

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

24 October 2003

Statement of H.E. Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, President of the 58th Session of the General Assembly, on United Nations Day

Fifty-eight years ago, a spark of hope rose from the ashes of a devastating Second World War. It ignited the human spirit in the higher cause of peace, equality, order and economic and social progress. In that defining moment in the lives of people and of nations, the United Nations was created, not to protect the interests of the powerful and influential, but as an organization dedicated to the service of all the people of the world. A mutual understanding of the importance of multilateralism was enshrined in the ideals of the Charter.

On this United Nations Day, dedicated to celebrating our premier international organization, we are reminded that even as the world all around us continues to change, the imperative which led to the founding of our United Nations has not changed. We can still say with confidence that the global community truly believes in the United Nations. Over one hundred and thirty Heads of State and Government and Ministers participating in the General Debate of the Fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations, as our best hope for a better world.

We can, therefore, reflect with pride on the many accomplishments of the United Nations family. It has extended its reach into every corner of the globe, providing critical leadership and partnerships to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; to fight deadly diseases including HIV/AIDS; to mitigate the plight of the vulnerable groups in society, including refugees, women and children; to advance initiatives for sustainable development, protection of the environment and poverty alleviation; to combat transnational crime and criminality and terrorism; and to help keep the peace.

This is not to say that our United Nations is not sorely challenged - it is. It is also not to say that we have in the United Nations a perfect organization - we do not. It is rather to express our confidence that the United Nations can and must continue its essential work in the service of humankind. To do so requires us to address head on those issues that divide the global community and that challenge multilateralism. We must also strengthen the United Nations through reform to better position it to carry out its essential work, and also by providing the level of resources it needs to function effectively. Importantly, we must, through our collective political will, ensure that United Nations decisions result in action that meets the expectations of our people, our nations, and our world.

On this the Fifty-eighth anniversary of the United Nations, let us not forget the many serious global problems that continue to challenge the United Nations. Nor should we forget those who

have given their lives to uphold the ideals of the Charter. We must, however, overcome both challenges and tragedy and use our collective will and collective action as building blocks for a better future, and for a better world.

I extend my sincere good wishes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and colleagues who work in the United Nations family as we join hands with people around the world to celebrate United Nations Day.