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Thirty-fifth Session

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND
THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 6 June 1968, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

Mrs. ANDERSON

(United States of America)

Tribute to the memory of Senator Robert F. Kennedy of the United States

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TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDENT: We meet this morning in an hour of deep tragedy and sorrow for the people of our country and indeed, I believe, for many peoples around the world. As President Johnson said last night when he spoke of the attack on Senator Kennedy:

"We know only that a brilliant career of public service has been brutally interrupted, that a young leader of uncommon energy and dedication, who has served his country tirelessly and well and whose voice and example has touched millions throughout the entire world, has been senselessly and horribly stricken."

It has been suggested that the Trusteeship Council might wish to meet this morning only to observe a moment of silent meditation and to hear a brief message from the Under-Secretary-General and, shortly thereafter, to adjourn this morning's meeting.

I ask the members of the Council to stand with me in a moment of silence.

Mr. DJERMAKOYE (Under-Secretary-General) (interpretation from French):

Madam President, the Secretary-General and the United Nations have been profoundly shaken this morning by the announcement of the sudden death of Senator Robert Kennedy, the victim of a heinous assassination which has plunged the world into terrible dismay.

Senator Kennedy, who fell on the field of glory, was a torchbearer of peace and progress, of justice and brotherhood among all men. He leaves a heritage of humanism that is the pride of his country and of all nations. To his Government, his family, his friends and to the whole of the United States the Secretary-General addresses his deepest and most heartfelt condolences of sympathy and deepest affliction. May his memory for all of us be a symbol of national and universal love and peace among men.

Mr. GASCHIGNARD (France) (interpretation from French): Yesterday morning my delegation learned with deep shock of the attempt on the life of Senator Robert Kennedy — the Senator from the State of New York in whose territory we live and work. Our horror and our sadness were redoubled this morning when we learned of the news of the death of Senator Kennedy — an opponent of all violence, but nevertheless himself a victim of violence, a statesman so young, but whose career had been so full and so promising. He was a credit to his country. I request you, Madame President, to be so kind as to convey to the Government of the United States the grief of the French delegation and to interpret our feelings of affliction and sympathy to Mrs. Robert Kennedy and her children and to the relatives of the late lamented Senator Kennedy.

Mr. LIN (China): The Chinese delegation is profoundly shocked by the tragedy of Senator Robert Kennedy. We cannot find words to express our feelings. Our hearts go out to Mrs. Robert Kennedy and her children, and the entire Kennedy family.

Senator Kennedy's death is America's loss. America's loss is the world's. This tragic event overwhelms us all, shatters us all and saddens us all.

Mr. ROGERS (Australia): The Australian delegation wishes to associate itself most fully with the expressions of grief and the expressions of condolence which have been beautifully expressed here this morning by the Under Secretary-General and by the delegations of France and China. Like all peoples throughout the world, we were deeply shocked yesterday to hear of this attack on Senator Kennedy and greatly grieved this morning to hear of his death.

The Under-Secretary General has spoken very beautifully about the late Senator Kennedy as a leader, as a world political figure and as a symbol of human aspirations. We wish only to add our delegation's feeling for the man and for his family and we would like you to pass our condolences, in

(Mr. Rogers, Australia)

accordance with the suggestion made by our Vice-President, to the Government of the United States, to the United States delegation to the United Nations and to the late Senator's family.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): On the occasion of the death of Senator Robert Kennedy, the Soviet delegation would like to express its deep sympathy and condolence to the family of the deceased Senator, and to the people and the Government of the United States of America. We understand and share the deep grief at the untimely decease of Senator Kennedy. We share and understand the indignation at this act of a political terrorism which we have always decisively condemned and continue to condemn!

We request you, Madame President, to convey our feelings of condolence to the family of the deceased and to the Government of the United States of America.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom delegation wishes to express its sense of shock at the news of the death of Senator Robert Kennedy and to associate itself entirely with the sentiments and the expressions of condolence which you yourself, Madame President, the Under-Secretary General and other representatives already expressed. All of us feel the sombre quality of the tragedy that twice within half a decade has afflicted the Kennedy family and thus impoverished the people of the United States.

Senator Robert Kennedy not only played a distinguished part in the political life of a great country -- which you, yourself, Madame President, represent and which acts as Host to this Organization and in which we are privileged to conduct our work -- but Senator Kennedy was also an internationalist himself on many of the issues with which we ourselves are here concerned, and was dedicated to the cause of peace and to the welfare of humanity. His own personal qualities exercised an attraction far outside the confines of his own country.

(Mr. Shaw, United Kingdom)

On this sad day, the United Kingdom delegation joins in extending to the Government and people of the United States of America and to Mrs. Robert Kennedy, her children and to the whole Kennedy family its deepest sympathy at their greivous loss.

Mr. CAINE (Liberia): On the death of Senator Kennedy I would like to convey on behalf of the Liberian delegation our deepest sympathy and regret to the family of Senator Kennedy and to the Government and people of the United States.

Personally, I have some feeling for the Kennedy family as a whole. I followed the Senator's campaign closely. The night of the primary in California I sat by my television up to the time that he came and made a statement congratulating the people who were supporting him and up to the time he was shot. I do not know whether any member of the Trusteeship Council has noticed this, but I think that most of the other organs of the United Nations, except the General Assembly, have closed down in homage to the late senator, and if I would not, in so doing, disturb the work of the Council, I would like to make a formal proposal that we adjourn our meeting for today in memory of the late Sanator and in homage to his past.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished delegate of Liberia for his proposal. It has been suggested that the Trusteeship Council should meet only briefly to express its sorrow and shock and shortly thereafter to adjourn this meeting, which we intend to do.

Mr. ALLEN (United States of America): On behalf of the Government and people of my country and the family of Senator Kennedy, I want to express our deep gratitude to all the distinguished representatives who have spoken here for their moving expressions of sympathy. Senator Kennedy's death is indeed a tragic loss, and not for our country alone. Your kind words serve as further evidence that Senator Kennedy's voice and example did indeed touch millions throughout the entire world. One's heart is too full to say more.

The meeting rose at 11.5 a.m.