



United Nations

# Press Release Deputy Secretary-General

UN LIBRARY

Department of Public Information - News Coverage and Accreditation Service - New York

231354

21 Dec ✓

14 DEC 1998

DEC 14 1998

DSG/SM/41

HQ/590 ✓

9 December 1998

## UN/SA COLLECTION

IN MESSAGE AT UNVEILING OF "AMANECIENDO VERTICALMENTE" -- GIFT FROM URUGUAY --

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS SOUL OF UN CHARTER REMAINS INTACT

Cites World Peoples' Determination to Reaffirm Faith in Human Rights

Following is the text of a message delivered by Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette on the occasion of the unveiling of a sculpture entitled "Amaneciendo Verticalmente", a gift to the United Nations from Uruguay, 4 December:

The United Nations has special reason to be grateful to your country today. For with this unveiling, we also witness a sunrise. The proportions of "Amaneciendo Verticalmente", or vertical sunrise, are so strikingly similar to those of the Secretariat building, it almost looks as though the sun is rising in the United Nations itself.

Let us hope that it is so.

But although it is greeting a new day, this sculpture -- like the United Nations -- is already rich in history.

For 70 years -- longer than our Organization has existed -- the wood in this sculpture formed part of a tannery in Montevideo. The timber came from the lapacho and curapay trees of the Paraguayan [sic] jungle. Such wood, it is said, is so dense that if you drop it in water it will not float, and if you place it on fire it will not burn. It is as sturdy as wood can get, and it will bear with fortitude the exposure to the weather in New York. It is as solid as the commitment to the United Nations of Uruguay, a founding member of our Organization.

We can still see the marks from the hoops that held the staves together during the years outside the tannery. We can see the stains that the elements left on the wood over the course of seven decades.

The artist, Ricardo Pascale, left these planks untouched -- for the impact of the forces of work and nature could not be improved upon by art or the hand of man.

(more)

For information media - not an official record - also available at <http://www.un.org/news>

9 December 1998

But as we look at the deeper layer revealed by the cut, we see a smooth surface never before exposed. This is what we might call the soul of the piece. It shows us that no matter how weathered and bruised the shell is by work and life, the soul within remains intact if the material is solid enough.

The world, and the United Nations, has withstood many stains and scars over the past several decades.

But the soul of the United Nations Charter remains intact -- because it is made of sturdy stuff: of the determination of the peoples of the world to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in human rights; and to promote better standards of life in larger freedom.

Now, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights next week, and as reform is giving the United Nations a new over-arching vision to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, the sun is indeed rising anew.

And so the title could not be more apt. Amaneciendo comes from the verb amanecer, and shares the same root as mañana, or morning.

Amanecer is what the sun does when it rises, but it is also what we do when we get up every morning. Allow me, therefore, to quote to you in Spanish a Latin American statesman who said: "Todo amanecer es una aurora, y toda aurora es una esperanza."

So as we look upon this sculpture on our way into the Secretariat building every morning, let us take heart from that message. Let this piece stand as a reminder that the marks left by work, time and nature have their own inherent beauty. That the soul can remain serene even if the surface is scratched. And that taken together, this is what gives us courage to greet every awakening as a new dawn, and every dawn as a new hope. En nombre de las Naciones unidas y todos los que trabajamos aquí, gracias Uruguay.

\* \* \* \* \*