

REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE XXI GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, in his address opening the twenty-fifth anniversary commemorative session of the United Nations General Assembly, drew attention to the broad scope of conflict in the United Nations and how progress is developing, with peoples and governments everywhere recognizing the relevance and the scope of purpose of the organization in world cooperation. He reminded the Assembly that, if there were considerable shortcomings in the performance of the United Nations, there has been notable achievement in the first 25 years of its existence, and he appealed for concerted action to make still greater progress in the next quarter-century. In the future, as in the past, the United Nations will succeed or fail in accordance with the extent of the participation of its members, which will be their commitment to cooperate with one another under the Charter. While lack of complete success, particularly in maintaining international peace and security, tends to disillusion those who may have expected the world to rally to the United Nations, there are many encouraging signs that the habit of co-operation is growing in many areas of international activity under the aegis of the United Nations.

Despite initial serious differences of opinion on points of detail, the commemorative session, beyond a general declaration on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Organization in which member states reflected of themselves to the spirit of the Charter, also saw many months of intensive preparatory negotiations.

CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

A comprehensive report on the work of the Assembly was presented by the President of the General Assembly, Arvid Harbo of Norway, as one of the most important documents ever adopted by any international organization. Finally, the commemorative session approved a declaration on friendly relations and co-operation among member states that will make a useful contribution to the development of international law.

Areas of Progress

What the United Nations again proved in the ordinary business of its twenty-fifth session, progress in a number of areas was recorded, especially agreement of the treaty prohibiting the placing of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed, agreement by all means on the measures necessary to strengthen international security, and a decision, involving how a Canadian initiative, to set up a committee to examine and recommend improvements for the General Assembly's procedures and organization.

The twenty-fifth session also devoted considerable time and attention to Middle East questions. In plenary, the Assembly debated the general situation in the Middle East and adopted a resolution calling for the resumption of the ceasefire for a further three months and urging the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute to resume peace talks under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring, special representative of the Secretary-General for the Middle East.