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President: Miss Angie E. BROOKS (Liberia).

*Tribute to the memory of Mr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke,
President of the Somali Republic*

1. The PRESIDENT: It was with deep distress and sorrow that we learned of the death of the President of the Somali Republic, Mr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke.

On the proposal of the President, the Members of the Assembly observed a minute of silence.

*Address by Mr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of
the Republic of Ghana*

2. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour of welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of the Republic of Ghana, and I invite him to address the General Assembly.

3. Mr. BUSIA (Ghana): Madam President, your election as President of the twenty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly is an event which invites one to reflect on the history of your country and the relationship down the centuries between the races labelled as black and those labelled as white. Two things stand out after reflection. The first is that race relations are a sphere in which the achievements of man fill us all with shame, and the second is that in your election we may take comfort and hope that mankind is making progress, even in this sphere so full of the sad records of man's inhumanity to man, too shameful to recall on an occasion such as this.

4. It is in the light of this sober reflection of history, Madam President, that I wish you to accept the warmest greetings, good wishes and felicitations from the Government and people of Ghana: first, because your election gives happy evidence of the notable advance that mankind has made in the twentieth century in the important task of learning how to live together as members of the same family, and secondly, because in your own personal qualities and in your achievements you bring honour to all Africa, particularly to the womanhood of Africa. You have given yet one more proof that man is not superior to woman, not one race superior to another. Madam President, please accept our sincerest congratulations.

5. Permit me now to refer to my own country, and to an event which has recently taken place there. It deserves to be noted as it is of historic and global significance. On 24 February 1966, the armed forces of my country, in co-operation with the police, overthrew the government in a coup d'état. The joyous and spontaneous general approval and acclaim, accorded to the armed forces and the police throughout the country, clearly demonstrated the people's endorsement of their action. It was the people of Ghana, not those elsewhere, who were best qualified to judge their own Government and those who overthrew it. They were the ones who had borne the suffering, degradation and deprivation inflicted by a tyrannical, corrupt and inefficient Government. They were the ones who had paid for the extravagances, ostentation and inordinate ambition that had dazzled those outside, who only watched from afar without seeking to probe beneath the glittering surface.

6. When, after assuming power, the National Liberation Council of soldiers and policemen declared that they would hand over power to elected representatives of the people as soon as possible, many both within and outside Ghana, were sceptical; they had cause to be doubtful for were we not familiar with military juntas, both in Africa and elsewhere, making similar declarations and promises, and repeatedly failing to fulfil them?

7. In Acora sixteen days ago, on 1 October 1969, in the presence of distinguished guests and representatives from all over the world, I was handed our new Constitution as a symbol of the transfer of power from a military to a civilian Government. I should like to quote a few words from what I said on that occasion:

"It is a unique and noteworthy event that men who have seized power, and who have the means and the ability to continue to wield it, should not only voluntarily decide to surrender it but should also supervise orderly free and scrupulously fair elections for the people to choose those to whom the power should be transferred. By any standard, this is an example of dignity and nobility at its best, and we are proud to be able to show the world that we have fellow citizens who can rise to such heights of grandeur.

"You have handed to me, as a symbol of the transfer of power from you to a democratically-elected civilian Government, our new Constitution. It is a Constitution which seeks to place the exercise of power under restraint. It is the fruit of our recent experience. It bears the marks of our scars, our fears and our aspirations. Its underlying philosophy is that no man, or group of men, is virtuous enough to hold power without checks. My colleagues and I to whom the nation has freely entrusted

that power accept the philosophy which underlies our Constitution. We are conscious of our fallibility as human beings, and we recognize the need to establish and develop institutions which help to tame the unbridled exercise of power. We shall endeavour to uphold the ideals of freedom and justice enshrined in our Constitution."

8. I am proud and thankful to be addressing this Assembly this afternoon as the Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana; proud because my country has demonstrated what I am sure the rest of the world will note, that it is possible to return from military to civilian rule by peaceful democratic processes, and I am thankful that I am alive and privileged to tell the world of this unique achievement.

9. At the time of the military coup in Ghana, relations between Ghana and her neighbours had been strained by the imperialist ambitions of the former régime, and they were far from being cordial. One of the principal tasks which the National Liberation Council set itself was to improve relations with our neighbours and to lay a foundation for beneficial co-operation. In this the Council was highly successful, and my Government intends to continue to pursue the same policy.

10. Our international policy will be based on the ideal of the brotherhood of all nations and peoples. That ideal derives inspiration from the faith that all nations and peoples, in spite of cultural and historical differences, belong to the same species of man, share a common humanity, and can dwell together in brotherly amity. We believe that human life cannot reach its highest level except in a world in which the barriers to friendship and brotherhood have been broken down. We take note of the fact that the scientific and technological advances of our contemporary world do not only increase the interdependence of the nations of the world, but also compel and make possible closer co-operation among the nations. A rational reflection on the possibilities, both for good and evil, opened to mankind by the knowledge and power at present available, make the efforts to build a world community based on brotherhood and responsibility, one for the other, the only alternative to destruction and annihilation. So we share the beliefs and hopes which motivated the founding of the United Nations and which provide the basis for its existence as an instrument for human understanding, co-operation and world peace.

11. Brotherhood implies the acceptance of all members of the human family as equals. There can be no inequality in our common humanity. Fundamental to our concept of brotherhood, and to our foreign policy is the firm conviction that international relations must be based on the acceptance of two established facts; first, that all races are equally human, and second, that human cultures do not and cannot divide men, because all men are capable of learning and mastering any culture if they are given sufficient exposure to it and the opportunity to learn. The cultural achievements of all men of all ages and of all countries constitute the common heritage of man from which all can and may draw. Our approach to the specific problems of racial and international relations that afflict our world will be based on the implications of the basic ideas I have tried to state.

12. When our foreign policy is described as one of non-alignment, it has meaning only in the historical context of our contemporary world where two power blocs, championing two conflicting ideologies, have faced each other. Non-alignment does not mean for us non-involvement, for, whether we like it or not, all mankind is inextricably bound together, and our lives are becoming increasingly intertwined. Our interpretation is that we reserve the right to make our own judgements and take our own decisions on international issues on the basis of two considerations. The first and primary consideration must be the interests of our own country within the context of our international obligations, interests which, as its Government, we must put above all others. The second consideration is for the welfare and peace of the world on which our progress and prosperity ultimately depend.

13. We will not be tied to the apron strings of any country, whether East or West. But we freely acknowledge what is obvious and what realism compels us to recognize as the facts of history. Our own historical contacts and experiences have brought it about that we share more common interests with some countries at this point than with others. They compel us to endeavour to forge the closest links with our brothers in Africa, particularly our neighbours with whom we share common boundaries. We also recognize that we need to establish friendly relations with all countries seeking world peace and brotherhood. It is a necessity for our economic development and progress. As we see it, the task facing our nation, and indeed all nations, is to widen and increase our areas of mutual interests and deepen our relations with other nations and peoples, so that we can build a world community of nations, bound together by our common interests and objectives. This task is made possible through our contacts and associations at the United Nations and numerous international groups.

14. Therefore, doctrines that are based on maintaining divisions among peoples are not acceptable to us. We consider policies based on racial or cultural discrimination or segregation to be wrong in their philosophic assumptions, as well as threats to world peace. It is in that light that we view the policies of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal. They are based on doctrines which we consider to be false and pernicious.

15. The existence of the United Nations General Assembly is based on the assumption, explicit and implied, that all men are capable of being persuaded by rational argument, and also that there is a moral language of principles of right and wrong which all men share, whatever their race, colour or tongue. If we did not accept these assumptions, the existence of this august body and all the efforts and money expended on it would be futile and pointless. However the achievements which the Assembly has to its credit leave no doubt about the soundness of the assumptions I have enunciated.

16. Consequently, I do not wish to take time by referring in detail to the problems posed by the policies of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal. They are well known at this Assembly. The main question is what to do to resolve them. When rational persuasion fails, then what? The answer which appears to have been accepted and applied in the

African context is to apply half-hearted sanctions which some countries responsibly accept, and others flout. That, of course, was doomed to failure. When decisions of the Assembly and the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations are defiantly flouted, as in the case of Southern Rhodesia, or as in the case of Namibia, what is to be done? Such incidents demand a fresh examination as to the effectiveness of the United Nations.

17. An Organization such as this will inevitably be faced with situations which do not offer easy solutions but which call for painful and courageous decisions if we are to leap forward toward the goals we seek. Since half-hearted sanctions have not worked, dare we consider applying more stringent sanctions in addition to those contained in Security Council resolution 253 (1968) of 29 May 1968? Imposing more effective sanctions would place the general welfare of humanity above narrow selfish interests. The lesson seems to be that where rational persuasion fails and other measures are resorted to, those measures must be such as will be effective. Otherwise, more harm is done since it brings into question the effectiveness of the United Nations itself, and even its future as an institution capable of fulfilling its objective and justifying the hopes centred on it.

18. A survey of the problems which are dealt with in the Secretary-General's reports poses one inescapable challenge, which is to make the United Nations itself an effective instrument for peace by developing effective sanctions and procedures, and by harnessing the collective action of its Members to deal with thorny problems. Like all human institutions, the United Nations must be capable of adaptation and growth to meet new needs and situations or stagnate and become an anachronism.

19. There are various subjects of topical interest and concern which, in accordance with the established custom here, every speech should deal. Among them are Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia, disarmament, the representation of the People's Republic of China, and the work of the preparatory committees. As I have nothing new to add to the statements that have been made by the Government we have succeeded, I do not propose to indulge in tiresome repetition.

20. However, I wish to betray my simplicity and naïveté, for which I claim the indulgence of the Assembly since I am a novice, by saying a few homely and commonplace things which I hope will reflect what is in the minds of some of the millions of simple ordinary men and women around the world whom this Organization seeks to serve.

21. Now that I have the opportunity I will publicly admit that I have often wondered whether the display by all concerned of some real sincerity and goodwill in the handling of problems like the Middle East, South-East Asia or disarmament, going beyond the facade of make-believe diplomacy, behind which eminent representatives and diplomats hide their real faces and selfish aims from one another, would not produce solutions to some of these apparently insoluble problems.

22. I have talked of a common moral language which binds mankind and makes an international organization like

the United Nations rational and meaningful. But why is that language so rarely spoken when we have to deal with difficult international problems that require the reconciliation of different sectional interests?

23. Take for example the arms race, which in 1968 cost \$280,000 million. Why this accumulation of armaments which everyone knows poses a grave danger to world peace and security? Yet the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament is prolonged by incomprehensible discussions of technicalities while the arms race continues, and the fears and feeling of insecurity of the nations mount ominously. Is it not that, behind many of the technicalities, lie what the ordinary man and woman understand to be distrust and lack of confidence in one another? When the diplomats meet, they wine and dine together and talk interminably and impressively about the many complex questions they pose to one another, but all the time they are haunted, one and the other, by the moral issue of trust. There is no mutual trust, only suspicion and fear. We are all afraid of one another and distrustful of one another, and we have become experts at raising screens to hide our true goals and interests from one another. A great deal of the disillusionment and frustration creeping over the world's hopes for the United Nations comes from the ordinary man's discernment that the Organization is becoming a place where men are engaged in hiding truth from one another, instead of tearing down their masks and facing truth together in a joint effort to build a peaceful, harmonious world.

24. It is in the areas where the common moral language has been truthfully spoken and there has been no hiding behind masks that the United Nations has achieved success and has been a powerful instrument. I remember how very deeply impressed I was, some fifteen years ago, at an international conference in Milan, when the leader of the delegation of one of the four big Powers declared, during a discussion of the question of aid to developing countries, that it was the moral duty and responsibility of the rich countries of the world to help the poor ones. It came as a startling novelty, and yet those of us who come from poor countries can justifiably make claims on the rich countries only on the basis of mankind's common moral language, that everyone should be his brother's keeper and that the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the handicapped and the disabled have claims upon those who are not so afflicted.

25. In our view, the greatest and most creditable advance the United Nations has made in the twentieth century is to have accepted and based the activities of its agencies on the moral responsibility of the nations and peoples of the world to help one another.

26. That is why we may venture to talk about economic aid and international co-operation to raise the living standards of the poorer areas of the world. We are in the closing period of the First United Nations Development Decade and on the threshold of the next. During the last ten years, experience has proved that it is possible for poor countries to make a quite rapid transition to the status of industrialized countries. In the most recent years it has been shown that the problem of feeding large and rapidly increasing populations can be solved by the application of modern science and technology. Thirty of the developing

countries are likely to have achieved the growth target of the First United Nations Development Decade by the time it ends, and it has been proved that the systematic provisions of international assistance towards the national development efforts of the developing countries can yield results in terms of economic and social development.

27. It seems to me a reasonable judgement that if international economic co-operation had not flagged so disastrously during the past ten years the targets set for the decade could have been achieved by the majority of developing countries.

28. The fact that only three of the industrialized countries have so far achieved the target of aid which was internationally adopted, and the difficulties which were experienced in the recent replenishment of the resources of the International Development Association show that there is a most urgent need for responding more faithfully to the moral obligations which were accepted. More strenuous efforts need to be made for strengthening international economic co-operation. The world community has still not made any progress in facilitating the trade of the developing countries in order to help them help themselves. An imperfect sugar agreement and the international coffee agreement stand as lonely exceptions to a general failure to reorganize the international trade in primary commodities which is of such overriding importance to the Third World. In the case of cocoa, which is of vital interest to Ghana, we have had many resolutions expressing support of the principle and declaring the intention to co-operate in working out an international agreement. After more than ten years of negotiation there is still no international cocoa agreement. My Government hopes that, through the practical co-operation of all the parties concerned, this statement will no longer be true a year from now.

29. It seems clear to us that the international strategy for development, which is being so carefully worked out for the coming decade, should be backed by firm undertakings in the area of international co-operation in trade and finance; otherwise it will lose most of its meaning. The Government of Ghana and those of other developing countries, I am sure, will commit themselves to the task of mobilizing our internal resources for our own development. As Governments responsible to the people of the developing countries, we cannot escape that commitment. We should also accept any measures that seem to be required to make the machinery for the implementation of international economic policy more effective. We must then look to the developed countries to commit themselves to the level of effort that is required, in order to fulfil their part in this joint venture for the advancement of the peoples of the world.

30. This commitment should include, in particular, the assurance of sufficient funds to the multilateral agencies so that they can play an increasing part in the planning and financing of national and regional development. The multilateral organization and co-ordination of aid has established its merits beyond doubt, and it is our hope that this will be reflected in the aid policies of the donor countries. We, in Africa, must emphasize multinational co-operation as an

essential part of development strategy during the years ahead. The Government of Ghana has participated vigorously in all the attempts that have been made at regional and sub-regional co-operation in Africa. We call on the world to support these programmes and, in particular, to supplement the self-help of the African countries which has been demonstrated in the establishment of the African Development Bank.

31. Together with other developing countries, Ghana will be carrying into the next decade a load of debts, the servicing of which will constitute a grave impediment to our prospects of national development. We cannot bear it unless we are prepared to deny essential commodities to our people, accept a condition of steady inflation and random scarcities of the most elementary necessities, be indifferent to massive unemployment among adults, and abdicate responsibility for the employment of the youth who are daily coming forward prepared to earn an honest livelihood. These are conditions which a democratically elected government cannot afford to accept. National development in Ghana has been virtually at a standstill for about five years now. It seems that, under the existing practices, our Government, which has been expressly elected by the people of Ghana to end these difficulties, might be required to continue servicing these past debts and to forsake our mandate. I hope our creditors, who have shown a willingness earlier on to recognize the need for dealing with this debt problem through negotiation and concerted action, will be equally willing to listen to the aspirations of our people and co-operate in arrangements for debt repayment which make it possible for our new Government to respond to their needs.

32. In conclusion, I would like to say that my Government regards the United Nations as a symbol of hope for the world. Despite its imperfections and failures, it has achieved successes which have justified its existence as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, for the creation of avenues for international understanding and co-operation, and for the collective building of an international community of all races and all peoples who have learnt to respect and regard one another as equal members of the human family, and have accepted the responsibility for being each his brother's keeper. We value our membership of this Assembly and we, on our part, will do all in our power to help it grow to fulfil the world's hopes and aspirations placed in it as an instrument of peace and progress.

33. Madam President, may the General Assembly, under your able and engaging guidance at this session, move a step nearer the realization of the vision to which it owes its existence! May God help it progressively fulfil its mission!

34. The PRESIDENT: I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, for the very kind compliments he has paid me, and, with the Assembly's permission and on its behalf, I wish also to thank him for the important statement he has just made.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.