As the United Nations enters its fourth decade, its essential role as a catalyst in the striving for international peace and cooperation becomes ever more apparent. Governments and peoples are seeking to bring about a fundamental change in the world order, and their agenda of priority items reflects not only a shift in emphasis—as in the expanding dialogue between developed and developing countries—but also a greatly increased readiness on the part of the international community to tackle truly complex global problems through the processes made uniquely available by the United Nations family.

The great range and variety of these efforts and of the political and economic trends throughout 1976 are reflected in the pages of this volume of the Yearbook of the United Nations. Its aim is to provide authoritative, objective and concise information and source material which will help in understanding the new efforts and trends in the world. I hope that its publication will provide a comprehensive work of reference on the complex workings of the World Organization.

KURT WALDHEIM
Secretary-General