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THE UNITED NATIONS POLITICAL ORGANS AND MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, New York, May 21, 1968.

I was pleased and honoured to receive Chief Adebo's invitation to deliver the inaugural lecture of the programme of lectures and seminars for diplomats which is being organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. I understand that the object of the programme is to promote knowledge and understanding of the United Nations amongst those of you who work here as members of permanent missions. I am sure Chief Adebo will agree that the best way to learn about the United Nations is to work here for a period of years. Those of you who have done that will perhaps wonder what more there is to learn. And yet we all know how easy it is, experts or not, to mistake the wood for the trees. My purpose tonight is the modest one of helping you to stand back from your desks for a glance at the skyline. If you reflect afterwards that it is not after all an unfamiliar sight, I hope it will not be considered superfluous to have reminded you it is there.

... Dag Hammarskjold once began a lecture as follows:

"One of the many contradictions of life is the frequency with which we refer to ourselves as living in a period of change and rapid development, while, on the other hand, we are so often reluctant to acknowledge the need for adjustment in our ways to the changes which actually take place."

The United Nations and its associated agencies and subsidiary bodies represent the conception of change. Diplomacy and its ways tend to represent the difficulties of adjustment. U Thant once made the same point more dramatically:

"What strikes me is the common factor in all these crisis situations...the gulf that separates practice from precept."

He went on to make a plea that governments make a conscious effort "to return to accepted standards of international morality and to refashion their international conduct in accordance with the precepts of the Charter".