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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 7143 of October 23, 1998

The President

United Nations Day, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

Every year on October 24, we celebrate the United Nations, a unique institution conceived in the crucible of World War II. Although the U.N. is an international body, the term “United Nations” was coined by an American, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who vigorously advocated for the creation of an assembly, composed of representatives from nations around the globe, devoted to the promotion of world peace and prosperity. The member countries of the United Nations are large and small, with diverse social, cultural, and political values, but each has a voice in shaping the world’s destiny. Maintaining peace and security; promoting democracy, development, and human rights—this is the noble mission put forth in the U.N. Charter. The U.N. has been effective in fulfilling this formidable mission, winning Nobel Peace Prizes for its peace-keeping operations, its promotion of children’s and workers’ rights, and its assistance to refugees. The U.N. has also enabled people in more than 45 countries to participate in free and fair elections by providing electoral advice and assistance and monitoring results. Its day-to-day operations—supplying safe drinking water, fighting disease, giving food and shelter to victims of emergencies and political tumult—have made a difference in the lives of millions of people around the world.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the first major achievements of the U.N. The Declaration has become the standard for international human rights law, beginning with the uncompromising statement: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Over the years, the Declaration has been used countless times in countless ways to advance and defend human rights. As Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated, “Human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and lie at the heart of all that the United Nations aspires to achieve in peace and development.”

Despite the U.N.’s extraordinary accomplishments, many challenges lie before us. Lasting peace can be realized only through wide social and economic development. Today, three-fourths of the world’s people live in developing countries, and 1.3 billion live in abject poverty. The ever-widening gap between the world’s richest and poorest countries remains one of our most pressing challenges. The U.N. and its agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, provide vital assistance to developing countries through grants and loans of over \$25 billion a year. With the current disruption in the world financial markets, the U.N. also plays a pivotal role as a stabilizing force, attracting investment in emerging economies in the developing world by promoting political stability, transparency, and good governance. And the U.N. continues to serve the world as an effective forum for instant consultation and cooperation among governments when attacking such shared threats as terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental degradation, and infectious disease.

The United States can best honor and celebrate the good work and many accomplishments of the United Nations by ensuring its continued strength and effectiveness. The U.N. has made great strides in streamlining its programs and cutting its costs. I applaud this progress, and I deeply regret the failure of this Congress to agree to pay our overdue U.N. dues. I pledge to work with the next Congress to meet our financial treaty obligations to the U.N. America played a vital role in the birth of the United Nations more than 50 years ago, and, if we are to remain true to our values and goals, we must work constructively with this great institution and maintain our vote in its deliberations.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1998, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

