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MAKING THE UNITED NATIONS EQUAL TO ITS TASKS

The opening statement on October 14, 1970, in the Debate at the Commemorative Session Marking the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp.

...Throughout the world there is deep dissatisfaction, rooted, I believe, in a profound uneasiness that has seized peoples everywhere -- uneasiness about a world wracked by bloody conflict, uneasiness about economic prospects, uneasiness about the quality and meaning of human life, uneasiness about the health of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil that gives us sustenance.

The dissatisfaction of which I speak is not limited to any group of nations. It transcends the clash of ideologies, respects no barriers between East and West, between North and South. It is felt in developing countries, in countries that are technologically advanced, by nations represented here and by those as yet without representation.

Dissatisfaction is most clearly to be seen among the young, the oppressed, the alienated and the poor. Yet it is to be found increasingly among people in the prime of life, people who enjoy material success. It affects the leaders as well as the led.

We are facing a broad crisis of confidence between people and the institutions they have created. Governments, judicial systems, places of learning, organized religion -- all the great constants of civilized life are being questioned. And the way they are responding seems often to add to the dissatisfaction. The relevance of institutions, their competence, their usefulness, their very purpose, have been brought into doubt.

In this place, at this time, it is dissatisfaction with the United Nations that we must consider. It does not stop at the threshold of this chamber. It is felt, I am sure, in every delegation seated here today. As we look out at the world, we see little cause for comfort, less reason for congratulation and no justification for complacency.

And yet much has been achieved. In the dark days of the Second World War, while fighting for their lives, the leaders of nations created a conception