Mr.President,

in offering you, on behalf of the Italian Delegation, our heartfelt congratulations on your unanimous election as President of this Assembly, I am sure that I am also voicing the feelings of all my countrymen who are bound to yours by a traditional friendship which dates back over the centuries to the distant times when our two peoples met, on the waters of the Mediterranean, to establish fruitful ties. Your wisdom and experience will certainly prove invaluable for the constructive impartial guidance of our debate.

Mr. President,

It would be a dangerous mistake to shut our eyes to the harsh reality. The sixteenth Assembly of the United Nations is meeting at a particularly difficult moment which might even mark a crucial turning-point in the history of our Organization. It will depend entirely on us, and on how we

tackle the problems confronting us, whether this turning-point will set us on the path of progress in international co-operation or whether it will see the triumph of those negative forces which could shatter once and for all the hopes and beliefs that inspired the founders of the United Nations, meeting at San Francisco at the end of the Second World War and which, in subsequent years, led so many new States to join the United Nations.

Our responsibility is great because we can either dissipate this great moral inheritance of ours, showing that it was nothing but an illusion, or we can defend it and add to it, proving to the world that the ideals of international co-operation are a reality in which we firmly believe.

This is certainly not the time for high-sounding phrases and general declarations of principle, which are easily made, but for deeds and for deeds alone. And the facts show that just when the international horizon is clouded

by the Berlin crisis, just when our Organization is deeply involved in the Congo and just when the responsibilities of the United Nations in such matters as disarmament, assistance to the under-developed countries and support for the independence of countries that have not yet attained that goal have become more pressing than ever, the tragic death of our Secretary-General has robbed our main executive organ of its head. The problem of restoring the efficient functioning of the Secretariat-General is, in the view of the Italian Delegation, the number one problem on which rests the solution of all other questions.

How is it to be dealt with? And how is it to be solved ? There are some considerations that I would like to submit.

The San Francisco Charter clearly embodies a principle, namely, that at the head of the Secretariat-General there should be a single individual personally responsible

for the implementation of our decisions and for the administrative work of the United Nations. This principle is tacitly reaffirmed upon the admission of new Member States joining the United Nations, and these States not only accept the rules contained in the Charter but also automatically acquire - on the same footing as other Member States - the right to withdraw in the event of reforms should they be considered unacceptable. Thus any departure from the institution of a single office of Secretary-General, besides jeopardizing the efficiency of our executive could, we feel, gravely complicate matters by casting doubt on the continued presence in the United Nations of part of its existing membership.

At this stage I should like to emphasize that when the principle of a single Secretary-General was accepted without dispute, the international community was substantially no different from now. Even then there were

Member States ruled by the Communist doctrine while others followed a policy of neutrality and others again ~~(the majority)~~ favoured active democratic solidarity. So the present tripartite grouping existed even then. Moreover, the Charter even then provided, in Article 51, for the regional arrangements that were to be concluded in subsequent years, including the Atlantic Pact and the Warsaw Pact. The Charter even envisaged the possibility of disagreement between the permanent members of the Security Council as, in fact, it gave them the rights of veto. Why, then, did this right of veto not extend to the activities of the Secretary-General? For several obvious reasons.

Firstly, because if Security Council decisions already required the consent of all the permanent members, it was generally agreed that the work of the General Assembly should be governed by a different principle - that of a two-third majority. It did not occur to anyone at that time that the Assembly's decisions could be vetoed, which

would happen, however, once the Secretariat-General is given the power to obstruct the implementation of its decisions. Secondly, because the main executive organ of the United Nations cannot be paralyzed at the whim of one party except at the cost of total inefficiency. Thirdly - and this deserves special attention - because the General Assembly should, like any political Assembly, have to deal with a single responsible individual from whom, in given circumstances, it can withdraw its confidence by a vote of censure. But by accepting the troika principle, we would be taking the serious step of sanctioning what would amount to irresponsibility on the part of the Secretariat, and it is obvious that you cannot censure a person to whom you have practically accorded the right of veto. In essence, the so-called troika system would introduce the veto ~~system~~ (which would turn the executive organ into a deliberating body) not merely into the Secretariat but, as a matter of fact, into the General Assembly as well, ~~which~~ and that

would clearly be unacceptable.

Once we have shown the legitimacy and the need of having one Secretary-General, the course we must take to ensure the smooth running of the only executive organ we possess is revealed in its true light. We all know the rules laid down in the Charter. We therefore know that the Security Council is competent to make a designation which the General Assembly is asked to ratify. But while awaiting for that designation, which we hope will be made as speedily as possible, can we just stand back and implicitly abdicate our right to adopt any further valid decisions, simply because there is no one to implement them or to continue to carry out decisions already taken in the past ? Do we consider that the problems confronting us are not urgent and that we can complacently postpone their consideration indefinitely? Such an attitude would, in our opinion, be irresponsible

and would certainly fall short of the expectations of public opinion in our respective countries. We therefore have no choice but to find a provisional head for our executive. Besides, when the United Nations was first established and when, on the expiry of the first Secretary-General's term of office, the General Assembly was faced with a similar problem (since the Security Council could not agree on a new nominee) it solved it by taking immediate action. In the present international situation it is imperative that we should assume the responsibilities that an earlier General Assembly had no hesitation in assuming.

Mr. President,

in dealing with the grave problems that cloud the political horizon I have already had occasion to mention the question of Berlin. Let me now make a few brief comments on that subject.

Some time before the Belgrade Conference, the

Italian Government, through its Prime Minister and Foreign Minister who had returned from a journey to Moscow, voiced the belief that the time was ripe for direct negotiations between the Powers concerned. This belief still holds firm. But, in our minds, negotiation means the exchanging of views in search of a solution that would take into account the interests of both sides, and not the unconditional acceptance of all the requests advanced by one side. We have a different word to define that type of exchange - we call it capitulation or surrender, not negotiation.

Yesterday the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union pointed out the danger to world peace stemming from the present partition of Germany. But he forgot to mention where responsibility lies for the failure to reunify Germany. Reunification, by means of free elections, which was also reaffirmed in principle at the Geneva Conference of 1955,

was never permitted precisely by the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gromyko, who yesterday so solemnly and firmly assured us that the Communist countries had chosen that order of their own free will, forgot to mention the reason why the inhabitants of East Germany have always been prevented from expressing their free will. It is simply because they have never had the opportunity to do so, that even today a barrier still stretches across the Brandenburger Tor in the centre of the city of Berlin.

It is hard to counsel acceptance of the view that what is lawful for one party is not only unlawful for the other but actually a threat to peace. In this respect the case of East Berlin is of a considerable relevance. Originally its status was governed by the same agreements as those which gave rise to the regime in West Berlin. But whereas any discussion of the de facto absorption of East Berlin into East Germany was taboo - even though its inhabitants

were so eager for a different arrangement that a sort of Chinese wall had to be erected to prevent their exodus to West Berlin - the citizens of West Berlin are denied any contact with West Germany. Sic vos non vobis.

From this rostrum we wish to renew our appeal for negotiations, with the hope that there will be no misunderstanding as to its meaning. Anyone who would today passively agree to a different course might find himself tomorrow the prisoner and victim of his own weakness.

Mr.President,

in the view of the Italian Delegation, the problem of disarmament today is more crucial than ever for the preservation of world peace. This belief springs from the awareness that the solution to all the delicate problems that vex us can be more easily found once a bold step has been taken towards a system which, by progressive stages, can

bring about general, complete and controlled disarmament. In stressing the urgency of disarmament in an age when technology conditions the lives of nations as a whole, both in the civilian and in the military fields, we are none the less aware that such priority is conditional upon a complementary but equally important requirement - the simultaneous establishment of an adequate security system.

as the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom pointed out this morning, that is

This system should be the cornerstone of any effective and fruitful international reconstruction. Our inclination to proceed towards general and complete disarmament can be justified only in so far as, in our progress towards the ultimate goal, we can be certain of safeguarding an international justice which will guarantee that all parties respect their undertakings. The present balance of terror should therefore be replaced by a system of guaranteed cooperation which will permit economic and social development for

all peoples based on freedom and respect for individual opinions.

With these considerations in mind, the Italian Delegation heartly welcomed the joint American-Soviet declaration of 20 September. The principles enunciated for the safeguarding of disarmament negotiations fully reflect our views. We have always held that a programme for general and complete disarmament, in order to cope with the realities of present and future situations, should be combined with limited but progressive measures designed to promote that "gradual approach" to the problem, to which President Kennedy referred in his wise speech. These initial measures, which could even be adopted immediately, as they present no inherent difficulties, would be of great psychological value and would mean a substantial step towards solving the disarmament problem.

The thorny but vital question of controls, so well defined in the declaration of principles, neverthless impels us to associate ourselves with the reservations put forward by Mr. Stevenson and reiterated in his letter of 20 September. The latest happenings with regard to the nuclear test-talks as well as the previous experience concerning the Committee of Ten, considered ~~against the background~~ in the light of Soviet statements on control, justify this caution. At the same time, the Italian Delegation cannot but restate its conviction that any proposed agreement for the suspension of nuclear tests or for the reduction of armaments and armed forces would be meaningless in the absence of suitable guarantees.

The Italian Delegation hopes that the present inconsistency betwen the readiness to sign a joint declaration on the principles of disarmament and the Soviet Government's decision to resume nuclear tests will soon be overcome. It would not be hard to quote entire pages from speeches made three years earlier by Soviet statesman and diplomats in

the United Nations and elsewhere prompting separate negotiations on the cessation of nuclear tests as a necessary precondition for disarmament, and roundly condemning any Power that would dare to be the first to break the moratorium. But I shall refrain, and shall simply recall here that it was the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union who made a solemn appeal to the conscience of the entire world when he stated (I quote) "if in the present circumstances a State should resume nuclear testing, the consequences of this action would be hard to foresee" (end of quotation) and added that it would (I quote) "assume a heavy burden of responsibility in the eyes of the peoples of the world" (end of quotation).

On 4 November 1958, in this very hall, we unanimously approved a resolution endorsing those principles. Would we be prepared to repudiate them today? Such an attitude would fail to reflect the deep-seated conviction of our peoples. Nothing has changed, technically speaking, since the day on

which we took that unanimous decision.

We cannot fail to face two unpleasant facts which, alas, do not seem to aim at promoting the climate which is essential for a constructive resumption of negotiations on disarmament and international security. The first of these facts is the torpedoing of the negotiations which, in the space of three years, had almost resolved the difficult task of preparing a draft-treaty. The second is the unilateral violation of the moratorium on nuclear tests, accompanied by the proclaimed intention of endowing the arsenals of the Communist world with 100-megaton atomic warheads. But what most alarms and even terrifies people are the reasons which the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union has given for his decisions. He has stated plainly and explicitly that (I quote) "the resumption of nuclear tests is in the interest of the Soviet Union" (end of quotation). I confess that it is hard

for me - and perhaps not only for me - to regard this as a contribution to disarmament rather than as a new and powerful incentive to the armaments race.

My country, however, notwithstanding this bitter and frightening situation, considers that every effort should be made to leave the door open for an agreement. At Geneva we took part in the disarmament discussions and concurred in the efforts towards a true agreement. We even tried to curb our impatience and that of others and to spur ourselves and our friends on to persevere in the undertaking, however arduous it might appear. And it is in that same spirit that we now lend our support to the plan laid down by President Kennedy. This plan, in form and in substance, seems to us, within the framework and in accordance with the principles of the United Nations, to provide a basis for negotiations which, by paving the way for disarmament through security, could

usefully contribute to the establishment of a new and better world order.

Mr.President,

Allow me to make a few comments on economic problems which in my view are no less important than the political ones for the survival of mankind.

The United Nations is the largest body in which countries with different patterns of production and different levels of economic development can air their problems and exchange opinions with a view to taking common action to promote economic growth and social progress throughout the world. The need for a balanced expansion both of production and trade has gradually emerged in recent times as the key to the development of all countries irrespective of their stage of economic level. This need did not fail to obtain a response in the United Nations.

Italy has already made a substantial contribution

towards the goal of economic interdependence and general co-operation and is now taking an active part in the many activities that the United Nations are carrying out in all spheres of economic and social development - be it the expansion of trade and increased financial assistance or intensified efforts in the field of pre-investments or the utilization of human resources. To that end, Italy has also substantially increased its contribution to the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance.

Italy's overall economic effort, up to the end of 1960, had already reached the figure of 930 million dollars.

The last session of the Economic and Social Council showed the growing importance of social and economic factors and the resolution adopted at Belgrade at the conclusion of the Conference of non-aligned countries, concerning the strenghtening and development of our Organization, reflects the

belief of those countries that it is these very economic and social activities of the United Nations which had and will have the greatest impact on the civil progress of the less-developed nations. We feel that the United Nations would do well to explore further the opportunities for expanding cooperation especially in those regions where appropriate action and methods of consultation could promote a greater flow and better use of economic and social assistance. My Government is fully aware of the magnitude of the problem and of its moral and political scope. We therefore propose to increase our efforts in order to assist those countries which are now in the process of development. Of course, we can do so within the limits of our economic possibilities and of our basic commitment to develop the depressed areas of Southern Italy. We also hope that every effort will be made by all of us here to expand and intensify this Organization's

economic and social activities. The primary task of the Organization is to discourage, impede and halt any threat to world peace; but this task is closely linked with economic and social action to combat poverty and improve the living conditions of mankind.

Mr. President,

In concluding my remarks, I should like solemnly to reaffirm the complete and unreserved support of the Italian Government for the principles underlying the United Nations and our firm determination to contribute to their defence and implementation. In bequeathing them to us, the founders of this Organization have bequeathed us a priceless legacy. Once again, as far back as 1945, when it was first established, and later at the time of the Korean crisis, the Suez crisis and the Congo crisis, the world looks to the United Nations as to the only pillar of peace. It is in this building

that the hopes of troubled mankind, aghast at the spectre of a new war, are centred. The world knows, to echo the words of President Kennedy - that mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind. It knows that this is still the only urbs pacis - the only real citadel of peace on earth. The very fact that in times of greatest international tension, when the fate of the world seems to hang on a slender thread, all mankind looks to the United Nations as its last sheet anchor, shows that this Organization really possesses great moral strength.

I am sure, Mr. President, that the Sixteenth Assembly will measure up to the challenge of the times and will, under your able guidance, stand the test and jealously guard its great heritage of ideals so as to hand it down intact, and perhaps even enriched, to further generations. One thing is certain: the future of the United

Nations is in our hands and depends solely on us. For its part the Italian Delegation pledges all its endeavours to safeguard it.