

## INTERNATIONAL THANKSGIVING 1978

On 20 November 1978 Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations sponsored the fourth observance of International Thanksgiving at United Nations Headquarters. Guest speakers included Ambassador Davidson L. Hepburn of the Bahamas, Ambassador E. Owono Asangono of Equatorial Guinea, Ambassador C.G. Maina of Kenya, Ambassador Harald Rose of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Zaim Imam, Political Adviser of Kuwait and Mr. Christian Schmittlein, Third Secretary, from the Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany. Colonel Geiger was also present as a representative of the Swedish Mission to the United Nations.

*Following are excerpts from the programme.*



*His Excellency Mr. Davidson L. Hepburn, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations: The Bahamian people are proud*

to be a part of this august international and universal body. Our participation in the United Nations is growing, gradually, from a rather nominal one to a more substantive one. The material benefits received, as a result of membership in the United Nations for the past five years, cannot be measured in a tangible way in terms of technical assistance, for example. But in an intangible form, such as training and experience, our membership has been invaluable. As a result, there has been a greater consciousness of global activities in the Bahamas society. Indeed, there is a stronger sense of belonging and less insularity, and the general public is beginning to demand more participation by its representatives. Most importantly, we are better able to understand the many social, economic and political problems which plague so many of our brothers and sisters categorized, like ourselves, as small developing nations. Consequently, we are more willing to lend moral, financial and technical assistance wherever possible.

Membership in the United Nations has been a catalyst to the Bahamas. The exposure has challenged our delegates to deal with issues in a more constructive and decisive manner. Hence, we are more positive in our conviction that the fulfillment of the true values of peace and harmony with one's fellow human beings and with one's environment are within mankind's grasp. And we hope that by sharing this belief with our colleagues here at the United Nations we can enhance the image of the organization by fostering better relations and strengthening the call for the maintenance of universal peace and security.



*His Excellency Mr. E. Owono Asangono, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations:* Before referring to the Equatorial Republic of Guinea, I would like to say a few words to manifest the importance and the highly significant role that meditation has for the human being. Because of the multiple factors of the social and political life of our environment, the process of humanization is very difficult. It is then indispensable and necessary to surrender every now and then to meditation, as a way to the purification of our spirit and the rediscovery of our inner self. The United Nations constitutes the hope and dream of the international community for the solution of grave problems that affect humanity. We have then the obligation and duty to work pure in spirit. The Meditation Hall, created by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, should constitute the centre of rediscovery for humanity. We render homage to the illustrious Secretary-Generals Dag Hammarskjold and U Thant for their dedication to the cause of humanity.

With Equatorial Guinea's admission to the community of nations, its people, who before did not recognize their own existence and value, were born to a new light. The joining of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations means the complete and effective acquisition of all its rights, duties and obligations before the International Community. The Equatorial Guineans feel that it is their duty and obligation to contribute to the common efforts for the edification of an honourable and prosperous universal human society and, at the same time, recognize their right to participate in the benefits of this community.



*His Excellency Mr. C. G. Maina, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations: In the spirit of International Thanksgiving this week, Kenya has much reason to be thankful, particularly when one looks around at many parts of the world*

where peace and tranquility are more of a theory and a wish than a practical proposition. We are grateful as Kenyans to be in a position to demonstrate that it is possible in this imperfect world for a human society made up of different races, peoples, religions, and cultures to exist free from the evils we are all struggling to eliminate through the United Nations.

Kenya has benefited along with many other countries from the achievements of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in various parts of the world over the three decades the Organization has been in existence. Of course, we have shared with others the disappointments of the Organization when it fails to bring about peace and solve problems which have afflicted many unfortunate parts of the world. For Kenya to be counted among those making an effort to bring about peace and to improve the lot of many suffering peoples of the world is a happy experience irrespective of whether or not those efforts are successful. We are, therefore, happy to join all our friends in this International Day of Thanksgiving, even for the imperfect peace in an imperfect world that we have continued to enjoy in the past year. It is our hope that men and women and leaders everywhere in the world will have the opportunity to sit back and count not only the problems, but also the blessings that we have, because without the ability to sit back and reflect on the basic values of human existence and the relationship between man, his immediate environment and the rest of the universe, the human being often behaves no better than the lesser creations that inhabit the earth.



*H.E. Dr. Harald Rose, Permanent Representative of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations:* Our people have been enriched materially and intellectually through manifold exchanges with many peoples, above all with the socialist sister countries. When we started, we had not only to clear away the ruins in our cities and villages, but, what is more, to remove the ideological garbage left behind by fascist barbarity. Thus, a culture has emerged which is committed to socialism and peace, to love of one's people and respect for other peoples and which promotes the full development of the individual's creative potential. It is a culture which brings forth and fosters active solidarity with all people fighting for national independence and against social oppression. ✓

For the German Democratic Republic, the commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is not only motivated by political or juridical considerations. It is deeply rooted in our philosophy and ideology and in our concepts of value, in short, in our new life. ✓



*Mr. Zaim Imam, Political Advisor of Kuwait to the United Nations:* The United Nations means a great deal to my countrymen. We view the United Nations as the institution that can ensure our very survival through the establishment of international security and the rule of law. It is also the institution which completes the process of decolonization and ensures protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms. I cannot deny that my countrymen, like citizens all over the world, have frequently been disillusioned with the United Nations. Through painful experience they have learned that the United Nations is at an early stage of a great international experiment being carried out at a time of bewildering change. To strengthen the United Nations, Member States should work to improve it as an object in itself. They should cease to use it as an instrument for the furtherance of national policies. My countrymen believe that with the proper political will, which must evolve in an increasingly interdependent world, the United Nations can fulfil its real goals, which are to suc-

cour victims of aggression, prevent territorial expansion, harness advanced science and technology in the service of mankind, narrow the gap between affluence and poverty, protect human rights and promote social justice.



*Mr. Christian Schmittlein, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations:* The German artists, philosophers, writers and painters of the 19th century did not want to be "German" artists in the first sense; coming from middle Europe, they wanted to give their message and their way of thinking to all states. They did not want to be German national artists, but they wanted to be world citizens. This is true not only for Goethe, but also for Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx or any of the others. So, you see that the German culture is not limited to what is now the present Federal Republic of Germany. German culture has always been directed towards the larger world.

This is how we understand our role in the United Nations, too. We try to strengthen all the attempts

and all the efforts for peace. The German culture in the past as well as in the present in the Federal Republic of Germany has tried to work for peace for all people.