

Statement made on 30 October 1985 by Mr. Jean Gazarian, Special Adviser for the Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations, after receiving a copy of the Preamble to the Charter signed by the participants in the Peace Walk.

Dear friends, on behalf of the Secretary-General I should like to thank you very much for the beautiful gift you have just honoured us with. I should also like to convey his gratitude for the very important event which has concluded today. As you know, the Secretary-General is always in favour of peace initiatives, whether they occur in world capitals, in conference rooms or in our beautiful United Nations garden.

You have expressed yourselves in one of the most eloquent languages on earth: the language of silence. Silence and meditation have for centuries been the basis of many religions. In whatever way we worship, it is important to meditate. In this connection, it should be recalled that in 1949, when the General Assembly was only four years old, it decided to amend its rules of procedures and to insert a new rule whereby it would observe at the beginning and at the end of every session a minute of silence devoted to prayer or meditation. This decision was extremely important because it introduced into the General Assembly the concepts of prayer and meditation. May I add, in a more facetious vein, that there is a long period of time between the first minute and the last minute of silence and, if I may say so, there is not much silence in between!

The fortieth anniversary is a period of rededication. It was a unique opportunity for world leaders, more than sixty of them, to come to the United Nations and make a recommitment to the principles of the Charter at the level of Member States. Tomorrow, in the General Assembly Hall, the Secretariat will also make a recommitment to the principles of the Charter. But today you have blended the two elements - delegations and Secretariat - by making jointly your own recommitment to the Charter. Your peace initiative has won the respect of all. It has been for all of us a source of inspiration.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I should like to thank you once again for what you have done, in the true spirit of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

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Since I have the floor, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Office for the Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations, to present to you the commemorative medal for the fortieth anniversary. May I also take this opportunity to offer you the official flag of the United Nations, which, I hope, you will hoist in 1986 for the next peace march.

Thank you very much.