

The global arena today strongly resembles Hobbes' *State of Nature* where each nation, no matter how small or poor, feels obliged to protect its national security and promote its economic growth through military strength and "beggar thy neighbour" policies. With the erosion of morality as the foundation of human solidarity, the vision of a world community of people has faded; old, narrow nationalisms have re-emerged in the place of the spirit of global cooperation, fortified by an adversarial system of international relations rooted in the concepts of absolute national sovereignty.

This phenomenon is doubly dangerous for peace and debilitating for development, when it is so starkly at variance with the commonality of human needs and the mutual dependence of nations in satisfying them. Internationalism has lost its moorings just at the moment when we need a new global awareness and a new global activism to overcome the forces of death.

All the Secretaries-General have been hamstrung in their efforts to achieve peaceful resolution of conflicts by the absence of effective world law. Neither strong personalities and ethical values nor political strategies can guarantee peace and security. Rather, a system of law is required. This is not a utopian dream but the hard reality of a modern world whose interdependent features make us all, irrespective of geography, vulnerable to one another. Just as no one would expect to live in a community without the protection of the rule of law, so everyone's security and safety today demands a body of world law. The system of world law we have today is primitive. In the face of the need for legislative, executive and judicial institutions to maintain world order, our present international institutions are alarmingly weak.

We now begin to see the fundamental weakness of the United Nations. Its declarations, exhortations and strategies are clearly aimed at peace, security and economic development, but it has almost no power to enforce its solutions. It depends on voluntary acceptance by nations of global strategies; it depends on international goodwill and trust. And when international mistrust, aggression, greed and protectionism prevail – as they do at this moment in history – global strategies fall by the wayside. The most sadly ironic feature of the U.N. is that it is blamed for being ineffective while national governments refuse to invest it with the necessary power.