

**United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
TWENTIETH SESSION**



**1397th
PLENARY MEETING**

*Thursday, 16 December 1965,
at 10.30 a.m.*

NEW YORK

Official Records

CONTENTS

Address by Mr. Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Page

1

*Agenda item 11:
Report of the Security Council.*

7

*Agenda item 22:
Reports of the Committee for the International Co-operation Year.*

7

*Agenda item 27:
Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy: report of the Secretary-General.*

7

*Agenda item 12:
Reports of the Economic and Social Council
Report of the Third Committee.*

7

*Agenda item 64:
Freedom of information:
(a) Draft Convention on Freedom of Information;
(b) Draft Declaration on Freedom of Information
Report of the Third Committee.*

9

*Agenda item 98:
Creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Report of the Third Committee.*

President: Mr. Amintore FANFANI (Italy).

Address by Mr. Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have the pleasure of having with us today His Excellency Mr. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and I should like to welcome him on behalf of the Assembly. It gives me great pleasure to invite Mr. Harold Wilson to address the General Assembly.

2. Mr. WILSON: Mr. President, it is a privilege to have the opportunity of addressing this twentieth session of the General Assembly, and to be able to do so under your distinguished Presidency. In one sense I have arrived a year late, because it was my hope and intention to seek to address the Assembly a year ago but for reasons that we all regret, but cannot forget, that Assembly was frustrated.

3. Since then it has been a sombre year. There were times when dedicated men needed to have an

almost unreasoning belief in themselves and in their colleagues and an unquenchable faith in survival to avoid reaching the conclusion that this Assembly might not meet again. It has been a year of debates, of critical and sometimes cynical analysis, and of searching examination.

4. Put through the warp and weft of those debates a pattern is emerging. Running through that pattern is the realization not only that this great world Organization must endure, but that to endure it cannot stand still. For a living organization, stagnation and death are synonymous. Historians may look back and conclude that the crisis through which we have passed will prove to have been the forcing house of change; that time has proved the need for revision of our Charter, but proved no less that present attitudes can be as stifling to progress as obsolete provisions.

5. But those would be wrong who concluded from the history of the United Nations in this past year that our internal problems, grave though they were, have dominated the scene. What has dominated the lives of those who have met and debated and argued and worked here has been the great compelling crises and conflicts that have rocked the world, and, because this great edifice is the centre of the world, every tremor, every seismic disturbance, every hurricane has been registered and sometimes amplified here.

6. It has been a sombre year because the quiet persuasive voices of those who, here and elsewhere, have sought to make progress have been silenced by the louder and more demanding noises of human conflict, the deafening thunder of guns and bombs in Viet-Nam, the sudden descent on peaceful villages of men with murder in their hearts, the cries of the children, the homeless, the bereaved. There have been internal conflicts, capable at a moment's notice of threatening the peace of a far wider area, as in Santo Domingo, which this Organization was able to turn from anxiety to hope. There has been the war that is not a war, the so-called confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia, with, in the past year, the sad withdrawal from our fellowship for the first time of a Member Nation. There has been the outbreak of conflict in the Indian subcontinent, as a problem which had smouldered angrily for eighteen years burst into flame. And against all this the quiet intervention of the United Nations, the fearless patience of our Secretary-General, the work of dedicated men here who by day and by night laboured for that cease-fire.

7. Now as the year draws to its end we face a new challenge in Africa, where selfish and unthinking men have plunged a continent into peril, the peril of a conflict which, in its horrors, would cause even the deep moral issues which are at stake there, the original grounds of argument, to pale and be forgotten.

8. A sombre year, yes, but it is possible for those with faith to see the hope of better things, and to see perhaps real progress on the things that matter for world peace in the months that lie ahead.

9. So I hope to use the time available to me this morning to say a few words first about the problems of the United Nations and of Britain's attitude to those problems, before turning to some of the wider world issues, and then, as I think will be expected of me, to say something of the agonizing challenge Britain faces, Africa faces and the world faces in Rhodesia.

10. The arguments and conflicts about the United Nations in these past few months have crystallized the choice we are facing. It is to be no more than an international sounding board for exchanging views and registering conflicts that are raging outside, or is it to move forward purposefully towards some form of world authority?

11. The answer of Her Majesty's Government to this question is clear. We range ourselves unequivocally on the side of those who say that the United Nations must move forward with set purpose towards becoming a world authority; for if it does not, for if we for a month or a week or a day lose sight of this ultimate goal, then this great enterprise is condemned to drift along in the shallows of human endeavour ultimately to be cast up on some remote shore, unwanted, even unmourned.

12. What does this mean for each of us? It means a conscious decision by all Member States to use this Organization not for the peddling of selfish and shortsighted national interests but in order to create an international rule of law.

13. We have taken our decision. Britain now has a Government which fundamentally believes in the United Nations and which has time and time again in this past year been prepared to make sacrifices, some of them far from easy, to help forward the purpose of the United Nations. This was why, at a critical time, we came forward with our unconditional pledge of funds to help overcome the Organization's financial crisis. This was why as one of our first actions, we announced the pledging of substantial logistic support to ensure that the United Nations shall never be inhibited in any peace-keeping operation because it lacks the resources needed for peace-keeping purposes. That was why, too, we put forward proposals, as we know others have to create more effective peace-keeping machinery.

14. We approach the future of the United Nations from these propositions which we will seek to make effective.

15. One, we maintain that while the Charter has given primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace to the Security Council, it would be wrong to whittle away the authority of the General Assembly. The Council and the Assembly both have a vital role to play, and the Assembly cannot be silenced and made powerless in this first function of the United Nations—the function of keeping the peace.

16. Two, we maintain that the time must soon come when the temporary and tentative efforts of the past should give way to new standards and new methods

for the keeping of the peace of the world. What we need and what we must create is peace-keeping machinery more effective, more efficient, more speedy and more permanent.

17. Three, we believe that the financial problems of the United Nations should be put beyond doubt. We, with others, have made a start, but too many are hanging behind.

18. We need in particular to improve our procedures so that the clear will of this Assembly, or of any other organ of the United Nations, will not be frustrated by our failure to provide the financial means to enable the Secretary-General and his staff to undertake and to complete the tasks that we give him. We do not give the world a lead when we pass a resolution. We do not give the world a lead when we provide the means to enable international action to make that resolution a reality.

19. Four, we believe it is essential that the United Nations should be more effective in a military sense. Brave men have performed miracles of endurance in keeping the peace on troubled frontiers, in preventing local conflicts from becoming cockpits of international intervention; and our gratitude is due to those men and their commanders and to the Governments who did not remain deaf to the appeals of this Assembly or of the Security Council. But we need to be sure that effective and immediate action can be taken whenever the crisis comes, so that dangerous weeks do not pass by while the Secretary-General has to go through the intolerable humiliation of passing the hat round for money and seeking to persuade this or that Government to contribute its meed of military forces. A peace-keeping fund, yes. National contributions pre-pledged and earmarked, as we and so many others have made, yes. But we need to remove the impediments to the creation of an effective military power of intervention. This we must do so that we are prepared to act when a situation arises that can be dealt with only by military intervention.

20. Five, it would be even better than this if we could prevent such a situation from arising. It was to this end that Lord Caradon presented a proposal to your Special Political Committee last Monday, 13 December [489th meeting], for settling disputes peacefully, and indeed before they need a peace-keeping force. This proposal, together with the many suggestions for strengthening the capacity of the Organization, which are now to be studied further by the Committee of Thirty-three, seems to me to offer a constructive way forward in this vital field.

21. Six, through our specialized agencies, through the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank, through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, we must be ready to assert a more coherent international responsibility not only for economic development, but for purposeful economic co-operation in trade and finance. And we must realize that all these separate problems present an underlying unity.

22. We are all anxious about the snail-like progress that is being made in the "Kennedy Round" for freer international trade. But let us recognize that if we are successful with the Kennedy Round—and it would be

a sad day for world prosperity if we failed—that very success can be frustrated and destroyed if we are not successful in creating an up-to-date and expansionist mechanism in international payments. Already today advanced industrial countries with a century and a half of experience behind them, with the warning of the '20s and '30s, if that warning were needed, are being forced into sauve qui peut measures—or what we would call "I'm all right, Jack" measures—methods of exporting balance-of-payments crises from one to another.

23. International finance is in danger of becoming a macabre version of the game of musical parcels which we used to play when we were young, the object being not to be caught with the parcel when the music stopped. But in an international system where we are all members one with another, if we are not caught with the parcel, someone else is. And from the game of exporting balance-of-payments crises from ourselves to our neighbours, it is only a short step to exporting deflation and unemployment from one nation to another. Haven't we learnt the lesson of the 1930's?

24. But world trade is no longer the monopoly of advanced industrial nations. All of us know the extent to which the developing countries depend for their hope of prosperity on earnings from commodities and their deep interest in the possibilities of increasing their exports of manufactures, and the work of the Conference on Trade and Development, in bringing home to the world the magnitude and urgency of the need to help the developing countries is of the highest importance, and we shall continue to do whatever lies within our power to forward this work. We welcome, in particular, the report of the International Bank on the scheme for supplementary finance which Britain and Sweden initiated at the Trade Conference in Geneva last year. A great deal more work will be needed on this report by both developed and developing countries. All I can say at this stage is that we are getting on as fast as possible with our own study of it.

25. Seven, let us recognize that the work of extending trade between the developing countries themselves and between the developing countries and advanced countries will be a mockery if the developing countries do not receive stable and remunerative prices for the primary produce by which they live. We have all seen the figures showing, for periods of years at a stretch, how the fall in purchasing power of many primary producing countries has more than outweighed the total receipts of aid by those countries—from every form of aid, international and bilateral—in those years.

26. It is nineteen years since, as a very young Minister, I headed my country's delegation for some four months to a preparatory commission of one of the United Nations specialized agencies, FAO, charged with the task of helping to solve world food problems and of providing security and stability in primary prices. I was proud of the agreed report that commission produced which set out a blueprint for commodity price stabilization schemes. But little has been done to give reality to the ideas which we proclaimed nineteen years ago.

27. The Conference on Trade and Development provides the forum and the forcing-house for devising effective means of promoting stability and security for primary producing countries. For this will not only provide a more secure base for countries in planning their development programmes—and incidentally helping to stabilize their demands for the products of industrial countries—but it will also help to banish for millions of individual producers the fear of instability and insecurity, so that they can plant their seed with more assurance about the returns they will receive when their crops come to be harvested.

28. Eight, the time is now ripe for a drive forward on disarmament. We have had our disappointments and our frustrations. But this United Nations has expressed its demands clearly. The next step is to get down to detailed and constructive discussions at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva which, I am glad to say, will reconvene next month.

29. I am not going to repeat all that needs to be done to secure an effective multilateral treaty on general and complete disarmament, covering nuclear and conventional weapons. This remains the clear aim of Her Majesty's Government, but I will leave the arguments as they have been so effectively put by our Minister of Disarmament, while, incidentally, appealing to every Government here to follow our example in appointing a Minister charged full time with the task of promoting disarmament.

30. Nor will I repeat our well-known views on the basis of which a comprehensive test-ban agreement could be reached, or the proposals that we and our friends have supported for a freeze of nuclear delivery systems, or the idea—which we favour—of destroying some of the bombers and missiles which already exist in vast numbers.

31. Equally, while I cannot go into the details, we should be prepared to examine, in Europe, in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, within a maintained balance of military power, areas of controlled disarmament in which there could be agreed and balanced reductions of conventional forces and nuclear forces; and we should be prepared to examine, too, proposals for nuclear-free zones, provided, as I have made clear elsewhere, they are genuinely nuclear-free, taking into account missiles trained on an area as well as those sited within that area.

32. I am passing over all these questions because there is one which to my mind transcends even these in urgency. And this is my ninth and final point. The need for an effective agreement to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, a binding and unequivocal commitment on the part of nuclear Powers not to pass on to non-nuclear Powers the means of acquiring nuclear weapons, and an equally binding declaration on the part of non-nuclear Powers neither to manufacture such weapons nor to seek to obtain them.

33. This question lies at the heart of so many exchanges—I will be frank—between ourselves and our allies and the Soviet Union. I recognize the fears of those with whom we are in negotiation. If I were a Russian, with memories of 20 million dead in the last war, I think I would feel the same. And in

the proposals Her Majesty's Government has put forward to improve the cohesiveness of the Alliance of which we are members, and in any alternative proposals we have come to examine, we have stressed, and we shall continue to stress, as a paramount and unnegotiable condition, the requirement that any new or modified arrangements that are made must be proof against the risk of dissemination.

34. This question will not wait. In all the welter of debating points and the almost overwhelming technical intricacies, one thing stands out clear: if, in 1966, we do not succeed in negotiating an effective and water-tight treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, the world may have passed the point of no return. There are some non-nuclear nations nearing the end of their patience. Grant that they may have the patience to wait a little longer. There are some nations that fear that if they do not go nuclear their enemies will. There are nations that have reason to fear attack and who know that their enemies have already developed nuclear power. That is why I appeal to this Assembly to demand that this problem be given the urgency that it requires. If not, all our eloquence, all our resolutions, all the ebb and flow of debate in the Assembly or in Committees, on the floor or in the corridors, will be weighed by the balance of history, and it is we—we here present today—who will be judged to have been found wanting. They will say of this Assembly and of its successors: the future of the world was in their grasp, and they were not worthy.

35. I want to make it clear, so far as the Government which I have the honour to lead is concerned, that we will do our utmost to secure this agreement. We believe that such an agreement is not only essential in itself: we believe that it is capable of creating the trust that will enable us to move forward to other and more glittering prizes. We believe that it could be a catalyst capable of transforming relations not only between East and West but in other areas: in the Middle East and in South-East Asia, where fear is in the saddle. My colleagues will travel to the ends of the earth to secure this, including Peking, because—let us be realistic—at the end of the day world disarmament like world security, is unattainable if the machinery for world disarmament, like the machinery for world security, is less than fully comprehensive. It is for that reason that we support the entry into this Organization of Communist China. This does not mean that we agree with its policies. No one has condemned some of its policies in stronger terms than we have. But I am a realist, and I recognize the difficulty. We are not agreed. But, nevertheless, disarmament and history cannot wait.

36. I have dealt at some length with disarmament, and particularly with non-proliferation. I should now like to refer briefly to just one or two of the principal world problems which have dominated our lives in 1965, and are likely to do so—for as long as we allow them to do so—in 1966.

37. Every one of our national Parliaments has, at some time or another in this year, debated the situation in Viet-Nam. Whatever our different approaches—

and we have made our position absolutely plain in this matter—let us all agree on these propositions.

38. First, this war is, above all, a tragedy for the people of Viet-Nam. Peace has been a stranger to their country for a whole generation. All of us can point to and condemn this or that tragic occurrence—to this village or that town; to this murder or that ambush; to the innocent victims of this bombing raid, or to the innocent victims of that murderous midnight assault. But every day that this war continues, these things will go on. Innocent people will be killed and maimed; children will be rendered fatherless or homeless. All concerned will have heard that principles are at stake, and there may be arguments about the principles, but it is those who refuse to come to the conference table who are responsible for the perpetuation of this intolerable suffering.

39. Second, as long as this war continues, there is a continuing danger—some would aver a growing danger—that what is at present a local war could escalate into a major war in Asia or into something even worse. But again it is those who refuse to negotiate who carry this responsibility.

40. And third—we have to face this—the fighting in Viet-Nam casts a shadow over the whole conduct of international relations. The hopes we had a year or two ago that we could make coexistence a reality, that each of us, East and West, believing profoundly in the rightness of his own system of government, could still move closer together—these hopes have received a setback over this past year because Viet-Nam is a cause of division and an impediment to reconciliation.

41. Therefore, for these three reasons, every nation here which has it in its power to contribute to peaceful negotiations has a duty which, in the name of humanity, it cannot shirk. And one thing is clear: there is no final solution to be sought in military means alone. Those who refuse to come to the conference table because they rest their hopes on an unattainable military victory delude themselves and imperil world peace.

42. The British Foreign Secretary, as one of the two Geneva co-Chairmen, has repeatedly urged on his Soviet colleagues the need to reconvene the Geneva Conference. So far, our Soviet friends have not felt able to agree. I recognize their difficulties, but it is certain that this problem will not be solved until there is a conference, whether under the aegis of the Geneva Conference—which would be right—or in any other way.

43. For reasons that we all understand, the Viet-Nam problem is not one that could at this time be most helpfully raised in the Security Council. That was one of the reasons we in the United Kingdom have proposed, through the Commonwealth, an initiative which could have led to negotiations and to a cease-fire. The Commonwealth, representing every point of view on the Viet-Nam issue, appointed its representatives—four heads of Government, from areas thousands of miles apart—to visit all the capitals concerned. From Washington and Saigon we had an agreement to receive us; from Peking and Hanoi there was no

agreement. The efforts of the Secretary-General have been equally unavailing. We have sought and are still seeking to turn the key in Hanoi, where alone this matter can be decided. It is a terrible commentary on man's impotence that, while we can reach out to the moon or to more distant planets, while astronauts can rendezvous in outer space, the whole power of this United Nations is incapable of establishing a dialogue between the leaders of two parts of the same country and between others concerned with this dispute. I believe the world, but above all the people of Viet-Nam, wants to see those leaders round a conference table. And every day that goes by underlines this truth, that the enemies of negotiation are the enemies of peace.

44. One of the consequences of a willingness to negotiate, I believe, would be an improvement in relations between East and West. For I have referred, with what I think will be recognized as realism, to the fact that this year, partly because of Viet-Nam, partly because of anxieties about nuclear problems within Europe, we have not made the progress that I believe both sides, East and West, would like to see. But if in so many respects the keynote of this speech at the end of 1965 must be the word "sombre", I do see some hope that we might be able soon to resume a constructive dialogue between East and West. We disagree about so much, but we agree about the need for coexistence because, as Lord Attlee once said, the alternative to coexistence is co-death. And if that dialogue can be developed, I believe that not only many world problems but many of the issues which have dominated and clouded the debates and discussions within this Assembly and its Committees can attain a more realistic perspective.

45. But it is not enough for this East-West dialogue to be confined to Western nations on the one hand and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on the other. It is urgent, as well, to establish a dialogue with China, whether in this Organization, as we would hope, whether in disarmament negotiations, or through improved diplomatic channels.

46. Finally, I want to turn to the question of Rhodesia.

47. I hope this Assembly will accept that no one could have done more than we did to warn the then Government of Rhodesia of the incalculable risks they were taking if they plunged into the illegal action which they formally, finally and irresponsibly announced on 11 November. I hope the Assembly will agree that we did everything in our power to agree on a just and honourable settlement. We failed, and we failed because of the racialist obsessions of the people with whom we were dealing. For not only did they defy the British Government, the legally constituted authority for their country; not only did they show their contempt for world opinion; but worst of all, they have, while paying lip-service to "civilized standards", outraged the moral law which is working its purpose out as year succeeds year in world history—the right of all men to live their lives in the dignity of social and political freedom. In a broadcast to the British nation before the tragic decision of 11 November, some weeks before, I said that in dealing with Mr. Smith,

as I then was, I was talking the accents of different worlds and, indeed, of different centuries.

48. Britain carries the responsibility. Sometimes I could wish it were otherwise. No Government, I believe, in our life has had to face a problem so complex, so multidimensional. In theory, and under constitutional law, this is a bilateral matter between the British Parliament, who alone has the responsibility of decision in Rhodesia, and the people of Rhodesia. But those in any country who believe that this can be contained within the confines of Britain and Rhodesia, those who do not recognize the fact that this is a world problem both in what it symbolizes and in what its effect can be, such people are victims of self-delusion.

49. It was the recognition of this fact which led the British Government, within minutes of the illegal declaration of Mr. Smith and his colleagues, to instruct the Foreign Secretary to proceed at once here to the United Nations and take the initiative in raising the matter in the Security Council. We accept the responsibility for dealing with this matter because it is our responsibility. But having embarked on a series of measures of unprecedented severity, at considerable cost and still greater risk to ourselves, in order to secure the return of the Rhodesian people to their true allegiance and to constitutional courses of action, we have the right to ask every Member of this Assembly to give us their fullest support. Above all, we have the right to demand that the financial and economic measures we have instituted are not frustrated by the nationals of other countries seeking to earn a sordid profit by traffic with those who have defied the opinions of mankind.

50. I know there are many nations represented here, many of our closest friends in the Commonwealth, who have criticized us bitterly for not invoking the use of military force to suppress this rebellion; and it is a sad thought that in this Organization, created to maintain and establish the peaceful settlement of disputes, there is a deep disagreement between us on the question of what is held to be our failure to settle this matter by war-like means. Their passions run deep, and every one of us understands this. But I say to them that what they propose is not the way to settle this problem.

51. We shall not let up until Rhodesia has returned to constitutional rule. We believe that, given time and given patience, the British Government and the British Parliament will effectively assert their authority in consultation with those who can claim to speak more representatively on behalf of the Rhodesian people as a whole.

52. Equally I repeat—and this has been the view expressed by successive Governments in my country—that the future of Rhodesia, as we have ensured with so many formerly subject nations that have achieved independence in these past few years, the future of Rhodesia must be on the basis of multiracial harmony leading to democratic majority rule.

53. Our disagreement is not about principles but about the methods for realizing those principles. The methods we use to achieve a settlement must be based on the realities of the Rhodesian situation,

realities which every one of us here must be prepared to face. And there are two facts I must underline. First, Rhodesia is in legal terms a colony, yes, but as our representatives here in the United Nations have had to make clear on many occasions, Rhodesia has had a unique degree of internal self-government for over forty years, unknown in any other part of the former British Empire. In all our long, proud record of ending British colonial rule, I do not believe there is any example, apart from Rhodesia, where, at the stage of qualified self-government, the local régime exercised control over powerful armed forces. One may regret this fact, as one may regret that over these last forty years previous British Parliaments failed to uphold and assert their right to insist on the maintenance of human rights, and the protection of the African people in Rhodesia. But however we may regret failures of the past, we have to deal now with the consequences of those failures for 1965.

54. My second point is this. It has been a cardinal aim of British policy to secure a more rapid advance of self-government for African peoples and to train those peoples for self-government. I believe—and I have said this many times to Mr. Smith—that it is a tragic commentary upon the European record in Rhodesia that there is not in Rhodesia, as elsewhere, an African nationalist movement capable of the responsibility of self-government at this moment. For one thing, it is tragically divided. For another, it has been denied the opportunity of practical political experience and, in particular, of multiracial co-operation. It is for these reasons that I have had to make it clear that, so far as we are concerned, a return to constitutional rule would not and could not mean an immediate advance to majority rule. Time will be needed, and time, as I have said in London and in Salisbury, will be measured not by clock or calendar but by achievement in working within a multiracial Rhodesian Government, during a period in which the British Parliament remains in a position to ensure the protection of human rights, to guarantee the advance, the unimpeded advancement of the majority and to safeguard the rights of minorities. This has been done with success elsewhere in Africa, and it can be done in Rhodesia.

55. We are facing a dangerous situation. The wind of change in Africa is blowing at gale force. The tragedy is that there are deluded men who have seized the helm and who, with all the apparatus of a police state, have in turn deceived a lot of their fellow citizens into believing that the relative stillness which is found at the centre of a cyclone can be a basis for quiet and stability.

56. I recognize the deep feelings, the passions that have been engendered among our African friends. Yes, I know that when some in Britain say that the Rhodesian Europeans are our own kith and kin they can reply, with right on their side, that their own kith and kin outnumber the Europeans by twenty to one.

57. But this is a time when calm, cool counsels are more likely to settle this issue, and it must be on a basis that will avoid confrontation and conflict across Africa. Lord Caradon has warned that if passions take control this mad action could be the

beginning of a new and more dangerous conflict which, unlike any in world history, would be a conflict of race, a conflict based on colour. I am proud that in the world where conflict of colour and race is now occupying the centre of the stage, to the exclusion even of our more ancient disputes, the Commonwealth is the greatest multiracial association in the world. I trust it will remain so and that it will survive the strains of these past days. But once the world begins to split, not on the basis of ideology but on the basis of colour, then all that all of us have fought for, including this United Nations itself, will be consigned to the limbo of impractical experiments.

58. This is a moral issue. More than two years ago, when Leader of the Opposition, speaking at my Party Conference, I said this Rhodesian issue was one in which there could be no neutrals. There is no neutrality here in this Assembly.

59. Dante has said, and I hope I have translated this correctly, Mr. President, "the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in a period of moral crisis, maintained their neutrality". Abraham Lincoln said in the context of a comparable moral crisis a century ago that "no nation could survive half slave and half free". That is the issue in Rhodesia today. But I beseech this Assembly to give us time to deal with this situation. I have made it clear that in this task to which we have set our hands, there will be no turning back.

60. I accept that there is a deep difference of opinion between the British Government and those in Africa whose goodwill and respect we would like to have and trust we shall yet retain, and I would ask our friends in Africa, when they are able to listen, to believe that the difference is not about the objective of ending the rebellion. It is about methods. On objectives, on our determination to bring this through to a successful conclusion, I hope there is no doubt about where we stand; this is a question of trust, of trust in our sincerity and our determination. As to methods, we can all argue about this and there will be no finality during the argument. I referred a moment ago to Abraham Lincoln. At the moment of that great conflict when everyone doubted whether the methods he proposed would succeed, when many even doubted his resolution, he said this:

"I will do the very best I can, the very best I know how. And I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me now will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

61. I wonder if we could leave it like that. Today, we see some of our friends passionate to intervene but unable to do so, directing their understandable anger, not against Rhodesia, but against Britain. All right, I understand that. But the British Government is not going to be deflected from the course that we are convinced is right, and in which I believe the whole British people is behind us. But I do have the right to appeal to this Assembly to recognize that words and resolutions and criticism and passions, while they have their place, are not a substitute for action.

62. When the American nation declared independence in the eighteenth century, they had world opinion on their side. What is more, they were dealing with a stiff, stupid and unimaginative British Government, which is not the position today. I warned Mr. Smith and the Rhodesian people in advance that 1776 was no precedent for what he was taling about.

63. And it is because Mr. Smith's tawdry declaration of independence, unlike that of 1776, never had, in those historic words of Jefferson, "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind"; it is because the vast majority of the nations of the world have condemned this action that i have the right in this Assembly to appeal, nay, to demand that everyone who deplores this irresponsible and backward-looking attitude of this Rhodesian minority should join with us, should back us to the hilt in our economic and financial sanctions, regardless of our differences, and so deny to the illegal Rhodesian régime the munitions of rebellion and the means it seeks for defying history and for defying the objectives asserted on behalf of mankind in the Charter of the United Nations.

64. At this critical moment in world history I have asserted the right to speak with a frankness which I believe this Assembly is entitled to demand. On every issue, be it the future of the United Nations, or disarmament, or the spread of nuclear weapons, or Viet-Nam, and now Rhodesia, we who are gathered here and those whom we represent have duties which we cannot escape. I remind the Assembly of the words of President Kennedy when he spoke here on behalf of the American people:

"... we in this Hall shall be remembered either as part of the generation that turned this planet into a flaming funeral pyre or as the generation that met its vow to 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'" [1015th meeting, para. 94].

"The decision is ours. Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose—or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet—or together we shall perish in its flames. Save it we can—save it we must...." [Ibid., para. 99.]

65. It was in the context of the arms race and of the poisoning of the human race through atmospheric tests that he spoke. Today we meet at a time when the arms race could once again be intensified, and there is grave danger of it, when the conflicts whose worse developments President Kennedy never lived to see are dominating world affairs, when, above all, the issue which was consecrated by his martyrdom has come to occupy the centre of the world stage. For whether the challenge that we face is an uncontrollable nuclear explosion, as we allow this fateful year's opportunities to pass ungrasped, or whether it is an equally uncontrollable human explosion of race and colour, as men demand their inalienable human rights, their just claim to freedom from contempt, those challenges are presented to us in terms which demand that we either proudly accept them or declare that we, all of us—all the hundred and more peoples who form the United Nations—will have done no more than to strut and fret our brief hour on this world stage, and then depart, unworthy to appear before the court of history.

66. Mr. President, I thank you.

67. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank His Excellency Mr. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the statement he has just made, concerning such important issues, to help the cause of progress and the maintenance of peace.

68. On my own personal behalf, I should like to thank the Prime Minister for quoting Dante Alighieri, during the very year which marks the seventh centenary of the birth of the great Italian poet.

AGENDA ITEM 11

Report of the Security Council

69. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Jordan and the Netherlands have submitted a draft resolution [A/L.475], in which the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council [A/6002] for the period 16 July 1964 to 15 July 1965. If no representative wishes to comment, I shall consider that the General Assembly adopts this draft resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 22

Reports of the Committee for the International Co-operation Year

70. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Chairman of the Committee for the International Co-operation Year has informed me that a complete and final report will be prepared for submission to the General Assembly at its twenty-first session and that it would be more profitable to consider this question at the next session, on the basis of that final report.

71. If there are no objections I propose that, at this stage, the Assembly should take note of the Committee's reports [A/5836, ^{1/} A/6086 and Corr.1] and should invite the Committee to submit a final report to the Assembly at its twenty-first session.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 27

Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy: report of the Secretary-General

72. Miss MEAGHER (Canada): I have pleasure in introducing today on behalf of the delegations of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, India, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, the draft resolution contained in document A/L.471 and Add.1. I hope that this draft resolution will receive the unanimous support of this Assembly. Canada is one of the early experimenters in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and has participated in the sharing of nuclear technology, bilaterally and multilaterally, for many years. In the light of this activity and of the recognition of it reflected by Canada's position as a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency since its inception, it is a particular pleasure for my delegation to present this draft resolution.

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, annex No. 7.

73. The draft resolution notes with satisfaction the contribution made by the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy to the free international exchange of scientific and technical information and to expanded international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, notably in respect of nuclear power.

74. It also expresses appreciation to all those who made the Third International Conference a success. In this connexion, it seems to the sponsors to be appropriate to pay a special tribute to the Director-General and the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the high level of efficiency with which they fulfilled their responsibilities in carrying out the administrative arrangements for the Conference.

75. My delegation, in company with the other co-sponsors, is of the view that international conferences such as the Third Geneva Conference can indeed be useful and that, therefore, consideration should be given to the holding of further conferences at appropriate intervals. The present resolution would have the General Assembly decided to consider further action at its twenty-second session. The Canadian delegation, for its part, would earnestly hope that, in reaching such a decision, all delegations would take into account the need for proper preparation which in our view means two years of careful and detailed work. My delegation would also suggest that future conferences in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy should be limited to subjects in areas of work which are receiving direct support from national Governments, and that such conferences should continue to be supported by national Government funds.

76. In conclusion, we should like to commend the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and all those associated with it for making an impressive and significant contribution to the concept of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Such activity is completely in keeping with the efforts of the United Nations to foster international co-operation in every field.

77. Mr. NABRIT (United States of America): We are privileged to consider again an excellent report by our Secretary-General on the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.^{2/}

78. The members of the scientific and technological committees, of the United States and I am sure of many other countries, deemed it a major achievement that, through the medium of that Conference, so much material was assembled and presented in a single form concerning work in the atomic energy field.

79. In June of this year, Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission and Chairman of the United States delegation to the Third International Conference said:

"I believe that the Geneva Conference served to dramatize the fact that the practical achievement of material well-being for the peoples of the developing nations rests upon a structure of close international co-operation. Again we were made aware

of the relative shortages of fossil fuels and hydroelectric potential in many of these nations. If they are to reach and maintain, by the end of the century, living standards presently found in the developed countries, there can be no doubt that the enormous potentialities of nuclear energy will have to be mustered and disciplined to their service. Indeed, we see the possibility that through nuclear power the developing nations may partially circumvent the long years of the industrial revolution and greatly telescope the time required for those nations to enter the scientific revolution which so many of the developed nations have already embarked upon. The imagination and resourcefulness employed by the United States and other nations of advanced technology in helping bring about this kind of advancement on the part of our less fortunate neighbours will be of the utmost importance in furthering the general cause of humanity in the years to come."

80. Our scientific and technological committees are fully in accord with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his foreword to the proceedings that those proceedings will:

"... prove to be of great practical value to all those called upon to plan, develop and watch over the use of atomic energy as a factor of growing significance in the power balance-sheet of their respective countries".^{3/}

81. The Secretary-General's report deals in a succinct yet comprehensive manner with the preparation, organization and proceedings of the Conference, as well as with the scientific content of its work. It would be repetitive of material already generally available to undertake detailed comment on those matters. Several general observations may, however, be useful.

82. The Secretary-General, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and all members of the United Nations and IAEA staffs who devoted so much in terms of energy, imagination and time to the preparations for and organization of the Conference are to be highly commended. In conducting that Conference at considerably less cost than was the case either for the First Conference in 1955 or the Second Conference in 1958, they have established a valuable precedent. Moreover, the co-operation between the United Nations and the IAEA in respect of that Conference is worthy of special note. As Secretary-General, U Thant declares in his foreword to the Conference proceedings:

"The pattern of collaboration between members of the United Nations family thus established provides an example which might with benefit be followed in the future in similar projects."^{4/}

83. In paragraph 39 of his report [A/5913], the Secretary-General has raised, but has wisely avoided pre-judgement on, the question whether similar conferences should be held in the future. We believe that

^{2/} Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, vol. 1: Progress in Atomic Energy (New York, 1965), p. v.

^{3/} Ibid.

the time for decision on such an essential question is not now but at some point in the future in the light of the then prevailing state of the art and the needs of the world community. It is probable that the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the conferences and meetings it holds in carrying out that work, will be among the really decisive elements in any future determination on whether the present series of three conferences should be extended further.

84. Mr. HOPE (United Kingdom): As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution [A/L.471 and Add.1] before the Assembly, I should like, if I may, to make a few comments on the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy which was held in Geneva in 1964 and on which the Secretary-General has submitted a report [A/5913] which is the subject of our discussion today.

85. We consider that the Geneva Conference was valuable and the United Kingdom delegation greatly welcomed the opportunity of participating in it. We were glad to have this opportunity of demonstrating our own capability in the field of nuclear power. Nuclear energy will in our view make an increasingly vital contribution to the world's peaceful energy requirements in the immediate future and we intend to play our full part in bringing that about.

86. In our own country, since the Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy which took place in 1958, nuclear power has moved out of the experimental stage and has become part of our daily life. In the United Kingdom, six commercial power stations are now supplying electricity to the national grid. One more station is in the process of being commissioned, and, in all, our nuclear power stations have generated a total of 36,000 million kilowatts. By 1969, nuclear power should be supplying about 12 per cent of the total electricity production in the United Kingdom. In April 1964, the British Government announced plans for a second nuclear power programme, which will add a further 5,000 megawatt capacity by 1975.

87. At the first two Conferences on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, we saw grounds for hope that nuclear power would make a significant contribution to satisfy the growing demand for supplies of cheap energy throughout the world. We confidently believe that the achievements that have taken place since then, and which were reported at the 1964 Conference, have confirmed these hopes. The 1964 Conference provided a useful opportunity for the exchange of information about national programmes, and I think that it was generally felt that the representatives of the United Kingdom were able to make a useful contribution. For our part, we are grateful to the United Nations and to the International Atomic Energy Agency secretariat for their successful organization of this last Conference, particularly in view of the fact that their budget was fairly restricted. They are deserving of our congratulations and thanks.

88. May I now turn briefly to the future. We think that the results of the 1964 Conference require careful study and time for digestion. A great deal of material has been produced and needs to be most carefully sifted. Under the item dealing with the report of the

International Atomic Energy Agency, which was taken up by the General Assembly on 18 November [1381st meeting], we were able to take note of the increasing activities of the IAEA, which is charged by statute to foster the exchange of scientific and technical information on the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to encourage the exchange and training of scientists.

89. This leads us to believe that the IAEA is the right body to co-ordinate such activity, and I am sure that there will be general agreement that any future conferences should be held under its auspices. We are inclined to think that such conferences, to be effective, should be limited in scope and size, since with the complexities of atomic energy today it is impossible to deal with every aspect of the subject and at one gathering. In our view, therefore, the moment has come to take stock and we should like to reserve judgement about the holding of future conferences.

90. For this reason, we feel that the draft resolution [A/L.471 and Add.1] which has been introduced by eight countries, including my own, is appropriate to the present circumstances. It quite properly notes with satisfaction the contribution made by the Third International Conference and expresses its appreciation to all those who played their part in making it such a successful occasion. It decides that the question of holding further conferences should be considered at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly, and we feel that this would give us time to review the work which has already been done and, in the light of future progress between now and then, decide what may be the most useful arrangements which can be made for the future.

91. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I invite the Assembly to vote on the draft resolution submitted by eight countries [A/L.471 and Add.1].

The draft resolution was adopted by 79 votes to none.

AGENDA ITEM 12

Reports of the Economic and Social Council

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE (A/6143)

AGENDA ITEM 64

Freedom of information:

- (a) Draft Convention on Freedom of Information;
- (b) Draft Declaration on Freedom of Information

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE (A/6164)

AGENDA ITEM 98

Creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE (A/6167)

Mr. St. John MacDonald (Canada), Rapporteur of the Third Committee, presented the reports of that Committee and then spoke as follows.

92. Mr. St. John MacDONALD (Canada), Rapporteur of the Third Committee: I have the honour to introduce the reports of the Third Committee in regard to three items: the reports of the Economic and Social Council [A/6143]; the report on freedom of information [A/6164]; and the report on the creation of the post of

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/6167].

93. With regard to item 12, dealing with the reports of the Economic and Social Council, the Third Committee considered, among others, the following main subjects: UNICEF; town twinning; the status of women; advisory services in the field of human rights; population; land reform and community development; narcotics; and the review and reappraisal of the role and functions of the Economic and Social Council.

94. In regard to item 64, I wish to report to the General Assembly that the Third Committee, because of its heavy agenda, was unable to consider the draft convention on freedom of information and the draft declaration on freedom of information. The Committee decided to postpone its consideration of these topics until the twenty-first session.

Pursuant to rule 68 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly decided not to discuss the reports of the Third Committee.

95. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): In view of the decision just taken by the General Assembly, I would point out that statements must be confined to explanations of vote.

96. The Assembly will take up agenda item 12, and will deal specifically with certain chapters of the reports of the Economic and Social Council [A/5803, 5/ A/6003], concerning which the Third Committee has submitted a report containing four draft resolutions [A/6143, para. 71].

97. Since no one wishes to speak, I shall invite the Assembly to take a decision on these draft resolutions, I to IV, which the Third Committee has recommended for adoption.

98. Draft resolution I was adopted unanimously in the Committee. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the General Assembly, too, adopts it unanimously.

Draft resolution I was adopted unanimously.

99. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Since draft resolution II was adopted without opposition in the Third Committee, and if no one requests a vote on it, I shall assume that the General Assembly adopts it unanimously.

Draft resolution II was adopted unanimously.

100. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Draft resolution III was adopted unanimously in the Committee. Accordingly I shall take it, if there are no objections, that the General Assembly, too, adopts it unanimously.

Draft resolution III was adopted unanimously.

101. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Draft resolution IV was also adopted unanimously by the Committee. Since a vote has been requested, however, I shall put this draft resolution to the vote.

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 83 votes to 1.

102. Mr. DELEAU (France) (translated from French): My delegation, which abstained in the vote on draft resolution II concerning town twinning as a means of international co-operation, did not request a vote on this draft resolution because, while approving of the text as a whole, it considered that paragraph 4, in which the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to take, through his offices, all suitable measures to encourage this form of co-operation, should not be construed as entailing any additional expenditure.

103. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Assembly will now take up agenda item 64, on which the Third Committee has submitted a draft resolution [A/6164, para. 8]. Since one has asked for the floor, and since the Third Committee adopted the draft resolution unanimously, may I take it that the Assembly, too, adopts it unanimously?

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

104. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We shall now take up agenda item 98, on which the Third Committee has submitted a draft resolution [A/6167, para. 15].

105. Mrs. BARISH (Costa Rica) (translated from Spanish): The delegation of Costa Rica is very pleased that the draft resolution which it submitted jointly with the delegations of Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Nigeria and the Philippines [A/C.3/L.1328] was adopted in the Third Committee. In this draft resolution, the General Assembly asks the Economic and Social Council to transmit to the Commission on Human Rights the proposal for the creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was included in the agenda for this session of the General Assembly at the request of my delegation, so that the Commission can study all aspects of the matter at its forthcoming twenty-second session and report to the General Assembly at its twenty-first session, that is, in 1966.

106. Delegations are undoubtedly aware of the great interest which this topic presents to the United Nations since, as we explained in the memorandum accompanying our request for the inclusion of this item [A/5963], and as various delegations have rightly pointed out, we have now reached a stage in the promotion and protection of human rights at which there is a need for greater impetus and, above all, for specific achievements in this field.

107. That is why we should like once again to express our gratitude to the delegations which voted in favour of our draft resolution in the Third Committee and we urge them to do so again at this plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

108. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Since no one else has asked for the floor, I shall put the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee [A/6167, para. 15] to the vote.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.