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PLENARY MEETING**

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*President: Mr. Amintore FANFANI (Italy).*

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 1347th plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

2. I would ask representatives to remain in their seats while I leave the hall to welcome His Holiness Pope Paul VI and escort him here.

*His Holiness Pope Paul VI was escorted into the General Assembly Hall by the President and the Secretary-General.*

Statement of welcome by the President

3. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): On 12 October 1962, John XXIII convened in the Sistine Chapel the delegations from eighty-six States which had gathered at Rome for the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Many of us remember that at that time, assembled beneath Michelangelo's "Last Judgement", Governments were urged to spare no effort, in this bewildering atomic age, to bring peace to the world. The principles of truth and justice through which peace could be achieved were amply set forth, at Easter 1963, in the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.<sup>1/</sup> In a significant gesture, the Pontiff forwarded the text to the United Nations, and its importance was again marked during a special meeting here in February 1965.

4. Continuing a series of acts already so eloquent in themselves, His Holiness Paul VI, whom we welcome with respect and gratitude, is here today in this hall. The Pontiff is greeted, not by frescos heavy with warnings, but by the representatives of 117 States gathered here to express, at this twentieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the most recent anxieties, caused by the imbalances, the oppressions, the perils and the conflicts which still disturb the human family.

5. So august a presence, and the motive for this visit, so highly valued on this twentieth anniversary of our Organization, recall to our minds the reasons why peoples and Governments have conferred on us special responsibilities.

<sup>1/</sup> On establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty (Vatican Polyglot Press, 1963).

6. The Bible, for many of us a sacred book, points to the measure by which every man will be rewarded or punished in eternity in accordance with the use he has made of the means and the power conferred on him to give work, bread, shelter, teaching, freedom, welfare and peace to each of his fellows. Beyond all creeds, this recollection drives us all to intensify our efforts in discharging the responsibility laid upon us. When peace is thus consolidated in truth and justice, every man will be able freely and in all serenity to advance the progress of all and to attain his own well-being.

7. These words express our joy and gratitude for a visit which honours us so greatly, our respectful tribute to the apostolic pilgrim who has come to us and our expectancy as to the words we are about to hear.

8. Allow me to make three wishes: that the message of His Holiness Paul VI may exhort the peoples, restored to freedom and independence, to give increasing support to the work of Governments for justice and progress; that it may inspire all States to do their utmost to make this Organization an instrument of truly universal peace, and, lastly, that it may encourage the agencies of the United Nations always to make their decisions just, timely and effective.

9. Your Holiness, your visit fills this Assembly with deep gratitude. And now, after the Secretary-General has spoken, your message, addressed to us and from this place to the whole world, will be heard in the expectation that it may prelude the conversion of the three wishes just expressed to the certitude of freedom, justice and peace.

Statement of welcome by the Secretary-General

10. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is the cause of peace which brings His Holiness into our midst. It was the cause of peace—universal peace, for all men on earth, without distinction as to race, religion, nationality or political belief—which led me, many months ago, to explore with His Holiness the possibility of his being present at a meeting of the General Assembly such as this, so that he might join his efforts for peace to those of the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations.

11. May I briefly recall the origins of this journey which is now reaching its felicitous climax. On 4 December last, in Bombay, His Holiness voiced a special appeal which moved me and many others deeply, as reflecting the aspirations of mankind and as being closely in keeping with the purposes and objectives of the United Nations—an appeal for an end to the armaments race and for the alleviation of human suffering—an appeal to all the Governments of the world to undertake, in the words of His Holiness, a

"peaceful battle against the sufferings of their less fortunate brothers".

12. Shortly afterwards, on 15 January 1965, His Holiness entrusted to me, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, the text of his appeal. I accepted it, as I stated then, as an invaluable source of inspiration for me and for the Organization which I serve. That appeal, and the desire of His Holiness to place it at the service of the United Nations, prompted me, with the full support of the then President of the General Assembly, to seek the agreement of His Holiness to appear before, and address, the General Assembly of the United Nations.

13. That historic occasion has now arrived. It is taking place at a time when there is a renewal of confidence in our Organization. It is a time also of grave dangers to the peace of the world. In adding my words of welcome to those of the President of the General Assembly, and in expressing my deep gratitude to His Holiness, I do so in the conviction that all of us who work for the purposes of the United Nations will draw from his presence here, now and long afterwards, inspiration for our continued struggle to attain those goals of peace and human well-being which are also the goals His Holiness so devotedly believes to be within our reach.

14. The PRESIDENT: I have the honour to invite His Holiness Pope Paul VI to address the General Assembly.

#### Address by His Holiness Pope Paul VI

15. His Holiness Pope Paul VI (translated from French): As We begin Our address to this audience, unique in the world, We wish first to express Our profound gratitude to Mr. Thant, your Secretary-General; for the invitation which he extended to Us to visit the United Nations on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of this world institution for peace and co-operation among the peoples of all the earth.

16. Thanks also to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Amintore Fanfani, who has had such kind words for Us from the very day he took office.

17. Thanks to all of you here present for your warm welcome. To each one of you We extend Our cordial and deferential greeting. Your friendship has invited Us and admits Us to this meeting; it is as a friend that We appear before you.

18. In addition to Our personal homage, We bring you that of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, now meeting in Rome and represented here by the eminent Cardinals who are accompanying Us.

19. In their name, as in Our own, to all of you, honour and greeting.

20. You are all well aware that this meeting between us is of a twofold nature: it bears the stamp both of simplicity and of grandeur. Simplicity, because he who speaks to you is a man like you; he is your brother, and even one of the least among you, representing as you do sovereign States, for he is vested—if it please you so to think of Us—with only a minute and quasi-symbolic temporal sovereignty, only so much as is needed to leave him free to exercise his spiritual mission and to assure all those who treat with him

that he is independent of every worldly sovereignty. He has no temporal power, no ambition to compete with you. In point of fact, We have nothing to ask for, no question to raise; at most a wish to express and a permission to request: to serve you, within Our competence, disinterestedly, humbly and in love.

21. This is the first statement We have to make. As you see, it is so simple that it may seem insignificant to this Assembly, accustomed as it is to dealing with extremely important and difficult matters.

22. And yet We said to you—and you all feel it—that this moment bears the stamp of a special grandeur, Grandeur for Us, grandeur for you.

23. First, for Us. Oh! You well know who We are. Whatever your opinion of the Roman Pontiff, you know Our mission: We are the bearer of a message for all mankind. This We are not only in Our own name and in the name of the great Catholic family, but also in the name of those Christian brethren who share the feelings We express here, and particularly of those who charged Us explicitly to be their spokesman here. And like the messenger who, at the end of a long journey, delivers the letter entrusted to him, We are conscious of living a privileged moment—short as it may be—which fulfils a wish We have been carrying in Our heart for nearly twenty centuries. Yes, you do remember. We have been on the way for a long time and We bear with Us a long history; here We celebrate the end of a laborious pilgrimage in search of a colloquy with the whole world, a pilgrimage which began when We were given the command: "Go and bring the good news to all nations." And it is you who represent all nations. Allow Us to tell you that We have a message for you all. Yes! A happy message to deliver to each of you.

24. (1) We wish Our message first of all to be a moral and solemn ratification of this high Institution. The message comes of Our experience of history. It is as an "expert in humanity" that We bring to this Organization the voices of Our latest Predecessors, those of the whole Catholic Episcopate, and Our own, convinced as We are that this Organization represents the obligatory road of modern civilization and of world peace.

25. In saying this, We are aware that We are making Our own the voices both of the dead and of the living: of the dead who fell in the terrible wars of the past while dreaming of harmony and world peace; of the living who survived war and already in their hearts condemn those who would try to bring it again; and of still others of the living, the young generations of today going forward confidently in rightful expectation of a better humanity. We also make Our own the voice of the poor, the disinherited, the unfortunate; of those who yearn for justice, for the dignity of life, for freedom, for well-being and for progress. The peoples turn to the United Nations as to the ultimate hope for harmony and peace. We venture to bring here their tribute of honour and hope, together with Our own. And that is why this moment is great for you too.

26. (2) We know that you are fully aware of this. Listen now to the rest of Our message. It looks wholly to the future. The building you have made must never again fall in ruins; it must be perfected and conformed

to the demands world history will make. You mark a stage in the development of mankind; henceforth no turning back, you must go forward.

27. To the majority of States, no longer able to ignore each other, you offer an extremely simple and fruitful form of coexistence. It is this: first of all you recognize and distinguish one another. You do not, of course, confer existence upon States, but you qualify each nation as worthy to sit in the ordered assembly of the peoples: you grant to each national sovereign community a recognition of high moral and juridical value, and you guarantee it an honourable international citizenship. This in itself is a great service to the cause of mankind: clearly to define and to honour the national entities of the world community, and to establish them in a juridical status which entitles them to be recognized and respected by all and from which there may derive an ordered and stable system of international life. You give sanction to the great principle that relations between the peoples should be regulated by reason, by justice, by law, by negotiation; not by force nor by violence nor by war, neither by fear nor by fraud.

28. So it should be. And allow Us to congratulate you on having had the wisdom to leave the door to this Assembly open to the young peoples, to the States which have but lately attained national independence and freedom; their presence here is proof of the universality and magnanimity which inform the principles of this Institution.

29. So it should be. This is what We praise and what We wish for you, and, as you see, these virtues We ascribe to you do not come from without. We draw them from within, from the very genius of your Institution.

30. (3) Your Charter goes even further; and Our message goes forward with it. You exist and work to unite the nations, to associate the States together. Let Us use the formula; to bring together one and another. You are an Association. You are a bridge between the peoples. You are a network of relations among the States. We are tempted to say that your character in some sort reflects in the temporal order what our Catholic Church seeks to be in the spiritual order—unique and universal. Nothing higher can be imagined on the natural level, in the ideological structure of mankind. Your vocation is to bring not only some of the peoples, but all of the peoples, to fraternize. A difficult undertaking? No doubt. But such is the undertaking, your most noble undertaking. Who does not see the need thus progressively to set up a world authority, able to act effectively on the juridical and political plane?

31. Once more We repeat Our wish for you: go forward. We shall say more: strive to bring back among you any who may have left you; consider means of calling into your pact of brotherhood, in honour and loyalty, those who do not yet share in it. Act so that those still outside will desire and deserve the confidence of all; and then be generous in granting it. And you, who have the good fortune and the honour to sit in this Assembly of the peaceful community, hear Us: so act that there may never be an attempt on the mutual confidence which unites you and enables you to do good and great things, that it may never be betrayed.

32. (4) The reason for this wish, which might be said to pertain to the structure of your Organization, leads Us to complete it with other formulas. They are these: let no one, as a member of your Association, be superior to the others: not one above another. This is the formula of equality. We well know that there are other factors to be considered besides that of mere membership of this body. But equality, too, is a part of its constitution; not that you are equal, but that here you make yourselves equal. And it may be that for several among you this is an act of high virtue; allow Us to say this to you, We who represent a religion which works salvation through the humility of its divine Founder. It is impossible to be a brother if one is not humble. For it is pride, however inevitable it may seem, which provokes tensions, struggles for prestige, predominance, colonialism, selfishness; it is pride that shatters brotherhood.

33. (5) And here Our message reaches its highest point. Negatively, at first. It is the word you are expecting from Us and We cannot utter it without being conscious of its gravity and solemnity: never again one against another, never, never again! Is it not to this end above all that the United Nations was born: against war and for peace? Listen to the lucid words of a great man now departed, John Kennedy, who declared four years ago: "Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind." There is no need of long speeches to proclaim the supreme finality of this Institution. Suffice it to recall that the blood of millions of men, that countless and unheard-of sufferings, that useless massacres and fearful ruins have sealed the pact uniting you, with a vow which must change the future history of the world: Never again war, war never again! Peace, it is peace, which must guide the destiny of the peoples and of all mankind!

34. Thanks to you, glory to you, who for twenty years have laboured for peace and have even given illustrious victims to this holy cause. Thanks to you and glory to you for the conflicts you have prevented and for those you have settled. The results of your efforts for peace, up to these last days, even if not yet decisive, deserve that We venture to interpret the feelings of the whole world and in its name express to you both congratulations and gratitude.

35. You, gentlemen, have done and are doing a great work: you are teaching men peace. The United Nations is the great school where that education is acquired, and We are here in the Aula Magna of that school. Whoever takes a place here becomes both pupil and teacher in the art of building peace. And when you leave this hall, the world looks to you as to the architects, the builders of peace.

36. Peace, as you know, is built not only by means of politics and the balance of forces and interests. It is built with the spirit, with ideas, with works of peace. You are labouring at this great work. But you are as yet only at the beginning of your labours. Will the world ever succeed in changing the exclusive and bellicose state of mind which up to now has woven so much of its history? This is hard to foresee; but it is easy to affirm that we must resolutely take the road towards a new history, a peaceful history, one that will be truly and fully human, the very history God promised



to men of good will. The roads to it are mapped for you: the first is that of disarmament.

37. If you wish to be brothers, let the weapons fall from your hands. You cannot love with offensive weapons in your hands. Even before they cause victims and ruins, weapons, especially the terrible weapons modern science has given you, beget bad dreams, nourish bad feelings, create nightmares, mistrust and sombre resolves; they exact enormous expenditures; they bring to a halt projects of useful work undertaken in solidarity; they warp the psychology of peoples. So long as man remains the weak, changeable and even wicked being that he often shows himself to be, defensive arms will, alas! be necessary. But you, your courage and valour spur you to study ways of guaranteeing the security of international life without recourse to arms: this is an aim worthy of your efforts, this is what the peoples expect of you. This is what must be attained. And for this, unanimous trust in this Institution must grow; its authority must grow; and the goal, it is to be hoped, will then be reached. Then you will win the gratitude of all peoples, relieved of the crushing expense of armaments and delivered from the nightmare of ever imminent war.

38. We know—and how could We not rejoice in the knowledge?—that many among you looked with favour upon the invitation in the cause of peace that We addressed to all States from Bombay last December: to devote to the benefit of the developing countries at least part of the savings which can be realized by reducing armaments. We here renew that invitation, with the confidence your sentiments of humanity and generosity inspire in Us.

39. (6) To speak of humanity and generosity is to echo another constituent principle of the United Nations, the very highest: you are labouring here not only to exorcise conflicts between States; but to make States capable of working one for another. You are not satisfied with making coexistence between nations easier; you are taking a much greater step forward, a step deserving of Our praise and Our support: you are organizing brotherly co-operation among the peoples. Here a system of solidarity is being set up, so that the high aims of civilized order may win the unanimous and ordered support of the whole family of peoples, to the good of all and everyone. This is what is most beautiful in the United Nations; this is its most truly human face; this is the ideal which mankind dreams of on its pilgrimage through time; this is the world's greatest hope. We presume to say that this is the reflection of God's design—a transcendent design and full of love for the progress of the human society on earth, a reflection in which We see the message of the Gospel, which is heavenly, become earthly. Indeed, it seems to Us that here We catch an echo of the voice of Our Predecessors, particularly of Pope John XXIII, whose message of Pacem in Terris evoked among you so honourable and significant a response.

40. What you proclaim here are the fundamental rights and duties of man, his dignity, his freedom, and above all his religious freedom. We feel that you are the interpreters of what is highest in human wisdom, We would almost say, of its sacred character. For it is above all the life of man that is in question and the life of man is sacred; no one may dare offend it. It is in

your Assembly that respect for life, even in so far as the great problem of the birth rate is concerned, must find its highest affirmation and its most reasoned defence. Your task is to ensure that there is enough bread on the table of mankind, and not to favour an artificial control of births, which would be irrational, in order to lessen the number of guests at the banquet of life.

41. But it is not enough to feed the starving; each man must also be assured of a life consistent with his dignity. And this is what you are striving to achieve. Is this not the realization, before our eyes and thanks to you, of the prophetic utterance so well suited to your Institution: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah 2:4)? Are you not using the prodigious energies of the earth and the magnificent inventions of science, no longer as instruments of death, but as tools of life for the new era of mankind?

42. We know with what growing intensity and effectiveness the United Nations and its related world agencies render help to Governments which need it to speed their economic and social progress.

43. We know how ardently you work to conquer illiteracy and to spread culture throughout the world; to give men proper and modern medical assistance; to put at man's service the marvellous resources of science, of technique, of organization. All this is magnificent and deserving of everyone's praise and support, including Our own.

44. We Ourselves would also like to set an example, even though the smallness of Our means is inadequate to the practical and quantitative needs. We wish to intensify the efforts of Our charitable institutions against the world's hunger and to meet its chief needs. It is thus, and in no other way, that peace is built.

45. (7) One word more, gentlemen, one last word: this edifice you are building does not rest upon purely material and earthly foundations, for it would then be a house built on sand; above all, it rests on our consciences. Yes! the moment of "conversion" has come, of personal transformation, of inner renewal. We must accustom ourselves to think of man in a new way; and in a new way also of men's life in common; finally, in a new way of the paths of history and the destiny of the world; in accordance with the words of Saint Paul, to "put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and the holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4:24). Now the hour for a halt is upon us, a moment of meditation, of reflection, almost of prayer; a moment to think anew of our common origin, our history, our common destiny. Never before has there been such a need for an appeal to the moral conscience of man as there is today, in an era marked by such human progress. For the peril comes neither from progress nor from science; on the contrary, properly used, they could resolve many of the grave problems which beset mankind. The real peril is in man, who has at hand ever more powerful instruments, suited as much to destruction as to the highest conquests.

46. In a word, the edifice of modern civilization must be built on spiritual principles, which alone can not only support it, but also illuminate and animate it. And it is Our conviction, as you know, that these

indispensable principles of higher wisdom can rest only on faith in God. The unknown God of whom Saint Paul spoke to the Athenians on the Areopagus? Unknown to those who, without realizing it, yet sought Him and had Him near them, as happens to so many men of our century? . . . To us, in any case, and to all those who receive the ineffable revelation which Christ has given us of Him, He is the living God, the Father of all men.

47. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Holiness Pope Paul VI for the noble and very important

address which he has just delivered. I am sure that the speech of His Holiness will continue to echo for a very long time in this Aula Magna of peace.

48. I would ask representatives to remain in their seats while the Secretary-General and I escort His Holiness out of the General Assembly Hall.

49. I shall ask the Under-Secretary for General Assembly Affairs to remain here until His Holiness has left the Assembly building. When the Under-Secretary rises, the meeting will be at an end.

*The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.*