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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL AT PRESENTATION OF UKRAINIAN CARPET AND VASE

Following is the text of a statement by the Secretary-General, U Thant, to be made this afternoon in connexion with the presentation to the United Nations of a carpet and vase from the Ukraine. (For further details, see Press Release HQ/253, issued today.)

It is with great pleasure that I accept this lovely gift made to the United Nations by the people and Government of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Kylym carpet and the porcelain vase which stands before it perpetuate a tradition which has evolved over many centuries and which has been passed down to the present day through successive generations of artists and craftsmen. Mrs. Babenko and Mrs. Pavlenko-Chernichenko have thus given us a contemporary expression of the folk art of the Ukrainian people, an art which is part of the life of your people and which has its roots in the soil of your land.

The beauty of our world is enhanced by the diversity of our various cultures. Your gift will therefore serve to remind us at the United Nations that we must make the world safe from divisive conflict in order to make possible the peaceful coexistence of all peoples in their diverse ways of life.

These decorative objects with their gay floral designs reflect the creative spirit of the people of your country and they bring a colourful note of gaiety to these halls. The tree-of-life design of the carpet draws on a motif which can be traced back to remote antiquity. Its original symbolic meaning is to protect life. Since this is also a fundamental purpose of our work at the United Nations, the presence of these objects here is most appropriate.

Would you kindly convey to your Government, Mr. Foreign Minister, our sincere thanks and deep appreciation for this very welcome gift.

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