

THE AIMS

The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations reads:

WE THE PEOPLES

OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS. Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

Again on the credit side, more and more developing countries have come to depend on the UN to provide economic and technical assistance. It has brought life and hope to millions of children in many of these countries. In such international undertakings, including those in the scientific, environmental, educational and cultural fields, the UN has pioneered programs that facilitate increased cooperation among nations.

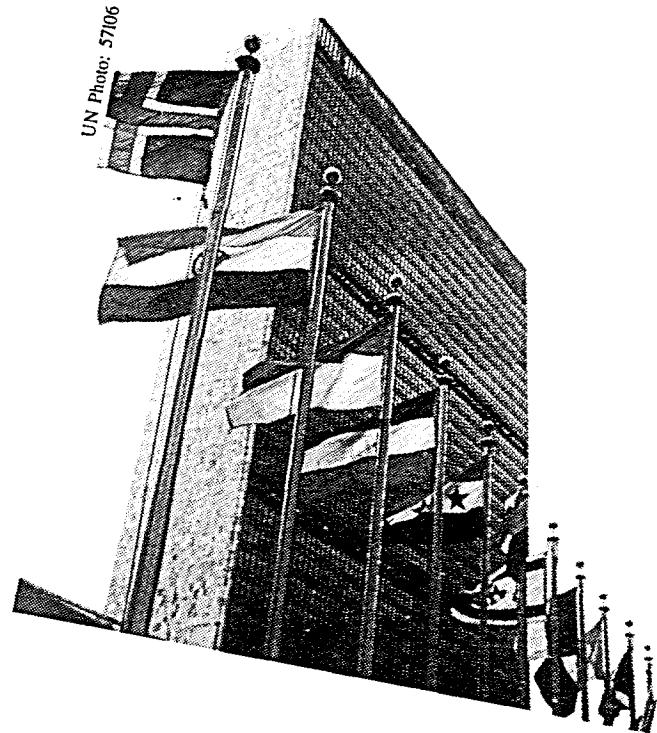
The UN has established an accepted international standard of fundamental rights and freedoms which all human beings should enjoy. It has done more to codify international law in the last 40 years than in all of recorded history. It has given protection and assistance to many millions of refugees displaced by conflict and politics.

The record is definitely weighted on the credit side of the ledger. Even so, the UN Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, states that "for all of the accomplishments of the past decades, and they have been major, the fact of the matter is that the three main elements of a stable international order – an accepted system of maintaining international peace and security; disarmament and arms limitation; and the progressive development of a just and effective system of international economic relations – have yet to take hold as they should."²

Taking a broad perspective, one might see the United Nations and the world as having followed a similar path. For its part, the UN has developed the machinery of international cooperation, while the world at large has gone through a radical change since 1945 that makes it more ready than ever to accept such a system. The majority of nations have achieved independence. There is a world-wide grassroots movement for establishing peace. The number of recently formed international humanitarian organizations is unprecedented. Scientific and technological developments towards solving practical problems have been substantial. And for the first time in history it is possible for everyone to see the planet as a whole in the images of the earth from space.

The United Nations is ready. Humanity is ready. Will the catalyst that allows the two to merge into a cohesive force be our collective "better selves?"

In what could be seen as both an answer and a challenge, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar, speaking to youth, said "It is no mere coincidence that the International Youth Year is also the 40th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. World youth and the United Nations share the same goals, but it is you who will dedicate yourselves to work for peace within your families, your communities and your nations. It is you who will carry forward our struggle for economic and social development into the next century. It is you who will inherit the world. It is therefore up to the youth of this world to make this world a better place."³



THE PURPOSES

The purposes of the United Nations are set out in Article I of the Charter:

1. To maintain international peace and security.
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.
3. To cooperate in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

1. Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport*, p. 190.

2. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization: 1984*, p. 6.

3. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "poster for UN Day, 1985."