


# Foreword

**T**HE United Nations is engaged in a unique experiment. The task assigned to the Organization by the Charter, namely to construct a new order of peace and co-operation among all nations and peoples, is unparalleled in both scope and complexity. We need hardly recall that such an endeavour cannot be fulfilled in the space of one year. Instead it is a process of transformation, both in the structures of national and international society and in the attitude of men and women throughout the world.

The Yearbook of the United Nations is a record of the efforts made by the Organization over the course of one year to edge closer to the great ideals of the Charter. It is a useful point of reference for all students of international life. But the successes and difficulties it records must be seen in the light of our long-term endeavours for peace, justice, and social and economic progress.

The United Nations itself fully recognizes the magnitude and complexity of the tasks before it. We set our sights on a future of true international co-operation, but we also had to measure our progress in limited spans of time. As the Yearbook recounts, 1980 saw the beginning of two important decades proclaimed by the General Assembly: the Second Disarmament Decade and the Industrial Development Decade for Africa. Other long-term goals were set over the year.

This Yearbook shows that we have given ourselves demanding objectives and we face some of the world's most intractable problems. But the start of a new decade is a time for renewal and for optimism, based on a measured understanding of the possibilities of this Organization for peace and rational change.



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