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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD AT THE OPENING OF THE

1959 UNITED NATIONS PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON THE EXPANDED

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND THE SPECIAL FUND

8 OCTOBER 1959

I have the pleasure to declare open the 1959 pledging conference for technical assistance and the Special Fund.

The fact that a pledging conference for the Expanded Program of Technical Assistance is being held for the tenth time makes this a particularly significant occasion. I know that every government that has shared in the Expanded Program can look with pride on the accomplishments since this unique experiment in multi-national cooperation began one decade ago. During the past ten years, more than 8,000 experts of 77 different nationalities have served in the field as advisers and instructors; some 14,000 fellowships have been awarded under the program by the United Nations and its related agencies in their special fields; altogether 140 countries and territories have received assistance. The program has provided a valuable leaven for economic and social development throughout the world.

International technical assistance brought to light the need for carrying United Nations assistance forward into the fields particularly suitable for capital investment. Recognizing this need, the General Assembly created the United Nations Special Fund, which came into being on 1 January 1959. Thus the United Nations now has widened responsibilities and possibilities for assisting governments in their efforts to accelerate economic development. In my opinion the United Nations Special Fund has begun its work in a sound and businesslike manner. Organizational details have been worked out, a first program of thirteen projects in sixteen countries has been approved, and agreements have been negotiated and signed between the Special Fund and a number of governments and between the Special Fund and different agencies in the United Nations family. Operations have begun in the field, and the Managing Director is finalizing a second and larger program of promising projects for the Governing Council of the Special Fund when it meets in December.

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As in the case of the Expanded Program of Technical Assistance, the importance governments attached to the work of the Special Fund has been clearly shown by the large number of requests they have submitted for assistance. While certain projects proposed could not be considered feasible, it is clear from the number of perfectly sound requests made to the Special Fund, together with those made under the Expanded Program of Technical Assistance, that the target figure originally visualized for the two programs -- 100 million dollars a year -- was, if anything, modest.

You are all aware of the announcement of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd in the General Assembly a few weeks ago that the United Kingdom Government planned to increase its contribution to technical assistance and the Special Fund from the sterling equivalent of 5 and 1/4 million dollars for this year to 8 million dollars for 1960. This is most encouraging. I am sure you share the hope that many more increases of comparable magnitude will be forthcoming. A major effort is needed if the development assistance of the United Nations is to be brought more closely in harmony with the scope and importance of the task. The opportunity is here and now, and I feel confident that pledges in this conference will give us enlarged resources and renewed incentive for the urgent and challenging task ahead.

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