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OBSERVANCE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

CONTENTS

Page

MESSAGES RECEIVED FROM MEMBER STATES

Haiti 2

HAITI

Message from His Excellency Mr. Jean-Claude Duvalier,
President of the Republic of Haiti

/Original: French/

/10 December 1973/

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations, meeting in Paris, proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the twenty-fifth anniversary of which we are celebrating this year.

The 30 articles of the Declaration are a codification of the new humanistic principles which should serve as "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" so that human beings, born free and equal in dignity and rights, may live in brotherhood in an atmosphere of harmony, security and peace.

It is true that enormous progress has been achieved since then, through the accession of many peoples to independence. Yet there are still areas of darkness which represent a challenge to reason, morality and science. Above all, we have in mind those millions of human beings who, as a result of anachronistic and shameful practices, are still held in Africa in a state of bondage which is the negation of the principle of human equality and of the right of peoples to self-determination. Our thoughts turn also towards the three fourths of the world population who are prisoners of illiteracy, suffering from disease of every kind and racked with hunger -- in short, divested of the economic and social rights which are nevertheless acknowledged by all modern nations.

On the occasion of this twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we address an urgent appeal for action to those who are aware of their responsibilities and their humanity, so that the still subject peoples may exercise their inalienable right freely to determine their own destiny. We also appeal for action with a view to applying the principles of international social justice which alone are capable of safeguarding the economic and social rights of the peoples of the third world.

The Haitian nation, of which as Head of State, I am the embodiment, has known colonialism and its horrors, racial discrimination and its consequences. Because of its past experience, it shares the sufferings of all oppressed peoples and offers them its firmest support in their just and legitimate demands.

It was at the cost of the heaviest sacrifices that we won our freedom and independence, which we have always jealously defended. And the Duvalier Revolution, inspired by the nation's purest traditions, seeks daily to consolidate the victories of 1804 through a rational organization capable of ensuring the rights of all citizens and of all foreigners living in the national territory.

In keeping with our unswerving devotion to genuine and positive equality, we have strengthened the legal system by administrative measures which put into

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practice my Government's constant concern to consolidate social peace through a healthy and impartial distribution of justice. This policy is closely linked to my desire to give a clear direction to economic growth and to safeguard the fundamental rights of the great majority of the disadvantaged who, for more than 2 1/2 years, have sustained me with their confidence, their loyalty and their devotion.

Modern civilization has discovered the profound unity of man, whatever his colour, his race or his country. It has revealed man's common destiny, if only in trials, difficulties, restrictions, fears and anxieties. It remains for him, through profound humanistic inspiration, to put his brotherhood into practice for the purpose of a fair and equitable distribution, without any discrimination, of the world's boundless spiritual and material wealth.
