

#### **4.4. Address at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in Honour of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations**

*New York, 24 October 1995*

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has gladly accepted the invitation to take part in the celebrations attending the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the OSCE.

Five decades is a long life for an international organization. The very fact that we can celebrate this anniversary today is evidence of the strength of the United Nations.

Looking into the future, we need the United Nations even more than in the past. In spite of setbacks, disappointments and shortcomings, there are encouraging and even inspiring signs indicating further progress towards world-wide co-operative and comprehensive security.

Such progress cannot be achieved without the United Nations. We need a UN which can fulfil the tasks assigned to it in the Charter – as we understand the Charter today – on the basis of 50 years' experience.

The problem-solving potential of the UN depends almost entirely on the support it receives from its member States. It is the contributions of member States which make the UN credible, strong and effective.

We live in one world, rendered ever more closely connected by our indivisible destinies. The OSCE and other organizations in its region are willing to make their contribution to a lasting and peaceful order between Vancouver and Vladivostok. As regional organizations become able to assume the tasks assigned to them in the Charter, the United Nations will become stronger. Regional action will alleviate the burden that has proven to be too heavy for the United Nations. This will “contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs” (Agenda for Peace).

On this we all agree, but we still have to find better ways of achieving mutually reinforcing co-operation. We must improve our ability to allocate tasks according to comparative advantages.

The situation in the world today requires an ever more closely interlocking network of international organizations, in which the UN has a special place. Only with such a network will we be able to cope with the challenges confronting us.

We should give further thought to how we can integrate non-governmental organizations more effectively into such a network. Through NGOs, responsible

citizens, in particular young people, participate in the difficult task of peace-building. Let us engage their specific operational capabilities and their dedication.

Efforts to strengthen the management and to streamline the structures of the United Nations are just one aspect of the tasks confronting the community of nations. These efforts will succeed only if they are rooted in our faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms and in the dignity of the human being. These common values were the beacon of hope that the founding fathers of the UN wanted to establish in the aftermath of crimes against humanity and a devastating war. As we know today, the light of this beacon, despite all the efforts made, was not strong enough to illuminate expanding areas of darkness.

This is not the fault of those who have served the United Nations in the 50 years of its existence. The UN had dedicated men and women who served it. Some of them gave their lives: Dag Hammarskjöld, an outstanding Secretary General of the United Nations Organization, was one of them. He lived, worked and died as a servant of peace. If this great man could speak to us today, he might repeat what he said 35 years ago:

“Working at the edge of the development of human society is to work on the brink of the unknown. Much of what is done will one day prove to have been of little avail. That is no excuse for the failure to act in accordance with our best understanding, in recognition of its limits but with faith in the ultimate result of the creative evolution in which it is our privilege to co-operate.”