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ADDRESS BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD
FOR UNITED NATIONS DAY PROGRAM IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL

Sunday, 24 October 1954

At the middle of our road through the regular annual sessions of the General Assembly we celebrate United Nations Day. Still at the beginning of the road of the United Nations itself, we meet today again in this hall.

The nine years that have passed since the coming into force of the Charter may have provided us with experience sufficient to serve as a basis for improvements in the machinery set up by the Charter. However, the United Nations is not just machinery, an inanimate mechanism, the value of which is determined by the efficiency of its constructional details. The United Nations is a living organism whose health and strength are determined by those using it and those serving it. It will be a long time before this living organism can be said to have reached maturity. The United Nations is still in its infancy, exposed to the dangers, uncertainties and doubts of that period of life.

So that the United Nations may develop as an organism holding together the peoples of the world in a common effort to preserve peace and create better conditions for all, those using it, while pursuing their own national aims, must be guided in their actions as members of the Organization by the universal objectives to which they have pledged themselves in the Charter. And those serving the Organization, while pursuing wholeheartedly the same universal objectives, must keep an open mind towards the special problems of all nations. This can be done while remaining fully faithful to our own national and cultural traditions. Indeed, without these, we would be without roots in a world that is still too wide for us to embrace with the sentiments we reserve for our own homelands.

This day is a reminder of our duty to look beyond national boundaries to universal needs. For us, who use or serve the United Nations, it is also a day when we renew our pledge to develop this Organization inspired and guided by our duty both to our own countries and to the community of nations.

(more)

A great poet of the last century ventured the paradox that "To succeed is to realize what is possible." We have not yet fathomed the possibilities of building, in cooperation, a world of order. In that sense we have not yet succeeded. The effort of mankind to realize the possible will never cease. Our effort to succeed may never cease.

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You have four hosts here this afternoon. The warm welcome that I extend to you is on behalf of us all. I am afraid that there are too many of you here for you each to be introduced to all four of us. May I, therefore, change the usual procedure and introduce your hosts to you. The President of the General Assembly, Mr. van Kleffens; the Mayor of the City of New York, the Honorable Robert Wagner; and the President of the American Association for the United Nations, Dr. Mayo.

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