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Queen Elizabeth II

Address to the United Nations General Assembly



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I thank you, Mr. President, for your words of welcome.

I wish first to express to you, to the Secretary-General and to the General Assembly of the United Nations my great pleasure at being here today.

This Assembly was born of the endeavors of countless men and women from different nations who, over the centuries, have pursued the aims of the preservation of peace between nations, equality of justice for all before the law and the right of the peoples of the world to live their lives in freedom and security.

The Charter of the United Nations was framed with a view to giving expression to these great purposes and so forming a fitting memorial to the men and women whose toil and sacrifices turned those ideas into articles of faith for the nations of today.

Time has in fact made the task of the United Nations more difficult than it seemed when the terms of the charter were agreed at San Francisco twelve years ago. We are still far from the achievement of the ideals which I have mentioned but we must not be discouraged. The peoples of the world expect the United Nations to persevere in its efforts.



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Ten Commonwealth countries are represented in this Assembly -- countries which form a free association of fully independent states and which have widely different histories, cultures and traditions. Common ideals and hopes, not formal bonds, unite the members of the Commonwealth and promote that association between them which, in my belief, has contributed significantly to the cause of human freedom.

The countries of the Commonwealth regard their continuing association with one another and joint service to their high ideals as still an essential contribution to world peace and justice. They add and will continue to add to a tried element of strength, and of accumulated experience.

The United Nations is an organization, dedicated to peace, where representatives from all over the world meet to examine the problems of the time. In it men and women from all these countries -- large or small, powerful or weak -- can exercise an influence that might otherwise be denied them. The United Nations also originates and inspires a wide range of social and economic activities for the benefit of the whole human race.

But, Mr. President, the future of this Organization will be determined, not only by the degree to which its members observe strictly the provisions of the charter and co-operate in its practical activities, but also by the strength of its people's devotion to the pursuit of those great ideals to which I have referred. When justice and respect for obligations are firmly established, the United Nations will the more confidently achieve the goal of a world at peace, law abiding and prosperous for which men and women have striven so long and which is the heart's desire of every nation here represented. I offer you my best wishes in your task and pray that you may be successful.