

This is the time, Mr. President, to follow up the improvements in the Second Committee last year and, rather than proceeding piecemeal, to take a comprehensive look at the General Assembly's procedures and organization. This is neither an original nor a new idea, but at this quarter-century mark in the United Nations history we in this Assembly face again the task of self-improvement.

It was this belief that led my Government, with the support of 12 countries, to request the inscription on the agenda of an item for consideration by the Assembly entitled "Rationalization of Procedures and Organization of the United Nations General Assembly". This proposal, which will have a number of additional co-sponsors from various regions, envisages the establishment of a committee with equitable representation from all groups.

The committee would report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly at its next session, thus allowing the committee time to give thorough study to the problems before it. My delegation has in mind that any reforms, to be effective, must attract the widest possible support and be based on a consensus to be endorsed by the Assembly, perhaps at the next session.

In terms of the material and operations to be studied, the committee's mandate should be wide. This study would take into account the nature of the Assembly's work, its priorities and organization, and the effectiveness of its machinery. At the same time, the committee's mandate should be narrow, in that it would restrict its recommendations to the procedure and organization of the Assembly as envisaged within the limits of the existing Charter.

Our proposal is a modest one, but I believe that even limited changes could have a very beneficial effect on our working methods and on the results achieved. Areas to be studied would obviously include documentation, rules of procedure and related questions. The proposed committee would also study the ways in which items are allocated to the main committees of the Assembly. Recommendations would take into account the need to ensure that all important political items are properly placed and adequately considered in future assemblies.

Mr. President, the effectiveness of the General Assembly and the United Nations will always depend upon the will and determination of the member states. Changes in procedure and organization cannot of themselves improve the quality of the General Assembly's performance. They can enable the will of the Assembly to be translated more swiftly, accurately and effectively into action. We should not underrate such improvements. The Canadian delegation does not.

There is no need to call in question the basic structure of the organization. But the fact that we do not wish to rebuild the house does not mean that we should delay essential repairs to the plumbing and wiring. For this reason, I call on the member nations to give urgent and continuing attention to the essential detailed work that is required, without losing sight of the fundamental need for all of us to re-examine our own attitudes to our responsibilities within the Charter.

The relevance and the competence of the United Nations are being called into question all over the world. The world community needs the United Nations. It needs a United Nations that has renewed itself, that has transformed