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STATEMENT BY PABLO CASALS AT RECEPTION GIVEN BY SECRETARY-GENERAL

Following is the text of a statement made by Pablo Casals at a reception given by the Secretary-General, U Thant, in his suite on the 38th floor of United Nations Headquarters at 11:30 a.m. on 17 April:

It is for me a great pleasure and honour to be once more at the United Nations and in the company of my dear friend, Secretary-General Thant and his most esteemed colleagues. I have long believed that the United Nations represents the most important hope for peace on our troubled earth. I am sorrowfully mindful of the agonies that men and women and children are suffering in the jungles and villages of Viet-Nam and in the tortured areas of the Near East and in other parts of the world. I am conscious of the hunger, oppression and tyranny that continue to torment every continent. I grieve over the fact that, like savages, we fear our neighbours and that we arm against them and they arm against us. If we are to become accustomed to the fact that we are human beings, if we are to make meaningful the knowledge that love should not stop at the border, then indeed it is through the United Nations that we of all lands must act together to achieve a world in which we and our children will live in harmony and happiness.

The thought of children in all their beauty and innocence is constantly with me, and it has had a special significance for me these last few days. The concert and exhibition with which I have been associated here in New York City have had as their goal the rendering of aid to the United Nations International School and to a series of free concerts for children. What nobler purpose could there be than that of bringing learning and music -- and therefore joy -- to many children of many nations. Children and young people are our greatest treasure. When we speak of them we speak of the future of the world.

(more)

Together with the people of all lands we must work to protect that common treasure. And more than that. We must nurture that richness.

In the book that I have recently concluded, Joys and Sorrows, I have expressed my feelings in these words: "Each second we live in a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you. And look at your body -- what a wonder it is! your legs, your arms, your cunning fingers, the way you move! You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work -- we all must work -- to make this world worthy of its children."

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