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ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON OPENING OF EMERGENCY SESSION

Following is the text of the statement by the President of the sixth emergency session of the General Assembly, Salim A. Salim (United Republic of Tanzania):

I wish at the outset to express my deep appreciation for this high honour, both to my country and to me, as well as for the trust and confidence which the Members have placed in me once again. Mindful of the heavy responsibility with which Members have entrusted me, I wish to reiterate that I shall do my utmost to live up to their expectations and to assist in the effective conduct of our deliberations in the discharge of the important task before us. In so doing, I feel confident that I shall continue to receive the same active support and positive co-operation of the entire membership which I had the privilege of enjoying throughout the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

This sixth emergency special session of the General Assembly is convened amidst the background of disquieting developments on the international scene which have justifiably caused great concern for the international community. It is convened in the context of the developments in Afghanistan and the escalation of tension in the area as a whole, over-shadowed by an ominous build-up of confrontation among the great Powers. In the last several days, the Security Council has held extensive discussions on the issue, which has now been referred to the General Assembly. These discussions have proven to be inconclusive since the Security Council was unable to take action due to the lack of unanimity of its permanent members.

The maintenance of international peace and security is certainly a matter of concern to all States, big and small, powerful and not so powerful. For a threat to peace and security to any part of the world has, in one way or the other, a direct bearing on universal peace and security and thus no nation or group of nations can claim immunity from such developments. It is therefore only appropriate that the General Assembly, in considering the issue which has led us to meet here, should bear in mind the vested interests of humanity as a whole and the preservation of peace and security.

(more)

This Assembly, which is representative of the nations and peoples of the world, has a clear responsibility to make its own contribution in that regard. At the same time, our meeting today underscores once again the extremely important role prescribed for the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security -- a concomitant responsibility complementing that of the Security Council as provided for under the Charter.

From the proceedings of the Security Council, it is quite evident that in the consideration of this item by the Assembly, it may not be possible to arrive at a unanimous position on how best to approach the problem. I believe, however, that it is important that in our deliberations we should all be guided by the principles of the Charter of our Organization, as well as those of many decisions and resolutions which have been adopted by this Assembly.

Above all, I trust that members of this Assembly in addressing themselves to this question, will do so not in a spirit of rancour and acrimony but, rather, in a constructive spirit with one objective in mind, namely, the elimination of tension and the preservation of international peace and security. I believe that that noble objective can be realized only through respect for the underlying principles of our Organization, including the principle of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States, and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of any State, as well as the principle of allowing all States to determine freely their own future and their destiny. These are sacrosanct and fundamental principles which have been affirmed and reaffirmed repeatedly by this Assembly year in and year out. These are principles which constitute some of the very basis of the fabric of international relations today.

This emergency special session of the General Assembly has an extremely heavy responsibility. I hope that our deliberations will be so conducted as to live up to the expectations of the peoples that we represent. I hope that the Members of the Assembly will do their utmost to be guided solely by the principles of our Organization and will, in the process, make a vital contribution to the preservation of international peace and security and the upholding of justice.

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