world, on law and contract, - an international society where the strong are just and the weak secure, as President Kennedy phrased it right here in this hall. We need affirmative action in the interest of our poorest members. We need an international public sector and a conscientious human rights-watch here in the UN. We must bring justice where the limits are overstepped, and support the new international courts, including the idea of an international criminal court, to make a civilized world.

A new step towards this civilized world will be taken when the Middle-East peace process is successfully completed.

A new step towards this civilized world will be taken when anti-personnel mines are prohibited, so that the children of war-torn areas can walk safely in the fields.

A new step towards this civilized world will be taken when the new test-ban takes effect

There can be no civilized world unless we unite to strengthen multilateralism. In this endeavor the United Nations is our repository of hope.