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forces on all sides may be reduced. The people of the world expect no less of us. And the people are right.

As we examine the lessons of the past, and as we assess the challenges for the future, there is one striking fact that dominates all others — the singular failure of the international community to solve the problem of poverty. We are still haunted by the spectre of hundreds of millions of people living below the poverty line and in danger of starvation. The right to enough material goods to ensure health and dignity is still denied to far too many.

Giving effect to this basic human right is the greatest task facing the United Nations for the remainder of this century. The overriding importance of this work is clear to all. Two years ago this Assembly passed a resolution recognizing that "the full realization of civil and political rights without the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights is impossible". It is insufficient for an individual to enjoy full human rights before the law if he or she does not have the basic necessities of life: enough food, health care; education; shelter. Problems of want must be attacked directly and urgently in the 1980s.

I welcome the renewed attention being given by the United Nations and its organs to these problems, for here, too, I see reason for hope. There is growing recognition that development assistance does not imply the foisting of one country's social and economic philosophy on another. The true meaning of co-operation is increasingly understood.

It is no answer to the problem to set up a sort of international social welfare system to give hand-outs to the poorest. Nothing could be more demeaning to human dignity, nor more guaranteed to perpetuate poverty. Our goal must be to enable people to use their own abilities, and to assist states to develop their own potential.

These may sound grand words, optimistic words, easy to say. But...I am optimistic about the capacity of our international community to work together to solve the problems before it. That these problems are huge, numerous and complicated, there is no denial.

What I find worrying is not the fact that we have problems, but the manner in which we approach them. I personally place enormous importance on the North-South dialogue. And yet I fear our present approach is doomed to failure. Many of the problems with which we are grappling in this dialogue are, after all, the result of change — rapid change, dramatic change, and, if we are honest with ourselves, change that is often for the better. The last three decades — including the turbulent Seventies — have been ones of unprecedented economic growth for the developing world, at rates faster than those of the industrialized countries. The problem is that this growth has been uneven, and, in the minds of those whose expectations have been raised so high, not fast enough. As we look into the decade before us, it is the countries at the bottom end of the economic scale who face the bleakest future and the lowest growth. At the opposite end of the scale, in the wealthy industrial countries, the prospects for

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