INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT IN THE PLENARY DISCUSSION ON "NEW
DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP FOR TODAY'S COMPLEX WORLD"

The essential question at this Symposium is to try
to throw light on the problem of "New dimensions of
leadership for today's complex world", as well as the
future challenges facing this leadership. These problems
should be studied "especially in view of the economic
crises and increasing risk of social destabilization."

The concept "dimensions of leadership" may encompass
both the objectives which leaders must strive to
attain,
the problems they must overcome,
the means they must make use of,
and the personal qualities required to solve the
challenges they face.

In a short introductory address I can only touch
upon a few of the questions which will emerge during this
session. I assume that there is a broad measure of
agreement on the objectives so that it will be sufficient
briefly to touch upon some of them: secure peace, mutual
and balanced disarmament, full employment, social justice
and economic growth.

Time will not permit a thorough discussion of the question whether the problems to which I would draw your attention really are as "new" as they appear at first sight.

Among the problems we are faced with, I should first like to point to a domestic phenomenon common to most democracies: a phenomenon which nevertheless has a major impact on international relations. I refer to the growth in numbers as well as in importance of organizations and other pressure groups which consider it to be their primary duty to secure advantages for the individual groups they represent at the expense of others. Such pressure groups may well come to form a hindrance to measures which have as their objective to further the interests of all or at least a majority of the population.

The risk that such pressure groups will succeed in preventing measures aimed at promoting the common interest tends to increase in such countries where there is no proper or cohesive parliamentary majority behind the government in power. To counter this type of problem, we have few remedies other than the will and the ability to bear the strain of standing up to these powerful vested interests. There are however indications that the political cost of such firm action is less than initially feared.

The other main problem I should like to mention concerns the growing need to consider national political decisions in an international context.

This problem is related to the previous one I mentioned: The national egoism inherent in the pressure groups may well influence governments to disregard the adverse effects on other countries of decisions made in their own country. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that we will not surmount the present world economic crisis and mass unemployment without overcoming this national egoism, for the simple reason that satisfactory solutions will not be found without better international economic cooperation. Here again it will be a question of the ability of the leadership to show firmness and to succeed in obtaining general public opinion support.

At the same time it seems appropriate to mention the role which political parties without government responsiblity, can come to play in such situations. They are easily tempted to opt for solutions which are founded on national egoism and which appeal to those who have no understanding for the adverse effects inflicted on other countries, and who, further, fail to realize how such adverse effects on others can in the second instance turn as a boomerang on themselves. It may be especially difficult for leaders of the opposition to withstand pressures supporting such short-sighted demands, since they do not have the same responsibility for the damage done.

The picture may, however, easily become one-sided if we do not also take into account considerations of a

non-material nature. Western societies have, since World
War II, gone through a long period with a social sense of
unity of purpose and a sound faith in the future. There
was a strong dedication to be personally engaged in
community affairs as well as to the respect of moral
norms, thus facilitating human relationship and the
solution of the problems of society.

There are, however, disturbing signs that we have
now entered into a period where the bonds and ties
between individuals have weakened, where the sense of
solidarity with and support for the individual in our
immediate environment is weaker, and a period with less
respect for the necessary rules of human conduct. Our
"dimension of leadership" should include the combat of
these disruptive tendencies. At the same time these
problems emphasize the need for interaction between the
political and other forms of leadership.