

immense caution and sensitivity. Here my delegation pays tribute again to our Secretary-General. His three annual reports, individually and collectively, provide us with clear, relevant observations on many of the problems which beset this organization. More than that, he has offered constructive solutions. Those reports are the starting point for future work on ways and means to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations. This need not involve elaborate new structures or committees; that could even prove counterproductive. It might be best to begin with more informal contacts amongst interested member states to identify those areas of common concern which are amenable to improvement, and then to identify improvements of real consequence.

In his first speech to the UN Economic and Social Council, if I can harken back to the words of the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie said: "While old problems will be solved, new problems will arise. The advance of science and the whims of nature and circumstances make that certain. But we are agreed to tackle our problems as we know them with stubborn and relentless energy. We will cross other bridges when we come to them." Now is the time to reinforce and then to cross those bridges.

Only this Assembly brings all of the international issues and all of the member states together. That is its unique role. Improvements here will have a telling impact on other United Nations bodies and on the difficult issues facing us. You, Mr. President, and I say this with heartfelt appreciation, have already instituted some much needed reforms in this Assembly. Let us continue that example. Perhaps now is the time to streamline our agenda and to eliminate routine, undebated items. Perhaps we should allocate more items from plenary to the committees. Perhaps we can arrange to have more current, less ritualistic, debates on individual items. Perhaps — dare I say — some repetitive items have exhausted their utility and can be dropped from the agenda. Perhaps greater use of informal contacts across regional groups would generate greater agreement.

The Charter begins with the words "We the peoples of the United Nations." Now is the time that we, the peoples of the United Nations, gathered here in this General Assembly, reflect on our past and, more important, tackle our future, particularly in the fortieth anniversary year, with that self-same stubborn and relentless energy to which Trygve Lie referred.