



DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS

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UNITED NATIONS DAY

On the occasion of United Nations Day, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, re-affirmed Australia's adherence to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and the importance Australia attaches to the work of the United Nations Organisation. He recalled that the UN Charter came into force on 24 October 1945 and on the anniversary of that event it was appropriate for the individual member countries of the world community to focus attention on the activities of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.

Mr Whitlam said that for Australia, the United Nations continued to be the most important international instrument in man's quest for an international order based on peace and racial equality, mutual respect and the elimination of poverty and illiteracy. He emphasised that Australia had all along maintained that the Security Council should be actively involved in finding a way out of the tragic struggle in the Middle East.

Mr Whitlam pointed out that some of the most significant achievements of the United Nations had been in the social and economic fields. He noted in particular that the guiding principles for United Nations activities in these areas were contained in the Charter and in such instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has been one of the most enlightened achievements of the Organisation. On 10 December this year, the United Nations will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration in 1948. Mr Whitlam said the work of the United Nations in these

fields had been a source of encouragement for the Australian Government in the promotion of economic and social justice in our own society as well as internationally. The Government has an active policy of giving effect to all relevant international instruments concerned with the protection and enhancement of human rights.

Mr Whitlam said that the UN Charter is aimed at promoting the dignity and well-being of the ordinary man and woman and is not an abstract document concerned only with the political interests and objectives of Governments. Australia's participation in the United Nations is intended to further our concern that all peoples should have the right to determine and pursue freely their political, social, cultural and economic development.

The Prime Minister noted that this year the United Nations is emphasizing international development and that today has also been designated as World Development Information day. He said that this was an appropriate time to assess Australia's commitment to the development goals of the United Nations.

Mr Whitlam recalled that the Government intended to expand present assistance programs in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, and to work towards an official aid target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product by the end of the present decade, in keeping with the principal aim of the International Strategy for the Second Development Decade.