

**MESSAGE FROM SIR HUMPHREY WALDOCK,
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE,
READ AT THE COSTA RICAN NATIONAL THEATER
ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1979, AT THE CEREMONY INSTALLING
THE INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS.**

Compelling reasons have, to my profound regret, prevented me from accepting the gracious invitation of the Government of Costa Rica to be present at the ceremony today inaugurating the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. However, I am well aware that the Chapter of the United Nations proclaims as one of the principles of the Organization, the achievement of international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. I would not, therefore, think it fitting if this historic occasion were to go by without my having conveyed to the judges of your Court a cordial message of good will and encouragement from the principal judicial organ to the United Nations.

The establishment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is one more testimony to the deep attachment of the peoples of the Americas to the cause of human rights and freedoms. By a long and cumulative series of international acts the Organization of American States has sought to determine, proclaim and define the fundamental rights and freedoms of men and women and to provide international guarantees for ensuring their observance and protection within the Americas. The creation of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, in 1960, was itself a notable landmark in the Organization's unremitting pursuit of these objectives. To the Commission the Organization has now added your Court, the creation of which may justly be considered as having as especial significance. Within democratic societies, as history shows, the judicial process has a vital role to play not only in safeguarding the rights and freedoms of the individual but also in determining their precise extent and limits. Accordingly, we have every reason to see much significance in the forging of this new judicial link in the chain of international institutions dedicated to furthering the cause of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the purpose and principles of the United Nations.

The Court of Human Rights, composed as it is of eminent jurists, is well-equipped to undertake the role entrusted to it by the Organization of American States. That role is as challenging as it is responsible, and the warmest good wishes to the Members of the International Court of Justice go out to you and your colleagues, Mr. President, as you enter upon your high mission.